

Big Book Stones — Updated*After Twenty-Nine Years*

The author's story, "Women Suffer Too," appears on page 222 of the revised edition of Alcoholics Anonymous, published in 1955.

Hers was the first woman's story in the Big Book; after three decades, AA is still her spiritual home

assurance that I would be able to stay away from drinking.

In 1968 I feel no different about the Twelve Steps. They did give me what I needed to stay away from drinking. Within a few years I came to realize they had given me far more than that: a glimpse at something I had never known — peace of mind, a sense of being comfortable with myself and with the world in which I lived, and a host of other things which could be summed up as a sense of growth, both emotional and spiritual.

Always, to me, meetings have been important. They renew the inspiration I felt at my first one. They remind me of whence I came, and how near I will always be to that twilight world of drinking. Most of all, they bring me in contact with my friends and introduce me to new ones — in my case, because I travel a lot, all over this country and out-

side it. The feeling of warmth, of love and understanding, of acceptance and belonging that I get at a meeting is to me one of the great rewards of being in AA. It is a rare thing we have, which the nonalcoholic world rarely experiences. It makes me know how lucky we really are.

In my working life, my personal life, and my spiritual life (which last I owe to AA, for I did not have it before), I find the Twelve Steps a nearly constant guide. I carry them in my wallet. I refer to them — to particular Steps that meet a particular need — with regularity.

The Serenity Prayer runs through my life like a litany; I find myself using it on a vast variety of occasions to meet a vast variety of problems.

Perhaps the greatest thing I have received (and still constantly re-

ceive) from AA is the knowledge of where and how to draw the strength and flexibility to meet problems. My life seems made up of problems, but I have learned that I am not unique, that life in general is just that. Problems and strain and stress are the stuff of life in our times, and my AA-given philosophy helps me to accept this and to live with it. Each day is a new one, and I try to meet it that way, as if each day I, too, were fresh and new. The 24-hour plan gave me this outlook, and each day it confirms me in my effort to make it real for myself.

Twenty-nine years later I feel as deeply immersed in AA thinking and the AA way of life as I did at the outset. For me it is increasingly necessary as I grow older. And it is always there for me, just as it has always been since I first found it. For this I daily thank God.

Marty M., Manhattan, N. Y.

TODAY, as in April 1939 when I attended my first meeting, the Twelve Steps are to me the heart of the AA program. By the time I gathered up courage to attend a meeting, I had read the Big Book three times. And I had studied several hundred times the pages containing the Twelve Steps and the suggestions on how to use them. They didn't seem easy to me—they didn't even seem simple, in spite of their clarity of language. But I was eager to go to work on all of them, for they seemed to me the key to that which I so desperately needed: