

"Clerical status": Office employees, "white collar" workers, from court interpreters, banktellers to messengers;

"Pedagogic status": school principals and supervisors; (for a man the qualification "teacher" in itself is no longer sufficient. It needs an additional asset, like the fact of his wife being a nurse. It may be that many persons mentioned as secretaries or organisations are also teachers, but this is then not mentioned.)

"Organisational status": committee members of sports clubs, co-operatives, burial and tribal societies, scout-masters, etc.;

"Political status": Advisory Board members (past and present), executives of the African National Congress;

"Ecclesiastical status": Ministers of religion, but also a Methodist circuit steward, and an evangelist; (In itself, the profession of minister of religion is, like that of teacher, no longer enough).

"Business status": businessmen, bus owners;

"Academic status": University degrees, such as B.A., M.A., amongst which the M.D. is probably the most highly esteemed.

"Sons of.....": when sons of important parents attain Matriculation certificate or Junior Certificate, etc..

Some interesting points emerge:

"Trades" are not mentioned. Shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, do not figure, neither do printers and builders. One "Trade" is, however, mentioned: that of "Photographer". It may be, though, that under "businessmen" some "wealthy" contractors are included.

"Businessmen" are only specified when "bus owners", but though he may stand out as representative of "wealth" only, additional qualifications seem necessary, such as the "B.A." of one businessman, and the fact that he is "the son of a wellknown minister of religion" of another.

AS a/.....

As a general conclusion, one might say that it would appear from the list that educational status is certainly quantitatively, but probably also qualitatively, of greater importance than business acumen, i.e., the acquisition of mere wealth.

If certain Europeans are right in saying that it is money which African people want first and foremost, then it is money through education which is their primary aim, and not money without education.

"Education", then, is the first class-criterion. (1)

"Education" means several prized attributes:

- 1) It is the adaptative instrument par excellence in the acculturation process;
- 2) Through the underdeveloped business activities of the African men, it has been, so far, also the surest way to acquire financial strength;
- 3) It offers opportunities for contact with Europeans and offers the greatest chance of "likeness" to Europeans;
- 4) It leads, inevitably, to non-manual labour. Non-manual labour is considered "real Work". Africans whom I asked about this, seem to agree that this has come about through the example of the Europeans in South Africa.

One quotation from my case-records gives the comments of a young medical doctor who explained:

"It is not natural for Africans. Apart from the Chief and his immediate family, his first wife, for instance, all Africans did the same kind of work. But the uneducated African came to associate the educated one with the Europeans, because he also does not work, does not do any manual labour. It is true, you know. Not even the European builders, they do not really work. They have Africans to do all the manual jobs for them, and even hand them their tools....."

They even call an educated African by a white man's name. They say "UMLUNGU", that's what they call him in Zulu, and "LEKHOOA" in Sotho.

Furthermore/.....

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- (1) There are, however, indications of an impending change. A disillusionment with "Education being the way to earn money" is beginning to set in. In view of the lack of opportunity for educated men, education is coming to be considered a dead end. A tendency to acquire wealth by going straight out for "business" only is beginning to manifest itself. If this trend continues, the balance may shift from "Education" to "Business" and from "Civilisation" to "Money". This applies to men only. For the women, education is still the surest way to higher wages, at least in South Africa.

Furthermore, many Africans have no experience of the fact that mental work can also be tiring. In a conversation with a teacher about the difference in salary between a nursery-school teacher and a primary-school teacher, I was told: "Of course, the nursery-school teacher has to get higher wages. She is doing real work. A teacher is only educating....." (The value of a greater responsibility has not yet penetrated! )

b] The "good" husband.

This is for the women:

- 1) The husband who gives a reasonable share of his wages towards family upkeep; or who, if the woman is working and earning, does not take her earnings away from her, or, alternatively, "pools" with, and decides the budget and each partner's contribution with her.
- 2) The husband who allows his wife a certain freedom of movement, membership, attendance and activities in her "societies", or, better still, encourages her and even participates in her work. (1)

This "good" husband is as important a determinant of "social status" as the "important" husband. This is the conclusion drawn from many conversations with African women and experienced European women, as well as from personal observation.

