

## THE CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

HOSPITALS ARE SADDENING PLACES—CONFESSION 195

I found when I awakened again that instead of going to sleep I had gone back into the region of unconsciousness where they tell me I lingered for days on the borderland of life and death.

I had vague visions of nurses and stiffly starched uniforms; of Dick looking, oh! so unhappy and worried; of Mollie's soft lips pressed against my burning hand; of Aunt Mary's soothing voice; but the rest were only shadows, which sometimes soothed and sometimes fretted me.

Now when I am able to write again, they tell me that I have been in the hospital over a month and that it will be another four weeks, at least, before I will be able to walk. I suppose I should be glad that I got out of it as well as I did, railroad collisions are serious matters, because I delayed my dinner, death passed me by. Every person I left in the car to go into the dining car was killed.

These sudden accidents make one understand as nothing else, what helpless beings we are. Fate takes us and carries us along the sunshiny path and then just as we are beginning to sing from the very joy of living, it flings us with wanton cruelty out on the jagged stone of physical pain or among the wolves of disaster to die.

Poor Dick looks awfully worried and I have not had a chance to ask him about the affairs of ourselves or those of the family. I wish I did not have to go back to the hotel. The doctors say, however, I can leave tomorrow and I shall be glad to get away from the hospital. The place where the poor bodies of suffering humanity are mended is saddening.

It seems to me sometimes as though nature was not only merciless, but malignant.

I am often reminded of what Robert Ingersoll once said in my father's

hearing. It was very early in Ingersoll's career when every one was questioning his sincerity and a number of clergymen waited upon him to ask some questions.

The first one said: "Mr. Ingersoll, you have so much to say about the mistakes that have been made in the plans and creation of this world, how would you improve upon it?"

Ingersoll looked up with a twinkle in his eye and answered: "I'd make good health catching. I'd make a poor little overworked sickly woman stand up beside some great hulking, husky man and catch good health. I'd make little puny babies immune from disease and liable to catch good health."

Think what a beautiful world this would be if we could make good health catching.

I don't believe anyone who is absolutely healthy can be as sad and sorrowful as one who is physically weak or ill. I have noticed that people with weak hearts lack courage; those with weak lungs are usually discontented; and when the kidneys fail to eliminate the poisons of the body, the brain is full of apprehension and worry. Everyone has remarked that a "sick liver" means a person of quick temper, easy to anger.

Lying here with one leg in a plaster cast and the other foot in many bandages to protect its blistered surface, is conducive to thoughts on weakness and ills of the body and my weakness brings worry. I am worried about Dick. I am sure there is something more than my unfortunate accident on his mind.

As soon as I get out of the hospital and alone with him, I shall know, for Richard Waverly cannot keep a secret to save his life—and from what I have known of them neither can any other man.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)