

U. S. delegate to the UN Population Commission, analyzed this problem. If the present rate of increase should continue, the earth would hold nearly 6 billion people in the year 2000. What worried him most was that the increase, while universal, is far greater in the poorer countries on the average than in the richer ones. Dr. Davis' conclusion was disturbing: "Eventually, either the birth rate has to go down or mortality has to rise again." His position was criticized most severely in private discussions. With his facts one could hardly argue. But Dr. Davis did not, it seems, give sufficient weight to the scientific creativity which, as David Sarnoff pointed out, produced the atomic and hydrogen bombs and which can also give the world all that it needs in the way of energy.

A most encouraging philosophy was implied by Henry Luce, Editor-in-Chief of

Time, Inc. and chairman of the conference, in his concluding address. He stressed that each country should help every other country; especially that a rich country should help a poor country. But more important, fundamentally, was his appreciation of the need for the United States and every other country for "a general world-wide economic order." This seems to recognize an international common good. Other speakers at times mentioned something similar. For example, the Indian industrialist Masani, speaking of American foreign aid, rejected the idea that this could have been mere charity or a means to liquidate surplus goods and materials or even a weapon to defeat communism. "I should like to think," he said, "that what really actuates these great projects is fraternity, the desire to share with one whose need is greater than one's own, and that its foundation is love

which is conscious of another's worth."

Was the conference worth while? The participants heard much they already knew. But it was like an advanced management course. The world's leading industrialists reviewed some fundamental principles and heard other people discuss the basic problems underlying their daily management practices. Yet even if they had learned nothing new, the conference was a success. It enabled men from different countries to be together, to talk over privately the different social and economic views which exist in different nations.

All the countries of the world, both the developed and the developing, owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Luce, whose public-spirited inspiration and energetic leadership made possible this International Industrial Development Conference.

RICHARD E. MULCAHY

BOOKS

Coping with the Problem of the Drinker

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE: A Brief History of A. A.

By a Co-Founder. Harper. 335p. \$4

After the first four years of its existence the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous totaled only one hundred persons. Today the membership is over 200,000 in 7,000 groups in 70 countries and U. S. possessions. The present volume, most of which has been written (anonymously, of course) by the surviving co-founder of A. A., is the fascinating story of the beginnings and the development of this unique organization. No other movement or method has been so successful in the large-scale recovery of alcoholics.

The author, Bill W., begins with an account of the Twentieth Anniversary Convention of A. A. at St. Louis, and uses the proceedings there as a starting point for a series of flashbacks which reveal the principal events in the early days of the movement. A. A. originally had a close connection with the Oxford Groups and was influenced in some of its terminology, ideas and methods by that movement. Fortunately for Catholics, however, it completely divorced itself from that movement at an early date in its history, and never incorporated into its program any of those theological ideas or practices which

made the Oxford Group movement unacceptable to Catholics.

The first part of the book ends with an account of how the old-timers in A. A., on July 3, 1955, turned over the affairs of the organization to the fellowship itself, as represented by its General Service Conference. "There our fellowship declared itself come to the age of full responsibility, and there it



received from its founders and old-timers permanent keeping of its three great legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service."

The Legacy of Recovery is embodied in the Twelve Suggested Steps, the heart of "the program." The Legacy of Unity is embodied in the Twelve Traditions, which are the fruit of A. A. experience in the days of its mushroom growth. These traditions are meant to safeguard the unity of the fellowship with a mini-

mum of organization and an absolute minimum of anything like formal authority or government. The Third Legacy, of Service, is essentially derived from the Steps and Traditions, especially the Twelfth Step: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." But the Third Legacy is administered, as it were, by the elected representatives who constitute the General Service Conference. This is not a governing body—there is none in A. A. It exists merely to provide the services which are obviously required if the message of Recovery is to be spread around the world.

A. A.'s renunciation of formal authority over its members goes so far that it does not even claim the right to determine who are or who are not members. There are sanctions, of course. First, the most powerful one of John Barleycorn himself, who may well condemn to death those who do not live by the Steps and Traditions, and who thus relapse. There is also the sanction of public opinion within the fellowship, which may bear heavily on those who do not conform to some important tradition, e.g., that of anonymity at the public level. It remains to be seen whether in the course of time such vague and indeterminate sanctions will continue to be both effective in maintaining some basic unity in the organization, and just to the individual members, who are frequently assured, on being received into the groups, that "there are no rules and no musts in A. A."

