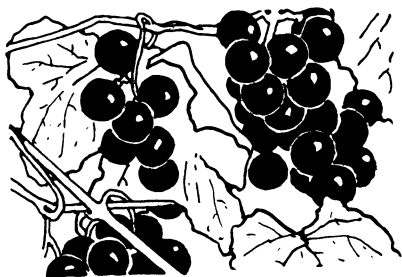


ANTHROPOLOGY
**NATURE
 RAMBLINGS**
 by Frank Thone



Partial Suicide

► ISN'T IT ODD, how human beings enjoy poisoning themselves!

Not all the way, of course. There's no fun in being dead; and the final stages of dying do not seem to be very enjoyable, either. But slight poisonings, that dull the senses, impair mental and muscular coordination, release conventional inhibitions and in general give a holiday from the strain of acting like a human being, seem to be welcomed by a very large proportion of the human race. Drugging one's self into a temporary escape from one's troubles is, psychologically speaking, a mild form of partial suicide, differing from the drastic last resort of the actual self-murderer mainly in degree—and also in the important fact that the process is a reversible one.

Ever since Noah's misadventure with the grape-juice that was left standing too long and got spoiled, with scandalous results, ethyl alcohol has been the most widely used of these intoxicating drugs—though it is far from being the only one. This is probably due mainly to the fact that it is the easiest to produce—indeed, it produces itself even by inadvertence or accident, whenever any sugar-containing liquid is exposed to the chance fall of air-borne yeasts. Or (as in Noah's case aforementioned) the yeasts are already clinging to the skins of the grapes or other fruit, ready to begin working as soon as the juice has been squeezed out.

Another factor in favor of alcohol (if anything can be said to be in its favor) is its relative mildness. Except when concentrated from the natural fermented products by distilling (a quite recent sophistication) it takes an appreciable time to act; and unless the consumer is more than making a hog of himself the

after-effects, though perhaps extremely disagreeable, are not likely to be fatal. This cannot be said for most other drugs used for the purpose of intentional intoxication.

Whatever may be the cause or causes, alcoholic beverages were practically world-wide in their use even before the great geographic expansion of the hard-drinking white race 500 years ago. The only really considerable "dry" areas on the world map in pre-Columbian days were North America above the Rio Grande and the islands of the Pacific.

Other social intoxicants have been limited geographically in their original distribution, primarily because of the limited range of the plants that produce

them. Tobacco is strictly American, and so is coca, source of cocaine; opium is of Asia, hemp (as hasheesh or bhang) started in India and has only lately been spreading in North America as marijuana. There are also drugs that appeal only to race-limited tastes, as betel to the Malays and peyote to certain American Indian groups. All round, there seem to have been very few peoples, even in more primitive times, who didn't have some favorite form of "dope".

Science News Letter, November 25, 1944

Recent investigations of American *sumac* as a source of tannin shows that poor soils grow sumac of higher tannin content than do fertile soils.



"I hear the war's practically over...back home!"

PROBABLY it's only natural for us here at home to feel that the war's almost won, the way the good news has been pouring in.

But the war's not over for *him*—not by a long sight! And he's just one of a few million or more that will stay over there until they finish the bloody mess. Or kill time for a few months—or years—in some hospital.

What about *you*?

This is no time to relax. No time to forget the unfinished business. It's *still*

your war, and it *still* costs a lot.

So dig down deep this time. Dig down till it hurts, and get yourself a hundred-dollar War Bond over and above any you now own—or are now purchasing. This 6th War Loan is every bit as important to our complete and final Victory as was the first.

Don't "let George do it"—get *yourself* that *added* bond for the sake of the guys that can *still* be killed. After all, you're safe and sound and *home*. That's worth another hundred-dollar bond, isn't it?

Buy at least one extra \$100 War Bond today!



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