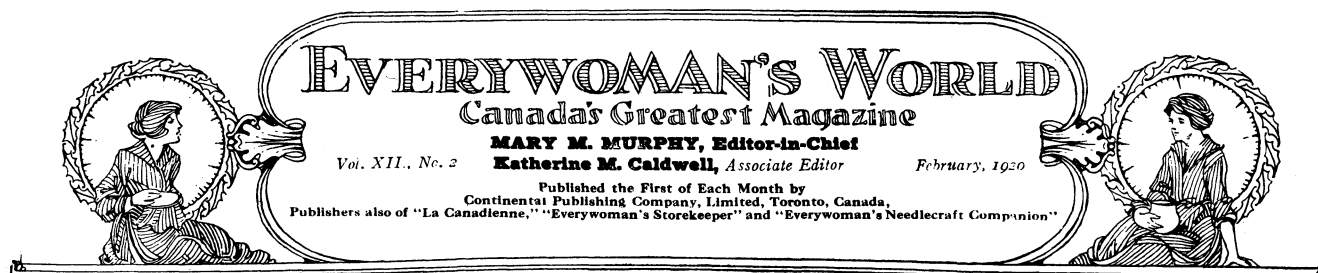


'Fifty-Fifty' Bases Satisfactorily Tried

One woman stood up and said, 'both Peter's and my idea of marriage was partnership in every sense of the word from a crust of bread, down or up. It's the Utopian idea of most marriages, isn't it? But we were determined to make it practical and my experience in the business world had taught me that it could be done. A fifty-fifty basis was the only feasible way of working it out, so we drew up a contract and both set our seal thereon. That was before we were married and we have tested it out for five years and have not found it wanting.

'Peter was just earning a fair, young man's salary as junior member of a progressive firm of architects, but I knew just how much it was and had a fair idea of what it would cost us to establish a little home and keep the "fires burning". We agreed that Peter would come home with his "pay-envelope" each week, two weeks or a month as the case might be and split it with me exactly in half. We had separate bank accounts and separate account books. Our idea was to share the expenses, household, clothes, and amusements evenly. If Peter wrote a cheque for the weekly butcher's bill, I wrote one for the grocer, and so forth until each of us had paid out exactly the same as the other. So much was set aside for diversions and amusements and entertaining. One night Peter would take me to the theatre or movies or out to dinner, and the next time I would give him the money to pay the expenses. If he took a friend out to luncheon downtown and I took one of mine out to tea, we entered these expenses in our little account books and somehow at the end of the week managed to square things.

'This undoubtedly sounds very silly and awkward to you all, but my aim was to be a pal to Peter and he to me and so far we have succeeded very happily. We share the home, the happiness, and the income. There is no need of paying a salary to a wife when life is lived on this basis, do you think?'



Husbands

My husband had two wives,
me and she, but me was legal.
Signed, sealed, and twice
delivered, I cooked,
cleaned, polished spoons,
floors, and children; her wasn't,
so she at nine drove up the
hill to hospital and job.
Well, now she's in, I'm out;
still childered, cooked,
cleaned but somewhat
tarnished, I drive and drive
to live my loveless life
and swear to boss and job
my faith forever.

And that old termagent, my
tongue, is queen of nothing
now; has lately split, run off,
and begun to play it safe.
It likes to lie there low,
a frozen log in ice awaiting
spring's bright crack-up
to let go its drift of grief
and garbage; but my brain
stays loyal and knows its
loves and hates; endlessly
it calculates why him and me
and she did equal minus me;
and no matter how I add, I'm
left with nothing now except
to wonder how was lost the rich
and gleam (by grace of course
unearned) of love, and love's
dear increment.

Miriam Waddington