

Country philosopher

The Thirsty Hypocrite

by Amos Arthur Holmes

The festivities endured this weekend made me realize why many of my friends are alcoholics.

They call themselves "social drinkers" but their conduct goes beyond social. Like, is it social to burn down the county library? Is it social to romance a girl while clinging to the top of a flag pole? Is it social to sneak a cat into the dog pound and is it social to walk nude in front of the courthouse?

No sir, my friends have a problem. I think it is a question of common sense. They have a tendency to lump all liquids into the same category. Milk is a liquid and rum is a liquid and what in the hell is the difference? If they can drink a liquid called Coca-Cola then what harm is there in drinking a liquid called Vodka? They admit that other people can get drunk but they themselves have no problem. It is, to them, just a question of not mixing your drinks, of limiting yourself to under a gallon of booze per day, and eating ten pounds of butter before taking that first drink.

I have two neighbors who, when drunk, have the most perfect marriage. They play strip-poker together, they tar and feather their canary together, and they make obscene phone calls together. They have, really, a perfectly wonderful, harmonious relationship. It is only when they are dead sober that evil things mar their togetherness.

I have a friend who has invented his own form of suicide. He has come up

with a drink he calls the Holocaust. You mix a jigger of rum, two jiggers of gin, seven jiggers of scotch, and four jiggers of gasoline. You pour this concoction into a hollowed-out pumpkin shell and sip the ingredients through a straw. My friend says it is much better if you imbibe this drink while lying in a prone position.

I think the oddest thing about a drunk is the fact that he will never admit to being drunk. You find him sitting on a bar stool. His fly is open and one shoe is off. He is drooling and he has an ash tray sitting on top of his head.

When you sit down beside him he fixes you with the only eye he can open, and says, "Hello, baby, can I guy you a drink?" You don't understand how he can mistake you for a girl (it's mostly your mustache) and you angrily sneer, "You should-be ashamed of yourself. You're drunk!"

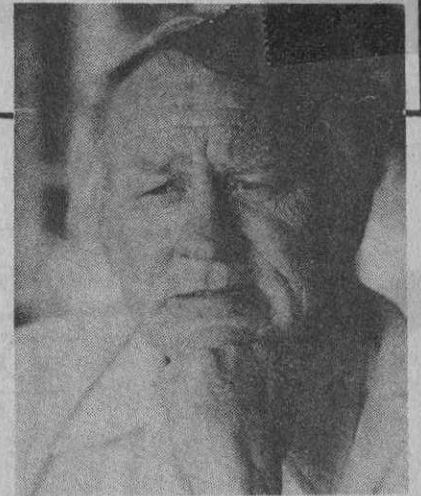
Ah! You shouldn't have said that. You should never call a drunk a drunk. It does strange things to his metabolism. So the drunk staggers off the bar stool, cocks his fist, and would

hit you if he could only find you. He mumbles something about your ancestry just before he falls on his face.

I remember 30 years ago you could muddle a girl's mind by buying her one single drink. To have her giggling and romantic cost you something like sixty cents. But those days are gone forever. I had a friend who recently took a young lady out with the intention of getting her inebriated. As soon as she became glassy-eyed he would whisk her away to his own private lover's lane.

After 20 drinks, at the cost of \$47, he sat in his chair rigid and painfully plastered. His head felt like an erupting volcano and none of his 15 fingers would work. The girl, perfectly sober, was leaving the bar with six other guys.

You also have a great deal of dishonesty attached to drinking. I know this man who says he never touches alcohol except for a before-dinner drink each evening. You certainly couldn't label HIM an alcoholic. What he does actually is have six martinis each night before



dinner. He never tastes his food, never notices his wife or six children, and can hardly wait for tomorrow's dinner so he can get at those six martinis again.

I'm not much of a drinker myself. I think that alcohol deteriorates whatever little personality you have to begin with and the physical and mental effects can be disastrous, I do, each morning, have myself a Holocaust.

But only for medicinal purposes.