

the serious, and the breach between them was bridged over once more in the manner that always follows where both are master and none is boss.

"Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow," she philosophized in great glee.

This added unrecorded weight to the Bootsy burden on the man's shoulders.

All this took place in the honeymoon period of their married life, and was simply a matter of those bumps that all newly-wedded people experience during the first few rounds of the new life; and Sinbad nursed a certain sympathy for his young and inexperienced mate in her extravagant whims and notions, no matter how wasteful and cruel they may have been.

But Bootsy wasn't altogether too bad. She had in store a measure of sunshine which is essential to the health of a home both physically and socially. She played the piano artfully, and sometimes with much feeling and emotion; and she laughed, and sang, and played, and giggled with her friends and her husband, all of which lit up the soul of the overloaded Sinbad with light that was purer and more valuable to him than bank balances could have been. Into all this sunshine he would not be guilty of casting the shadow of a cloud—not if HE could help it!

Bootsy's beams were real human sunshine too; but even sunshine becomes depressing when you get too much of it, or when it is applied beyond the resources of the consolidated fund. Sinbad began to look upon the glory of it with the view of one getting money under false pretences.

Sinbad failed even the interest on the first maturity, and by dint of much embarrassing diplomacy, stood the mortgagee off with a promise that he knew could be nothing but mere fiction.

That evening they had their first sham battle. Sinbad began the charge, going on the offensive immediately after the "canned supper."

"Look here," he began, with real force, "we've got to change our tactics." And he related his experience in the real estate office.

"Well, it's not my fault," she defended.

"But it is."

"But it isn't!"

"I tell you it is!"

"And I tell you it isn't!"

There was a moment's silence during which each combatant reloaded.

"We can't stand it," persevered Sinbad.

"Well, do you want me to take in washing?" she fired back.

"It's all up to you," was Sinbad's advice.

"To me! Where do you get that old stuff at?" she replied angrily. Don't you eat as much as I do? There's nothing wasted except the cans. We couldn't eat them, could we?"

"I wouldn't care were it not the home," replied Sinbad, with the usual masculine composure. "I'd hate to lose that."

"Don't worry; they won't take it."

"They won't, eh?"

Bootsy was always optimistic to a fault.

"I don't think so," she said innocently.

"A lot you know about it," persisted Sinbad, with his ripe knowledge of finance. "Business is about the coldest-hearted thing there is."

"Oh, well, if they're so mean, let them take it; they'll be the first to suffer," she said resignedly.

"Just like a woman," continued Sinbad. "A woman never realizes nor honors the responsibility of a debt, does she?"

"Oh, I don't know. There's just as many honest women as men in the world, I'll say."

"Perhaps, but you don't appreciate the seriousness of a thing."

"That's right; jump on the poor woman again. We suffer a thousand times more than you men do at that!" she cried, defending her sex against the aggressor man.

"A lot you have suffered," he threw back.

Bootsy flared up like a tigress about to spring on its prey.

"Come, come," said Sinbad. "Can we not argue the point diplomatically? You know we have the future to look forward to. Expenses are likely to get greater rather than less, and we must practice economy against such possibilities. What are we going to do when the family increases?"

"The family ain't going to increase."

"No?"

"No."

"Well!"

"Well yourself! What do you take me for?"

"Oh I don't know; I never thought."

"Do you ever think?" And she laughed through her anger in a spirit of defiance.

Sinbad laughed too, but it savored more of the tragic than the sunshine variety.

Time flew by on its relentless wing and Sinbad sank deeper and deeper in the mud through which he was struggling. And the quagmire extended just as far as his eye could reach and away beyond for aught he knew. But he plodded along with the Bootsy problem still clinging to his shoulders like a dead thing while his knees wobbled and his course became more uncertain at every step.

About this time Bootsy discovered that she was tired of "cooking" and hankered after a change.

"Say, kid," she said one day, clinging to him like a lover, "let's go boarding. This mussin' about the kitchen is taking the life out of me. See how thin I am getting." And she stroked her plump cheeks.

"But it would be too expensive, Boots," objected Sinbad.

"That's right, think about the expense again. You think of nothing but dollars and cents."

"Mine Gott, I've got to!"

"Think about something pleasant," she encouraged.

"Show it to me." And he looked around the room.

"Me for instance," And she smiled her sweetest.

"You are indeed beautiful!" he complimented. And he held her to his bosom for a few seconds as one might a real sweetheart.

"You are such a comfort to me—sometimes," he cried out.

"Well, I want you to forget all this gloom stuff. Reflect my sunshine. Let's board out for luck. I believe it would be cheaper anyway."

Sinbad studied the situation for a few seconds. He recalled the enormous store bills for the numerous canned goods purchased; the waste in serving it up on the part of his "cook"; the can after can that was only half consumed; and the frightful stack of empties that was growing daily in the back yard:

"It might be cheaper at that," he agreed.

Bootsy danced with childish delight, not because of the saving that would accrue, but owing to the novelty of boarding out and the victory over Sinbad.

It was worth an experiment at any rate; it couldn't very well be worse; so it was arranged that they should "board out."

"We can eat a little while here and a little while there," enthused Bootsy. "We can patronize a different place every day. Oh it'll be lots of fun!" she boiled over.

"But it would cost double that way," explained Sinbad.

"No fear. You just pay for what you eat, you know."

"Yes, and we're some eaters too!" laughed the husband.

Nevertheless he determined that there wouldn't be much variety in the matter of eating places.

The first meal was heavenly until the time to pay for it. Even then it was a joy to Bootsy.