A class division could be made entirely according to the determinant "good husband" and "educated" husband in this way:

lower class:	husband: "bad",	"uneducated".
lower middle class:	husband: "good",	"uneducated".
Middle middle class:	husband: "bad",	"educated".
upper middle class:	husband: "good",	"educated".

The "good" husband plays his most important role in the ascent from lower (upper-lower) to lower middle class, and from middle middle to upper middle.

The/.....

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(1) Ultimately, the criteria of a "good" husband or a "reasonable" husband (as he is often called), are those of a "Westernised" husband.

The beginning of the man's assumption of his new rôle as provider is the first impetus towards lifting the family out of the amorphous lower classes into the class-conscious and class-expressed way of life of the middle classes. Some of the women's wages can go towards the first home-improvements, can be used for the education of the children, towards some better clothes. The regularity of a "good" husband's income makes a certain planning possible, and, awakes the first "social" ambitions. She begins to try to look "respectable", and to look down on her less lucky sisters, who cannot control their husbands, whose children become delinquents, and who are too exhausted to do something about anything. She can, perhaps, afford to be a member of a Manyano, and join a Funeral Society, and her husband does not prevent her from doing so. She is beginning to breathe more easily.

But the husband's wages, though regular, do not increase, however hard he works. According to experienced welfare workers, it is extremely rare for this situation not gradually to deteriorate again, because the husband becomes disillusioned and taken up in city-life, or in another of the aforementioned societies which offer chances of earning money. If the wife has "ambitions" she may join him in this, because who will otherwise pay for the too rashly concluded insurances, the hire-purchase furniture, the children's schooling.... So, if she cannot take in more washing, she starts brewing and selling beer, dealing in stolen clothes.... and all those other ways of supplementing a too low income.

Since the husband is unlikely to earn more than an average of £11 to £12 per month legitimately, for he is a labourer, and she will never be able to make, legitimately, more than at the utmost £4 or £5 per month, what can she do with so many children, and there are his parents to send money to or younger relatives to look after also.....

To achieve the rank of middle-middle class, there is no other way but "education".<sup>(1)</sup> And when the wife is also educated and has a "profession", a purely economically determined life begins to open up towards wider horizons. If the husband, however, is a "bad" husband, the woman's wages, though she need not slave from morning till night, since she has a more remunerative profession, have to go

towards/.....

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(1) "Education" is meant to include school education as well as training for a job requiring some skill or special knowledge.

towards the upkeep of the family, and not towards "general improvement".

She manages, however, to keep up appearances, to give an occasional tea party to her teacher colleagues, to get her children into schools. But her "social" life is greatly handicapped. Her husband "does not like it", he does not want her to "waste all her time without getting anything for it". He is jealous, he feels she is getting out of hand. Or he is, most of the time, just not there. Each of the partners goes his own way. The responsibility for the family falls on her.

It is only with the "good" husband, that she can express her social ambitions, and can enjoy the real advantages of her own "education". She can start buying the little luxuries of life. There is no desperate need for her to work, but she does so because she wants "schemes" of furniture, and a party dress, and all the little comforts and amenities "civilisation" can give. She will buy a hat and put it on in front of a mirror before going to visit a friend, she will buy an umbrella, she will want to make herself a dressing gown, she will wear dresses which have to be sent to the dry cleaners, and which are not just "washables". She is leaving the domain of the merely "utilitarian" and aspiring to what is "beautiful". She is, with all that, becoming upper-middle class, and enjoying it. Her problems are few and only social. Her husband participates in her social life, and she in his, and "they do things together".

The regrettable fact is that, with the extensive and nearly general irresponsibility of the husbands <sup>(1)</sup>, it is precisely this "good" husband who is so rare. This is, to my knowledge, the greatest single factor accounting for the thinness of the class-layering amongst the married generation of "educated" couples in the upper-middle class.

In this we encounter the greatest, the agonising problem of the young unmarried women of the professional classes, and especially the university graduates. She knows with certainty that unless she finds the "good" husband from amongst the educated men, she will not be able to maintain that priceless possession, her upper-middle class belonging, what she calls "enlightenment". She knows that her husband will make or break her.

And/.....

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(1) See Chapter on the "Emancipation of the Women".

And I know how many of these seemingly so Westernised men in the offices become again real tribal, dominant, husbands when, in the privacy of the home, the pretence towards the European ends.....

