

The guy complained of having only about a pint of gasoline in his car which he said was a Cadillac. "I know I shouldn't be driving a Cadillac," he apologized, "but I became alcoholic rich when I was making good money and was temporarily in the chips." Here he offered to take me to the automobile and introduce his wife who was supposed to be too sick to leave the car.

The story sounded sincere enough, and I can readily understand how an alcoholic can get fore-flushed when he is flushed. I wasn't blaming him for his spendthrift behavior during his period of prosperity. How many times I too have operated in the same manner!

It was shortly after the noon hour when "Shorty" and his son blew in. According to his tale of woe, he and his family hadn't eaten since breakfast the previous day. This father and son were both clean and gave me the good impression of being genuinely honest and sincere. Old Pop put out a good "line" through a nice sounding set of pipes. I fell for the whole sympathy-jerking story.

But father was a fake. In my opinion he was, and still is, a suave swindler. (It is hard for even me to believe it but here I am writing this without the least resentment. I only wish to warn my fellow AAs against the activities of these meandrous marauders of the road who practically pilfer under the guise of Alcoholics Anonymous)

This gentleman with the Cadillac sat on my davenport and deliberately lied. I found out later that he had just come from the store of one of my AA friends where he had narrated the very same fiction and had received five dollars from bighearted Bob. He sat there on my comfortable cushions, his legs out stretched, his hands crammed deeply into his pockets and was probable fingering the fin as he audaciously blurted he was busted. I swallowed his hook and let him have three bucks. I won't miss the money but I am thinking about the eight dollars which the fellow filched in the course of 45 minutes. Four similar touches a day will net this nuisance \$96.00 a week. Not bad for a little special spieling! At this writing the man is probably mooching in Muncie and may make many other towns in Hoosierdom as well as other states before he messes himself up and lands in the clink.

I have always been easy prey for these touching types of tramps because I have continued to take the attitude that I'd rather run the risk of getting rimmed than take a chance on discouraging a well-meaning man with the thought on my conscience that the individual might meet with future disaster. But I am rapidly rushing toward a new resolution in regard to the migratory moocher. I am about to decide against him with the same disfavor that I long ago decided against the hitchhiker. I at length felt it was foolish to risk my car, cash and cranium on a crowd of wanton crooks just for the sake of accommodating a few tried and trustworthy travelers. It is my candid opinion that any man or woman who hides behind the apron strings of AA in order to swindle some guy of good-natured gullibility is practicing the lowest form of cowardly subterfuge. He should be stopped short in his tricky tracks.