

"There is no area
in which there is so much
mystery, so much misunderstanding
and so many differences of opinion
as in the area of narcotics."

-JOHN F. KENNEDY

This statement by the late President reflects the thinking of legal, medical and religious authorities who have had to contend with the problem of drug addiction and who are aware of the inadequacy of our efforts at prevention and cure. In this anthology, Dan Wakefield has gathered the writings of physicians, lawyers, social critics, journalists and novelists to present a comprehensive view of the addict and his world. They deal with the laws, language, customs and attitudes that compose the addict culture; the psychology, pharmacology and treatment of addiction; and the political and emotional responses of society to the problem.

For both citizen and student, THE ADDICT offers a thoughtful introduction to a social problem that affects all areas of American life.

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A Fawcett Premier Book

the addict DAN WAKEFIELD

the addict

EDITED BY DAN WAKEFIELD

The physical, psychological and social effects of narcotic addiction by Marie Nyswander, M.D., Nelson Algren, Reverend Norman C. Eddy, Jane Kramer, Professor Alfred R. Lindesmith and others



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ceives on retreats and missions for his personal use is doled out a few dollars at a time for emergency help to individual addicts. He also begs what he can from friends and relatives—clothes, cash, even baby carriages—but they are used up almost immediately. Father Egan is helped by a few girls from the Legion of Mary. One of them especially, Jane Carney, has worked with him for years, visiting hospitals and the House of Detention, encouraging addicts who telephone her at the bank where she works or at home. She frequently goes out, even late at night, in response to a call for help from an addict who is sick or discouraged to the point of taking a shot of heroin.

Father Egan is chaplain of Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.), patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous and founded in 1948 by Daniel Carlsen, who had been a heroin addict for twenty-five years. Before he died of cancer in 1956, Carlsen, by his courage and perseverance, had been able to inspire many addicts to follow his example. He was helped in large measure by Brigadier Dorothy Berry of the Salvation Army. Through the Army's social welfare department she provided countless addicts and former addicts with food, clothing and shelter; through her constant sympathy and patience, especially in the early days when the police seemed to be the only people interested in addicts, she has helped countless others to start a new life. N.A. has had its ups and downs over the years. It has been hampered by lack of money, places to meet and, particularly in the beginning, by the addicts' fear that police spies or informers would infiltrate their meetings. For a little while a few years ago N.A. had its own headquarters in an old store but, except for a donation from the Catholic Worker which paid the first month's rent, it received no financial support and had to close. Since then N.A. has met in a Salvation Army building and later in the 23rd Street YMCA. Currently N.A. has four meetings a week: at the Y, the House of Detention, and more recently in rooms provided by St. Augustine Episcopal Church and St. John Chrysostom Catholic Church, both in the Bronx. Father Egan hopes to see a chapter started in Brooklyn soon and another priest, Father Andrew Van Groll, a Capuchin, is trying to organize one in Riker's Island prison with the help of N.A.'s present leader, Rae Lopez.

Mrs. Lopez began using heroin in 1930 while still in her early teens. She was addicted for nineteen years. Finally, with the help of Carlsen and Narcotics Anonymous she

stopped using drugs in 1949; with the help of a young seminarian (now a priest) she eventually returned to the Church; the therapy of a sympathetic psychiatrist brought her to a clearer understanding of herself and the things that led her into addiction. Mrs. Lopez was on City relief for several years (she had numerous physical ailments and besides no one would hire her with her record of addiction and jail sentences), but a year ago she started to work in the office of the Narcotics Coordinator. Her salary is small but she says, "if they fire me at least I'll have a reference." Lately Mrs. Lopez has spoken before gatherings of government and hospital personnel on the narcotics problem and ways to handle it; in August she attended the White House Conference on narcotics addiction, and in a speech delivered there recommended not only half-way houses for men and women addicts returning from hospitals but also camps in a drug-free environment, outside the city, where boys and girls could learn a trade, get used to keeping regular hours, continue psychiatric treatment and learn to use their leisure time constructively. She hopes that city, state and federal aid will eventually make such a camp possible. Meanwhile she continues a rigorous schedule of trying to get addicts into hospitals, attending N.A. meetings and advising those who want to start new chapters.

As concern about narcotics addiction has grown, N.A.'s open meetings have been visited by priests, ministers, social workers and nurses trying to learn about addiction, and lately an occasional politician looking for votes on the promise of supporting legislation helpful to addicts. Sometimes addicts from New Jersey come to New York meetings; they are usually accompanied by Father Leonard Spanburg who, while helping juvenile delinquents, began to realize that a growing number of adolescents were taking heroin for thrills and were becoming addicted. He hopes that New Jersey's Carmel Guild, a Catholic group noted for its programs for the blind, the deaf and alcoholics, will eventually offer similar assistance to narcotics addicts. He is having a hard time arousing interest, however, as there is apparently even more lethargy and ignorance on the subject in New Jersey than in New York.

In New York, adolescent addicts are sent to Riverside Hospital which, along with medical and psychiatric treatment, provides a school and athletic and recreation programs. Riverside has been criticized because it has "cured" so few