Although the above is, naturally, too rigid and exaggerated, it is not totally without truth. There is no doubt that a certain minimum of marital stability amongst "working class" people is an important lift from upper-lower to lower-middle, and amongst "educated folks" a great push upwards from middle-middle to upper-middle class.

Amongst the women of my acquaintance, classified by me as "upper-middle" class, there is not one with a "bad" husband, and only very rarely a widow. She must have wealth in the form of property or income and be an exceptional personality to be able to stand on her own.

2) A great many women, however, as would be expected with the increasing independence of the women, achieve a measure of public renown in their own capacity.

The categories of status with reference to women taken from the column "Friends and Personalities" have been listed by me as:

"Professional status": Here again, as with the men, the doctor<sup>(1)</sup> and the B.A. lead, with the other professions following. These women's professions have, moreover, each their own column in the "Bantu World". One column "All about our Nurses", and one for the Teachers. The social workers do not have their own column; this seems to accord with the general complaint from the social workers that they have no "status".

It is interesting to note that although, as we shall see later, there are already social gradation within the three great women's professions, for a girl it is still sufficient to be "teacher" to have status, whilst for the men this in itself is no longer sufficient.

"Business status": Mainly "restaurant-proprietor".

"Organisational status"/.....

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(1) There was mention of Mr....., husband of Dr..... (Dr..... is a wellknown female doctor of medicine). Indeed, women's emancipation has begun!

"Organisational status": As office bearer of a society or association, as organiser of fund-raising functions, as hostess of "parties".

Of these three kinds of "status", only "professional status" leads per sé to upper-class belonging, other factors being favourable. This status has found in the present generation its group-expression in the so-called "professional classes", which are generally recognised as existing by European observers.

"Business status", is extremely rare for women, even rarer than for men. Business-activity seems eminently the field of action of the semi-educated woman and the widow. Of the business women I know, none has risen higher than middle-middle class.

"Organisational status" can exist along or in combination with other forms of status. In combination with any one of the two above-mentioned forms of status, or in combination with a "socially important" husband, it will make the women's name a regular feature in the social columns of the "Bantu World".

This investigation was naturally greatly concerned with this "organisational status". Hence, in what follows, certain data from observation will be furnished, and may serve as illustrations of the whole notion "status" and its relation to "class".

#### Organisational status

This is of immense importance for the women of Johannesburg African society. Amongst the reasons are:

- 1) In this stress on organisational status, African women imitate their white sisters, or, alternatively, and possibly in addition, react in a similar way to the peculiar environment of our "City of Gold"!
- 2) It gives urban expression to the immense lust for "parties", the need for conviviality, the stress on hospitality, the desire for social get-togethers, which seems to have been such a strong characteristic of tribal life.

The immense significance of "social activities" for the women on both sides of the colour line expresses itself in

entirely/.....

entirely similar ways, namely in providing social entertainments and in promoting functions and establishing committees with charitable aims. And the status derived from these activities is reflected in similar "write-ups" and "pictures" in the Press.

One example must suffice:

"Mrs.....'s residence in.....was a hive of activity recently when a large number of guests attended a birthday party held on behalf of Miss....."

The riot of colours of women's attire lent a splendour to the occasion. Miss..... herself looked a paragon of beauty in her fittingly well-cut two-piece costume suit. An enjoyable party, all tables were laden with good things to eat; the birthday cake, had a lovely array of candles. Amongst the guests were....."

(From the Bantu World, 20 February, 1953. The "residence" is in Sophiatown (recently declared a slum area, and a picture of the hostess accompanies the article.)

"Organisational status" is the way offered to women with social ambitions, on both sides of the colour bar, to achieve social distinction.

Evidence from a study of fifty-one "leader types" amongst the women reveals that at least twenty-six of them definitely achieved a measure of social prestige and considerable social status through organisational activities without the help of a "socially important" husband, whilst fifteen of them are widows.

Moreover, the study shows that more than two-thirds of them belong to the generation of over forty and that, for this older generation of women, neither educational nor occupational standards were essential to achieve social eminence, nor was this necessarily expressed in a manner which Europeans are wont to associate with it, e.g. the "manual" labour of "doing washing" did not appear to have any "class-odour" as yet.

