

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

DOES ANYONE LIVE BY THE COMMANDMENTS

I had to tell Alice, of course, and I shall never forget her terrible expression when she learned that I could not get her picture from the rogues' gallery.

She turned so pale that I thought she was going to faint. But her courage came back, and she straightened up smiling like the brave soldier she is.

"So that is the sentence," she murmured.

I must have looked my question, but I did not dare enter that holy of holies, where a woman's soul was writhing in torture, for she said, "Don't you see, dear Mrs. Waverly, that I can never have a child?"

"Why not," I asked, at first not realizing just what she meant.

"How can I give to a child a mother whose face is among the faces of thieves and thugs and murderers?"

I saw that her reason was almost tottering.

"Look here, Alice, you've got to stop this. You have got to take hold on yourself. Your past is gone. It is buried.

"But don't you remember, dear Mrs. Margie," she said, as she came forward and grasped both my hands, "what it says about the sins of the father being visited on the children?"

"Perfectly, my dear, perfectly, but you see I have no recollection of anything having been said about the sins of the mothers."

I got a ghost of a different smile this time, for Alice has a saving sense of humor.

"Now," I continued, "let us look at this calmly. In the first place, if we are to live by the rules and precepts of the book you just quoted more or less haltingly, you will remember that everywhere the Apostle of Love has made it clear that there is hope for everyone. 'Thy sins are forgiven thee' mean just as much as that awful sentence you quoted.

"My dear child," I continued, "can't you see there is only one great unpardonable sin and that is to lose your self-respect?"

This came out entirely unpremeditated, and yet as I heard myself uttering the words I knew that I had voiced a great truth—a truth that should be preached from the pulpits, placed at the tops of newspaper columns and taught in the schools.

"When you can still respect yourself you need not despair."

We women strive too much for the respect of others, and when we have it we delude ourselves with the idea that we are virtuous, never asking if we really respect ourselves.

"Why, my dear Alice, do you know that the command against slander is just as stringent as the one against murder, and yet every day you and I hear women bear false witness against their neighbors?"

"And get away with it," came in the laughing tones of Jim Edie.

"How long have you been here, eavesdropper?" I asked.

"Only long enough to hear your last sentence, and I want to say right here that I think the scandal monger who murders a reputation is just as bad as one who kills a body.

"The whole trouble, Margie, is that although most of us prate of living up to the rules supposed to have been written on tablets of stone we regard some of them as of much more importance than others."

(To Be Continued)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

M. C. Walsh will speak, 112th and Michigan av., Thursday evening, "Mexico and Dollar Patriots"; Fri. and Sat., "Why America's Newspapers Want War With Mexico."

33d ward Woman's Study club meets Wed., 2:30 p. m., Hertrick's hall, 4201 Armitage av.