

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

PAULA DESCRIBES FLOSSIE SMITH

"Shall I begin today, Mr. Smith?" was the question I put to Congressman Smith as I walked into his office the next morning about 9 o'clock," said Paula to me, continuing her story.

"Congressman Smith looked up quickly and said: 'Begin whenever you like.' He said it with a kind of quizzical smile that told me he was as much in the air as I was.

"What shall I do?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Then we both laughed, for we knew nothing about the work in hand.

"I'll tell you what you do. Go up to the Shoreham and see Flossie. She has a lot of ideas about Washington, and at the present moment I haven't in idea about anything, and my constituents are bombarding me with commands, adjudications, compliments and damnings to beat the band."

"Looking at young Congressman Smith, Margie, I could see that while he was a man of splendid mind and presumably fine ideals, yet just now he was so consumed with the excitement and self-satisfaction over his job that he could think of nothing else.

"I'll confess that I did not want to go to work very badly that day, for Alma had had word from Tom Perry that morning that Jeff Perrygreen was in town and had brought his car with him.

"Some class to Jeffy, isn't it?" said Alma.

"There were five days before congress opened and Mr. Smith's predecessor had not taken all his paraphernalia out of his office yet. I got bored of his secretary and he told me to come around the next day and he would tell me something about my duties.

"I departed with a light heart for the Shoreham,

"I wonder if I have told you, Margie, that Washington is the city of castes. In this regard its hotels are a good illustration. The Shoreham, a small hotel only about three blocks from the white house, is the hotel of the administration. Here can be seen almost every day at luncheon the members of the cabinet, the secretary to the president and other men connected with the administration who are known to be particularly his friends.

It was here that Congressman Smith had domiciled his frivolous little wife, Florence, who was always called Flossie, by her intimates.

"The name was perfectly expressive of the woman, and Alma told me a story before I met Mrs. Smith which illustrated her point. It concerned the assistant librarian at the Congressional library.

"The assistant was a bachelor and has on this account greatly worried one of his sisters, who thought every man should make at least one good woman 'unhappy' by marrying her.

"A girl named Flossie seemed much impressed by the librarian, and his sister said to him: 'Why don't you marry that little girl who seems to be so much in love with you, brother mine?'

"You surely don't want me to marry that girl, sister? She is Flossie by name and very Flossie by nature."

"Flossie! Flossie! What on earth do you mean by flossie by nature?"

"Why, my dear sister, a girl who is Flossie by nature is one who would not wear a porous plaster without threading baby ribbon through the holes."

"I've told you this foolish little story, Margie," said Paula, "for I want you to get just the right idea of Flossie Smith. She will have much to do with the story I'm going to tell you and with my job as secretary to