Amongst the older generation there were women of social status who remained as single, "influential" personalities, attracting around themselves and in their houses a number of diverse women, all looking up to them, and waiting for their lead, and performing certain services for them in return for admission to the inner circle, more in the nature of a leader of an age-group or a Chieftainess holding court.

It/.....



It was a matter of the single, excelling personality.

It would suggest that the evidence of my study leads to the supposition that it is amongst the younger generation that one can for the first time speak of "classes", as groupings based on certain criteria, amongst which "congeniality" and "social status" are primary.

The phenomenon of "professional classes" has been generally noted. These are groupings of women who have similar "professional status", who occupy positions which necessitate equal-ranking educational qualifications and financial remuneration. But over and above this, somehow cutting across this professional class-grouping, and somehow accompanying it, dependent on it in a certain sense, yet in another sense independent of it, one can observe, specially in the younger generation, but also amongst those of the older generation who "have made the grade", and who have become conscious of this, another kind of grouping, which must be called "social class", more properly so-called.

This phenomenon of a differentiation according to the criteria of "social class", dividing again the "professional classes", can best be demonstrated in the example of two wellknown professional classes: the ministers' wives, and the dressmakers and skilled textile factory workers.

#### Social class versus professional class

Within the profession of "minister's wife," certain differentiations are noticeable which make these wives seek different social groupings, and make them belong to different social classes. We have already noted elsewhere the beginning of class-differences between different denominations. But apart from this, ministers' wives are beginning to show differences in their general way of life and interests so that, outside purely religious and ceremonial functions, they tend to seek their level amongst other women, with whom they have more in common, and feel more at ease.

The class-differentiation amongst Dressmakers shows itself objectively in the type of customers they have and the prices they charge. African female society in Johannesburg already has its cheap dressmakers and its expensive dressmakers. We know from our own European experience that the different prices do not always correspond in

differences

in/.....

in craftsmanship, and there is no reason to suppose that it is different among dress-conscious African women.

A dressmaker who is herself more fashionably dressed, who has ideas about "chic" and "fashions", who has upper class manners of speech and a more refined behaviour, regards it as her due to attract the more upper class clientele, and she charges accordingly. A very smart staff nurse or "society-beauty" or "doctor's wife" will consider the higher price charged by her dressmaker not only as a certain guarantee of smartness, but also as a rightful confirmation of her own social class.

These price-differences are quite considerable, varying from 7/6d. to as much as 25/- for "a simple cotton dress, washable you know".

Thus these differences amongst the dressmaker profession reflect similar differences in African female society, and, according to my experience, within one professional class much as that of "teachers" for instance.

These private dressmakers cannot always be distinguished from another professional class: the skilled garment worker, since the women often switch over from one to the other way of earning a living by their craft.

These skilled garment workers furnish an interesting illustration of the confusion caused through European influences, and through different European ideas about class. Many of these women come in touch with Marxist ideas, and are habitually in an atmosphere where Marxist terminology and "class" notions fill the air. They have somehow adopted the Marxian class-consciousness, and talk proudly about themselves as "we workers". It needs all the natural placidity of the African women to cope successfully with two such contradictory attitudes as the Marxist workers' class-consciousness and the capitalistic class-consciousness of being amongst the highest paid African women and, as to social contacts and friendships, belonging to the upper class layer of the "fashionable" set!

#### THE PRINCIPAL ATTRIBUTES OF SOCIAL CLASS.

Whilst remembering once more my suggestion that the

emergence/.....

emergence of classes, for the moment at least, goes apace with the civilising process, and that the graduation of classes represents, within the limitations explained above, the stages of civilisation arrived at so far, it must be stated first that my evidence does not show significant correlations between the degree of "urbanisation" (1) and the degree of "civilisation", nor does it appear that the nature of this "urbanisation" is associated with the nature of this "civilisation".

One year overseas' travelling does more for a woman in respect of civilising influence and class-belonging than life-long residence in Johannesburg. The "civilising process" and the "urbanising process" are, naturally, not incompatibles, they are simply not necessarily connected. They are made of different "stuff".

#### Education and wealth.

These are two great dividing lines running throughout African urban society, and little need be added to what has already been said. Of the two, "education" is still the first class-criterion. Only through the portals of education does one enter "in civilisation", as the expression goes.

This has two consequences:

- 1). The medical profession. Since this profession combines education (according to standards which are European throughout) and wealth, it is the profession with the highest "status". A minister's wife needs considerable additional attributes to equal the status which a doctor's wife has as such.

