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Grandpa Sobered Up

By JOE HOCHDERFFER

GRANDPA first took whiskey by the spoonful and called it cough syrup. Then one day he woke up hooked. Americans got their socialism the same way.

Grandpa didn't set out to become an alcoholic. He was trying to get well. Americans didn't want to tamper with the Constitution. They just wanted a spoonful of progressive income tax. Grandpa fell for the wrong remedy, and so did we.

After he picked up the habit, Grandpa had a few good times. He figured he came out ahead when the other boys set up the drinks, but he always woke up with a headache and his paycheck gone. Every time we've believed that the social planners could "get it for us wholesale," we've ended up with a hangover and broke. Grandpa got too drunk to remember he paid for a few rounds, and we didn't notice that when Uncle Sam treated, he had his hand in our hip pocket. Grandpa kept going back for the hair of the dog that bit him, and we swallowed every bureaucratic tonic on the market.

This would be the end of the story, except Grandpa sobered up. If he hadn't, I'd swear this country was down the drain to socialism.

I watched Grandpa slowly become addicted to the cunning, baffling, powerful influence of alcohol, and I watched my great country slowly—ever so slowly—sink into the insidious morass of socialism. I don't understand socialism any more than I do alcoholism, but for the sake of argument let's say that the graduated income tax represented our first drink of socialism. It tasted pretty good. Here was concrete evidence of the philosophy that says: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

Movement was stealthy at first. After the social planners tilted the Constitution in 1913, it was some time before they realized the great power they had rediscovered: the power of minority manipulation. They had bunched the great masses of unwealthy up against the wealthy and solemnly declared, "Majority rule!" Who could protest such noble principle?

- *It's one thing to get an idea firmly in mind; it's quite another matter to communicate it.*

Illuminating analogies, homologies, fables, proverbs, parables are rare because they are invention at its best; they're the products of insight.

Joe Hochderffer, our author, is Public Relations Director, Memorial Hospital, Fort Wayne. His "Grandpa" piece is presented here not as a model of analogy but as an example of the kind of effort we should like to see widespread: each sincere student of liberty struggling to illuminate that which he so clearly sees himself—each his own thinker!

(For more on this point, see page 4.)