

THE CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE AS A WOMAN THINKS

Chapter XLVII.

One thing which Kitty Malram said keeps coming up before me:

"You talk like an untempted woman."

She struck a note of truth and it has made me humble.

I wonder if conditions had been different—if, for instance, I had not met Dick until after he had married and become estranged from Eleanor Fairlow if I would have resisted him and his cyclonic lovemaking?

Perhaps it is because man has always known the strength of temptation that he has tried to keep his women "unspotted from the world." And yet—which one of us can claim virtue if it has not been put to test?

I want to be strong, and staunch, and true. I want to feel that under any and all circumstances I will do the right thing. But is the right thing always the conventional thing?

Is it heresy to wonder if poor Kitty will gain anything by putting Love out of her heart?

You see, little book, according to the world's decree, it is Kitty who must do this. Her world would treat her as a criminal otherwise, and, with its thumbs turned down, send her to that awful prison called ostracism—while for "that good fellow, Bill Tenney," as Dick calls him, there would be no such punishment, only perhaps a sly jest or two among his cronies and a hope on the part of his friends "that Bill will soon get over his foolishness."

Already her world, which is the little coterie of men who know her, have passed upon Kitty, and their judgment was voiced by Dick when he told me the other night to "cut her out" and all the "untempted women" will probably follow this lead.

I have determined on one thing, however. If Kitty is big enough to go away for a little while and work it out alone I'll stand by her and thank

the Fates which have conspired not to lead me into temptation.

I said something of this to Dick when he came home last night, of course not mentioning Kitty, and he looked perfectly horrified. He seemed to feel that in some way I had stooped from that pedestal on which, as his wife, I am supposed to stand, by even thinking that by any combination of circumstances I could conceive of temptation coming to me. Men seem to have all sorts of dead ideas and lifeless old beliefs on how certain things change the character of a woman in the twinkling of an eye, and, no matter how hard you try to show them that you are the same kind of a human being that they are, they still persist that always to them you shall be something entirely different.

Since our marriage Dick has been changing his idea of me. During that wonderful three months I was "the woman to be desired." Now I am "his most prized possession." And as such he guards me most jealously. It annoys him when I show any of those human qualities which made him fall in love with me.

Oh! Dick, if I could only make you understand that I am no better than any other woman; that I have the same belittling insincerities which are the heritage of all women in this human world; if I could make you understand this and you would take me off of the pedestal where you have placed "your most prized possession" and make me your confidante and chum as well as your wife, not only I, dear, but you would be immeasurably happier.

Dear Dick, I only think these things when you are away from me; when you are here beside me and take me in your arms all other thoughts, save those of Love, find no resting place within my brain. You are the dearest of lovers and the