A doctor is the husband coveted by all young women B.A.s, who form the highest class among women. The female doctor is still a very rare occurrence.

The lawyer may be a close second, but is so far still much rarer than the doctor. (2)

How/.....

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(1) I have had the benefit of reading Miss. Violaïne Junod's thesis for the M.A. (Anthropology) presented to the University of London, which is a study of Bantu urbanisation compiled from published sources. In it seven varying definitions of "urbanisation" are listed. Also Ellen Hellmann's "Sellgoods", a sociological survey of an African commercial labour force, South African Institute of Race Relations, 1953. Also, Mr. E. Sherwood kindly communicated his "criteris of acculturation" to me.

(2) This in contrast to the situation in West Africa.

How many generations "in civilisation". A girl who has educated parents is "second generation". If she already has an educated grandfather or grandmother she is "third generation in civilisation".

It was an African principal of a high school who first drew my attention to this very important criterion of status, and I have since had occasion to check the truth of his statement that:

"The students here in school, for instance: One will say to the other, my family was in civilisation for the last three generations! It is playfully said, of course, but it means in reality a lot to them. They are very proud of it." "Or they will say", he continued, "Oh well, what can you expect of him. He's an INQABA, which means: uncultured, no background, but come forward on his own. It is a word which was used in the old days for a man who did not know the conventions of behaviour".

I have also learned to see in African eyes there is a difference between one busdriver and another busdriver, both of whom Europeans generally regard as belonging to the new élite, as, for instance, in Alexandra Township. For Africans, on the other hand, there may be a subtle difference between the two:

"You see, it is like this. The one vandriver may be the son of a cultured man. He may have started studying and then got tired of a J.C., he did not see any possibilities in it. He has felt the repression which there is in the expression of gifts as to opportunities. This, of course, is general", the speaker adds. "He may have wanted to use his hands and so become a vandriver."

"The other one vandriver may have been one just pushing from the bottom".

"There's a great deal of this pushing up from the bottom in African society", he then adds pensively, "it is an important factor".

According to the Africans, there is a considerable difference between those who have been "in civilisation" for a long time, say three or four generations, and those who have "come new".

Involuntarily the comparison with the classification of American citizens as "second" or "third generation Americans" comes to mind. "Length of residence" which is an important class-criterion in America, seems to find its replica in South Africa as "Length of being in civilisation". (1)

Knowledge/.....

(1) The English equivalent would be the difference between a second or twelfth generation Baron or Baronet.

Knowledge of this makes one understand the slight feeling of superiority which I encountered amongst some Durban Zulu towards their Johannesburg co-tribalists. In Durban they have been longer "in civilisation" and they are slightly resentful of the Johannesburg Zulu "upstarts" and their "big cars and big money".

Amongst Africans, as amongst Europeans, a "TJ" car-plate signifies aggression, discourtesy, ostentation.

Whilst "the length of being in a town like Johannesburg", as an important "urbanisation" criterion, may not show such significant characteristics of "acculturation", it is very likely that a study amongst those who have been "in civilisation" two generations might show a considerable increase in stability of employment, or residence, or general individual and social behaviour patterns. (1)

In my own experience the general difference between daughters of educated mothers and daughters of uneducated mothers is striking.

#### Housing standards.

The "normal" criteria of housing are:

- 1) district of residence
  - 2) plot or house ownership
  - 3) home interior.
- 1) The criterion of "district of residence" has as yet been unable to express itself amongst our urban African population, since houses have so far been allocated and no choice between one or another locality was offered. The selection by the African family, if any, was entirely determined by availability as well as nearness to place of work.

This, however, may change rapidly, since the introduction of new Native housing policies is offering African house-seekers some choice. Dube, for instance, is developing as a more "high class" township. (2) The tendency and the desire to "sort themselves out in classes" and express this in districts of residence, is as great amongst Africans as amongst Europeans, and possibly greater.

2) Whilst/.....

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- (1) A similar development can be seen in Lamontville (Durban). A typical phenomenon was noted, namely that this new "aristocracy" in Dube as well as Lamontville, shies away from the word "location" and prefers to talk about "our village".
  - (2) The few such instances met with amongst the nurses of Baragwanath Hospital seem to bear out this possibility.

