

THE SHATTERED DREAM

IT was past midnight and Emma turned over restlessly. Norman snored slightly in the next room and it gave her the comfort of knowing that he was asleep. He was her youngest child and at only 16 was doing a man's job down at the docks. Outside were sounds of people coming and going, here and there a guitar playing a monotonous tune and now and then a shout from some late home comer arguing with another.

Emma lay thinking over all the hard times since she left her home in the Transkei to come to Cape Town to work. Such wonderful times she had thought about and hoped for but it had proved nothing but struggle. Norman had been younger then and his two elder sisters unaccustomed to the town's ways.

Ellen, the elder, was married now and rarely came to see her mother and certainly never brought anything to help the meagre income that she and Norman made. Emily did help a bit, sometimes, but she loved to dress and going to shows and so never had much over from her month's wages. Emma herself worked very hard, charring one day, washing and ironing the next, throughout the week, and walked the long distance between Athlone and Rondebosch each day to save fares. Norman had failed in Std. 7 so had left school and all that seemed open at the moment was this hard work at the docks and she always felt sorry for him as he was always too tired to go places after work. Perhaps, she thought, at least there was consolation in the fact that it kept him out of mischief.

This Christmas she had determined there would be something better than other years. She had scraped together the pennies that she and Norman earned and had made a lay-bye of a suit for Norman and some material for herself. With a lovely blanket she had carefully put it all away in a large suitcase and was so looking forward to the day when she and Norman would go out rigged in their new outfits and enjoy the festive season. The meals had

Youth Leader Charged

JOHANNESBURG.

In a prosecution of Transvaal Indian youth leader Ahmed Kathrada for being in the Free State without reporting to an immigration officer, the case started five hours late because the public prosecutor was looking for an immigration officer.

This was the case in which Mr. Ahmed Kathrada was charged in Bloemfontein last week for entering the location without permission during the annual conference of the ANC in December and for entering the Free State and not reporting to an immigration officer.

A Mr. Du Plessis gave evidence for the crown. He said he was employed by the Bureau of Census and Statistics, under the Department of the Interior. Under cross-examination he said he would be surprised if he were described as an immigration officer, he had never read the Immigration Act or its regulations and he would not know what to do if an Indian from another province presented himself to him.

Applying for Kathrada's discharge at the end of the Crown's case, Mr. J. Slovo said there was in fact no immigration officer in Bloemfontein.

The magistrate reserved his decision.

The proceedings against Dr. H. M. Moosa, originally facing the same charges, were dropped.

been very meagre of late, to be sure, but what else could one do when they were saving everything to prepare for a grand time like "Kisimusi."

How different things had been at her home in the days before this awful demand for money had come. The days when one had their fields with maize and kafir-corn in plenty, watermelons and sweet-reed, pumpkins and sweet potatoes. Where the rivers ran smoothly through the valleys and the cattle grazed so peacefully among the trees.

Gone were the days of great feasts, when the men thought nothing of entertaining hundreds of people and the women enjoyed cooking the great pots of porridge and meat on the outside fires. Why, the other day she had priced a thin chicken in the butcher shop and he had the audacity to ask 13s. for it. A chicken! What did they count a chicken in those home days? Why, if a visitor happened to pass or even a stranger from some other part of the



country, it was quite the usual thing to kill and prepare a chicken for them to eat. And here they ask thirteen whole, hard-earned shillings for one. That was not a price she could pay, she reflected.

In her days of happiness at home she had never known hunger but here many times she had had to go without to save the money for something that was needed especially since she had determined to have these clothes for Christmas. She had never noticed the cold at home, for the houses were thatch for one thing and the mud walls made it warm too and there were always blankets to be had at the trading store for some mealies or meat.

Loneliness was never known, for one always had the other wives to talk to and there were always people passing to and fro who could bring news at leisure. But here, in this Belgravia Estate, loneliness was accentuated by the fact that it was in a crowd. A crowd that was for the most part Coloured and didn't understand her nor try to. She spoke Afrikaans fluently but her accent told that she was an African as did also her looks and the way she wore her head doek and for that reason she was more often than otherwise despised.

