CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

MY FRIENDS GATHER AROUND ME

Dick must have sent out the S. O. S. call, for last night whole clan met in my room. Ostensibly it was a farewell party at the hospital, for tomorrow I will move to Mrs. Selwin's.

Eliene brought a wonderfully embroidered Chinese mandarin coat and a piece of Chinese embroidery to throw over the bed.

Pat gave me a little book bound in red, with "Confessions of a Wife" on the outside. I had never known before that my friends were aware of my devotion to my diary.

Pat whispered, "I hope that some day you will let me print the contents, Margie."

Jim made every one smile by saying: "If she did, Sullivan, I prophesy it would not be 'the confessions of a wife,' but 'the confusions of a wife.' "

"Well," said Donna Tenney, "I can not see anything humorous about that. If Margie told the truth, her diary probably would tell you that she was usually confused over something every time she confessed."

I looked about at these dear friends and tried to picture their faces when I would not be there.

"You just have to face it alone," I said to my cringing, trembling soul. "None of these good friends can help you at all—not even Dick."

Strange, isn't it, little book, how pictures of pieces of statuary, poems or scraps of music come back to you again and again in the most crucial moments of life.

Here were these friends who had come here to comfort and help me over the hard place, yet they could not do anything. Their hands clasped mine, their eyes were filled with sympathy and yet from all this that solitary thing — my soul—shrank and all at once that wonderful statue of which I have told you so often came before my mind's eyes, only I gave to each one of the splendid figures that the sculptor had conceived and executed in the cold white marble the living soul of one of my friends.

We were all touching hands, we all were wishing to help each other—we all were wishing help from each other—but we were all alone.

"Thus on we tread, an army marching with listing ears,
Each hoping, wishing for the music he never hears."

All at once, as this little vagrant couplet came into my head as an accompaniment to the picture of that statue, "The Solitary Souls of Men," by Lorado Taft, I began to take a little comfort. Surely I was better equipped to stand the struggle against stagnation than if I had never enjoyed any of the great art of the world; never dimly guessed or tried in my blind way to follow the supreme art of living.

These thoughts I am putting here, little book, were subconscious last night, for no one could really think while Jim was rattling off his pleasantries and Bill Tenney was trying to be funny even though one could see it was an effort for him to be anything but ill.

"Come over here, Bill, and sit near my bed," I said. "I want to talk to you about your illness. Are you getting any better?"

"That's right, Bill, play the interesting invalid, so Margie, whose heart was always full of pity for every one in trouble, will single you out and smile on you."

"Rather one would say, Jim," I bantered, "that perhaps it is a case with me of misery loving company."

"Look here, Margie, we are not going to let you be miserable," protested Harry Symone.

"Why, I predict that after a few months at the Selwin home you will be running Dick a footrace."

"And don't you dare to think you won't be doing all the new steps with me when the dancing season begins."