

PATHFINDER

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First Lady' Story

"I have said ten dozen times that the time has not yet arrived for a woman President."

Many stories have made the rounds about the fast-traveling, omnipresent, ever-active First Lady of the Land—Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. In response to all the lampoons, caricatures and anecdotes about her, she has merely laughed, and the stories have continued to be told—even to one relating that Admiral Richard E. Byrd on his lonely, six-month vigil at the South Pole always had an extra chair at the table "just in case Mrs. Roosevelt should drop in."

But last week, Mrs. Roosevelt threw up her hands and branded as "ridiculous" a rumor, originating no one knew where, that Postmaster General Farley had started a campaign to have her succeed her husband as President. She said: "I would like to say right now that it would be the most idiotic thing ever . . . while we have some able women, I do not believe any of them is yet in a position to rally sufficient backing to be a success in that office."

That was one story, quickly and completely scotched by Mrs. Roosevelt, but another had many tongues wagging. This one was told by Mrs. Roosevelt herself in the form of an autobiography dealing with events in her life up until the Madison Square convention of 1924. Entitled "This Is My Story," the autobiography began serially in the Ladies Home Journal.

Reason for the wagging tongues was the characteristically frank and sincere nature of the revelations. For example:

"My father, charming, good-looking, loved by all who came in contact with him . . . had a physical weakness which he himself probably never understood . . . Whether it was some weakness from his early years . . . whether it was the pain he endured, I do not know . . . He began, how-

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ever, to drink, and for my mother and his brother, Theodore, and his sisters began the period of harrowing anxiety which was to last until his death in 1894."

Of her mother, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote: "She was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen" who was "always troubled by my lack of beauty, and I knew it, as a child senses those things. She tried very hard to bring me up so well that my manners would in some way compensate for my looks . . . If a visitor was there, she might turn and say, 'She is such a funny child, so old-fashioned that we always call her Granny.' I wanted to sink through the floor in shame . . ."

Mrs. Roosevelt said she had shown the manuscript to the President and that he had not changed a word of it. Asked if the President were "proud of you?" she replied smilingly, "I didn't ask him."

With the book written, she confessed there were two things she would still like to do, "write a novel and a play." But before getting around to these, Mrs. Roosevelt was to continue with her other work.

At the end of the week she was ready to be off on her travels again, this time on a lecture tour which would take her to six States—Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama and Arkansas.