But that, she felt, was to be accepted and so she did not worry over it too much, though now as she lay sleepless in the dark she could not help but think how lovely things could be if all human beings could learn to understand each other, not in language only, but simply on the realization that all are of one flesh and could be of one kind. What a happy world it could be for all, she thought, if there were no difference made because of your skin or accent. What a blissful existence one would have even though they struggled, it would ease the burden such a deal.

And then she dreamed and in her dream she was wafted to a beautiful country, similar to that where she had come from and she saw there beautiful rivers of pure, clear water, mountains high and lofty, covered with trees and thick shrubbery. Rocks, pitched at odd angles lay on the slopes and in the valleys were fields of waving corn. The cattle which she saw

everywhere were so beautiful and fat and sheep and pigs were unnumbered. The villages where the people dwelt were multitudinous and dotted all over the country. Children's voices could be heard happily playing their many games, while their mothers were busy at the various things that called their attention.

Menfolk sat in groups under the trees enjoying discussions of one kind and another and drinking their beer in peace and quietude. In her dream she wondered what could be the meaning of this beautiful and happy country, so fruitful and peaceful, and going up to where some of the men were sitting, and bowing low, according to custom, she asked if she might be allowed to put a question. "Certainly," replied the man nearest to her, who seemed somehow to be the head.

"I want to ask whose country this is and how comes it that it is so peaceful and quiet while I have seen nothing but turmoil and trouble since I have left home and scattering before that?" "Ah," said the man with the kingly appearance, "that is a simple question, this is the New Age." Whereupon she awoke and lo, a smell of smoke! Still with

By M. MAISHIGO

the dream in her mind, she wondered where the smoke came from and how it could be so strong in the night. She wondered sleepily if Norman were smoking. She hadn't seen him and had secretly been pleased that he didn't, but now as the smoke smell came to her anew, she thought sleepily what she would do if she did find out that he smoked and how she would do her level best to get him to stop at once before it had gained a hold on him.

Thinking these thoughts slowly and half sleepily she was suddenly shocked into reality by Norman leaping from his room, shouting, "Umlilo." Grabbing her blanket and throwing it around her body, still half dazed, she followed him through the open door, outside. A dull moon peeped out from behind the clouds as flame burst forth from the shanty, the only home she had in this great Cape.

Norman made several attempts to dive in to try and save some of their goods but to no avail. The fire had gained control and there was no hope. Forlornly they stood in their blankets, with nothing more than that to face the world with next day, and watched as the fire gutted the last of their belongings and home. A man from nearby seemed to be the only one that had seen the fire and he had called two others and together they had tried to put it out but by the time it was out, there was nothing left but corrugated iron burnt black and a small tin trunk that the fire could not consume. Emma and Norman poked around in the embers to see if anything had been left to them but there was nothing but ashes and mournfully they turned away to try and find somewhere to stay.

Dawn was already breaking over the sky when at last they found someone willing to give them a shelter for a bit. It was a tumbledown room in the yard with loose sheets of iron on the roof, held in place by great stones and when the wind blew it seemed as if the whole place would certainly come down. When the employer heard, she did what she could for clothing so that Emma could go to work again. Norman lost his job because he had to stay away a couple of days since

he had nothing to wear and after a week of hard struggle and much walking up and down, he at length secured another job cleaning a factory.

Christmas came and went and found them, if possible, worse off than before. The people around them all had better clothes and feasted over the holidays while they pretty nearly went without. Emma's heart was pained as she thought back over the years of plenty in her own home villages and how she had dreamed of happiness and grandeur when she came to earn in Cape Town, and here, after these years of nothing but struggle, what few little belongings she had managed to scrape together, had in one night been swept from her grasp.

Then, as she mused, she remembered her dream of the night of the fire and wondered what it could mean, and somehow there came a new determination in her heart and mind, that though she had been rendered penniless in the real sense of the word, yet she felt that she should now build up a new life in the embers of the old and make a better home for the generations to come and to the best of her ability help her children's children to take education more seriously and endeavour to cultivate the best things in life.