Bill, the co-founder, explains the

three legacies in three talks which in substance were delivered by him at the St. Louis convention; they continue the narration of A. A.'s history and growth. This method of grouping past events around the ideas of Recovery, Unity and Service, though it forsakes chronological order, is a very effective method of imparting instruction and maintaining interest at the same time. It would be confusing, were it not for an excellent chronological table provided at the beginning of the book. In the last pages there are included some of the talks given by friends of A. A. at the St. Louis convention. One chapter is entitled "Medicine Looks at A. A.," and another "Religion Looks at A. A."

A. A. emphatically repudiates the idea that it is a religious sect or movement, or that it advocates any system of theological doctrine. Except for the simple ideas that the alcoholic should acknowledge a Higher Power, "God, as we understood Him," and should ask for God's help, A. A. steers clear of any further theological involvement. An important declaration is made on p. 232 by Bill W.: "Speaking for Dr. Bob [the

other co-founder] and myself I would like to say that there has never been the slightest intent, on his part or mine, of trying to found a new religious denomination. Dr. Bob held certain religious convictions, and so do I. This is, of course, the personal privilege of every A. A. member. Nothing, however, could be so unfortunate for A. A.'s future as an attempt to incorporate any of our personal theological views into A. A.'s teaching, practice or tradition. Were Dr. Bob still with us, I am positive he would agree that we could never be too emphatic about this matter."

Catholics will find in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions nothing contrary to Catholic ascetical and theological teaching. In fact the vast majority of Catholics who sober up in A. A. become better Catholics in the process.

Not only the members of A. A. will enjoy this well-written and absorbing account. Anyone who is interested in seeing what can happen when men and women with a common problem love and help one another should read it. The paradox of victory through defeat comes to life here. JOHN C. FORD

A Novel without Direction

ATLAS SHRUGGED

By Ayn Rand. Random House. 1168p. \$6.95

If, as would appear, Miss Ayn Rand's purpose in this book was to establish the thesis that the dollar sign is the holiest of symbols, that the profit motive is the only human impulse capable of sustaining a decent society, it would have been more honest and more effective to write a long essay, or a series of essays, rather than involve the reader in an interminable tale about railroading and heavy industry.

For this reading marathon is really not a novel but a tract. One might even say that by trying so desperately to be a novel, it has missed its only possible vocation in the domain of fiction: to be a long-lived comic strip. If Miss Rand would draw it instead of writing it, there are materials here to outlast Kerry Drake or Buz Sawyer or many of the other perennials of the daily papers.

The action takes place in a future America, not chronologically situated, but characterized by a general decline in standards of production and of living. The political structure of our country has undergone such change as seems implied in the designation "Head of State" given to the chief executive, and in the

power over every phase of activity exercised by a morbidly multiplied bureaucracy.

Perspectives are much altered between now and that time. Of our present preoccupation with the dangers of catastrophic conflict between Communist and non-Communist ideologies, not a trace remains in Miss Rand's shabby



new world. The hope that our time places in the development of atomic energy is, presumably, a flash in the pan, since in this version of things to come there is not even mention of the atom, and motive power and energy are still sought in the good old-fashioned resources of oil and even coal.

The United States, last outpost, to-

gether with one or two South American republics, of a kind of capitalism, is unrecognizably down-at-heels. But her dinginess is a horn of plenty compared with the misery of the People's States to which socialism has degraded the rest of the world. These wretched countries survive at all only by handouts which America still contrives to give them from her own insufficiency.

That things have come to such a pass is due, we learn, not to the corruption and ineptitude of the leadership, nor even to the defeat of creative initiative by the hopeless bureaucratic confusion. These ills are mere symptoms of the deeper-lying cancer which, century after century, has been preparing society for utter collapse. The real villain of the piece is the concept, fostered over millennia by philosophy and religion, that human society must (or even can) be based on altruism.

The author indicts by name the secular version of this view as summarized in the Marxian dictum: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." But by implication at least the Judeo-Christian "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" must be judged even more pernicious. Miss Rand establishes the validity of her thesis by setting up so outrageous a caricature of altruistic society that it is possible for the heroine of the story to observe, with reason: "What motive is the opposite of charity? Justice!"

The remedy to the calamitous plight of the world, the only hope for human survival, lies in acknowledgment of self-interest as the only healthy motivation in man's life. The program is summed up in the oath taken by the few *cognoscenti* who, in the story, may yet save the world for a new era of light: "I swear by my life and my love of it that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine."

Having spent so much space trying to analyze the theme of this book, there is little left in which to indicate its plot, of which there is a great abundance. The central figure is a youngish female executive who tries to run the remains of a great railroad system in the midst of the disintegrating economy already indicated. Her dealings with the corrupt, the weak, the greedy and the incompetent who make up most of her entourage, and with a handful of surviving honest and capable industrialists, constitute the fabric of the narrative, moving forward from disaster to catastrophe. Every few hundred pages, as if in a concession to the depravity of public taste, this good lady indulges in

