

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

PAULA WELCOMES A TALK FROM EMMA ON CONFIDENCE AND OPTIMISM

"Say, Paula, didn't I see you with Horace Chalmers this noon?" asked Emma as I went up the steps of my boarding house.

"For a moment I felt myself grow angry at the idea of any one mixing into my affairs, and when I looked into the ingenuous face of my new friend I knew I had no right to question her interest in me.

"Yes, he knew some of my friends at college, and it seemed so good to get back for a little into the old life, Emma, that I could not resist going to luncheon with him."

"Better cut all that out, kid," was her advice. "If his mother should see you with her darling offspring, through whom she intends to make the society hurdles of this town, you can be sure she will make it not only hot for little Horace, but warm for you."

"I could not help laughing at that, Margie," said Paula at this point of her story. "She does know it," I answered. "You see, Emma, I answered her advertisement for a social secretary this morning and her son entered the room—"

"And you were promptly turned down," interrupted Emma.

"Right you are, my dear. She said she was afraid I know more about the employer than the employe side of social secretaryship."

"Well, that shows me," said Emma, "that Mrs. Horace will never get into society. She hasn't brains enough to see that having a real society girl like you as a member of her household would be the greatest help."

"Emma," I said, "some day I expect you will be a society leader."

"Well, stranger things than that have happened," she said with a smile.

"Did you lose your position today, Emma?"

"I did not," she answered drily. "The boss knows that I'll save him more money every day than that frosty dame will. Besides, if you must know it, the boss has an idea that some day I'll marry him and try that society game myself."

"Now don't smile, Paula, or I may not tell you that from the position of checker in a restaurant to the first row in the diamond horseshoe at the Metropolitan opera house is not so far. And what any other woman has done, your little friend Emma can do."

"As I looked at her, Margie, I believed she could, and I said involuntarily: 'Oh, Emma, I wish I had your confidence.'"

"This world will eat you up if you don't show it you are not afraid of it. It has always got its great maw open for such delicate morsels as you are. You have got to go right up to that cruel mouth with its awful tongue and sharp teeth and looking into its shifty eyes say: 'I am not for you and I am not afraid of your fierce look and hungry growl.'"

"Emma looked so fierce that I could not help laughing and immediately I found that nothing puts so much courage into one as to laugh."

"Evidently Emma thought the same thing, for she said:

"That's right, Paula, laugh. Laugh at me, at the world, at yourself, at circumstances, at misfortune—laugh with joy, with love, with happiness, with life. When I first started out and was having plenty, I tell you, I used every morning to stand in front of the little old cracked mirror in my tiny hall bedroom and say to the discouraged face I saw there: 'Laugh, damn you, laugh!'"

(To Be Continued.)