With this all in her mind, she packed her few belongings, gave up the awful room that she had been sheltered in since the fire and secured a position in domestic service. Here, by giving of her best, she won her employer's trust and by dint of saving she was able to put away a good few pounds each month. Norman later married and lived in Retreat where his children received the beginnings of their education but many years after Emma had gone to her eternal rest, these children were better educated by the fund that she in this humble fashion had made for them, and today they are in good positions, earning good money and likewise, doing their best to help those who are coming after. The dream that was shattered was perhaps a stepping stone to the something that brought help and betterment to many.



This is a well-told and sympathetic story, direct and rather bare, contrasting an old woman's pinched life and struggles in the city with her dreams of a happier past and her ideals of humanity. Her dreams and ambitions come to nothing. There is nothing but struggle. At this stage the writer takes pity on the old woman, Emma, puts her in a good job and thanks to a trusting employer and to giving of her best, her whole life experience is reversed. Out of her savings she educates her grandchildren who prosper. This ending seems quite untrue to the story. Why has Emma never found a good job before? Hasn't she always "given of her best?" The writer might consider rewriting the ending in a more convincing way. It seems a pity to spoil an otherwise promising story by ending it on an unrealistic note.

J.C.

"Work On Farm"

(Continued from page 1)

MR. BANDA CAME TO THE UNION FROM BLANTYRE IN NYASALAND IN 1929, AS A BOY OF 12. HE HAS LIVED AND WORKED HERE EVER SINCE.

His first work in Johannesburg was at a brickyard but since 1941 he has been a presser in the clothing industry.

He has lived in Sophiatown since 1933. His wife is a Coloured woman from Nylstroom and they have five children. The eldest is only nine years old, and the baby, Charles, nine months.

Mr. Banda lost his job in one Johannesburg factory last year when work became slack and workers were retrenched. He found another factory job but the pass office refused to register him. He was arrested and sent to a farm in the Bethal district where for three months he earned 9d. a day.

Issued with an exit pass from the Union: "Proceeding home, not to return to the Union," and an instruction to the railways, "Please issue single ticket." Mr. Banda struggled for months to appeal against this expulsion order which is given to non-Union Africans who are not willing to work for the low pay and under the notoriously bad conditions on the farms.

While his appeal to the Secretary for Native Affairs was pending he carried a special pass renewed month by month as he continued working in Johannesburg. As the months went by Mr. Banda's hopes began to rise.

Then suddenly this month they were dashed to the ground. The Nyasaland authorities who had intervened on his behalf got a final notification from the Chief Pass Officer that no exception would be made in his case.

Should he return to Nyasaland? He left so long ago he does not remember what his former home looks like. He has no family there. His children all speak Afrikaans and no other language. The eldest boy, Henry, has been deaf and dumb since birth and after four years of trying, the family managed to have him admitted to a deaf and dumb school in the Cape some two years ago.

Ordering this family to leave the Union is like turning them out into the wilderness: a man and wife who have no idea how they will live in Nyasaland, a deaf and dumb boy of nine, Richard, aged seven and the tiny tots: Lydia aged four and Ellen, two; and the baby.

Last week the Bandas were trying to make their decision. His permission to remain in the urban area had expired almost before he had recovered from the shock of the final order. He was busy packing his belongings and winding up his affairs . . . but he and his family did not know where they would be going.

MINISTER OF NATIVE AFFAIRS VERWOERD, SECURE AND COMFORTABLE WITH HIS FAMILY WAS CERTAINLY NOT HAVING ANY SLEEPLESS NIGHTS ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE BANDA FAMILY. FOR, WELL KNOWING THAT APARTHEID MEANS MISERY FOR THE AFRICAN PEOPLE, HE WAS BUSY DREAMING OF NEW APARTHEID LAWS.

Collection Number: AG2887

Collection Name: Publications, New Age, 1954-1962

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

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