2) Whilst the prevailing housing shortage and the law prohibiting urban Africans from owning land and restricting the ownership of houses in most towns also makes this criterion of "plot or house ownership" extremely difficult to achieve, yet, in those areas where it is possible, it is an important class-attribute.

"She is a plot-owner", is always the first thing said about a woman by her friends in describing her, and it is said in tones of due respect. For instance, in Pimville, Sophiatown, or Alexandra, a "plot-owner" is quite somebody. What has become known of the histories of the house-owners in the Western Areas who are now going to be removed, gives an idea of the tremendous sacrifices, the years-long saving and slaving which have been willingly undertaken for this great ideal: "to own one's own house".

How strong the urge is to express their new civilisational belonging and class consciousness in the outward visible symbol of a house, can be seen in some of the Reef towns, where there are African-owned houses which are in no way different - let alone inferior - to some of the houses in European middle-class suburbs, and which show all the architectural and aesthetic features of prevalent middle-class European taste.

There seems to have been a tendency all along amongst the better classes to try and acquire house ownership, or to go where this was possible.

3) Home Interior. Where two very important ways of class-differentiation are withheld from Africans, the whole weight of their class-differentiating need is thrust into "furniture". And whilst class-ascending Europeans in Johannesburg buy ever bigger and better houses in ever smarter suburbs, the Africans buy "as we go up in life", ever bigger and better furniture-schemes. (1)

There/.....

(1)

Of the ten probationers (in the Nurses Report), there were five of whom the staff-nurse, doing the questionnaire, had written "much improved" in answer to a question about the home atmosphere "before" and "now". When asked to explain this, she replied: "Well you know, as we go up our parents also go up. Most of our homes improve as we grow up and become more learned. They started off in the ancient way with hardly any furniture, and now they are quite modernised. The children as they are educated and earn money, buy things for home. They often do that, the nurses and their educated sisters, so that they do not need to be embarrassed when visitors come".

The importance of furniture is demonstrated by the cost-of-living test carried out by the S.A. Institute of Race Relations during the week of the 8th November, 1954. The Nkosi family had bought two "schemes" of furniture, a bedroom and a diningroom suite for £185 on the hire-purchase system. From a salary of            per month they paid off £6 per month.

There is, in my opinion, a clearly expressed connection between "class" and "furniture", much more so than between "class" and dress, or food, or the acquisition of any other material appurtenances of Western civilisation.

Significant class-criteria can be found expressed in the type of furniture used as well as the rôle assigned to the available rooms.

The search for a correlation between "home-interior" and "class", should, however, not be continued into too much detail. There are too many unpredictable and individual factors at play. One woman's civilisational urge will express itself in a "kitchen scheme", another will have greater need for a phonogram, another will consider that only a "bedroom suite" will place her amongst the enlightened, again another will find her heaven in a piano. A mere enumeration and classification of pieces of furniture and objects d'art cannot have great value and, in fact, seems rather useless.

But certain broad differences can be traced between the groups, while leaving aside the details which depend on the uniqueness of each individual.

On the whole, the general move from the purely utilitarian into the domain of the aesthetic, that is, from things as means to an end to things as an end in themselves, accompanies the transition from the primitive to the more advanced type of woman. This is a concomitant of the general move from a more economically-determined to a more socially-determined existence.

I would, then, submit the following class-criteria:

The "parlour" or reception-room for the upper-middle class.

This shows that entertainment has become a matter of greater formality, requiring the serving round of refreshments. The formality of entertainment, which includes, for instance, the previously made appointment, is, I am told, not truly African. "We come and visit each other just like that", the women say. It is a "Europeanisation" of the African's tremendous desire for love of "parties" of all kinds and descriptions.

The "parlour" is essentially not a dining-room. It is a room to give "tea parties".

The visitors sit in

easy/.....

easy chairs and put their teacups and saucers, as well as their cakeplates on little sidetables. The serving of tea requires the display of napkins and teacloths and teashowers. The parlour also affords an occasion for the display of the innumerable doylies, crocheted, embroidered, knitted and woven, without which no house-proud woman could respect herself.

The essential factor is the absence of a large centre table and its substitution by one small, round, low table, frequently made of glass and aluminium.

Generally the parlour is a "scheme", consisting of a settee and some matching easy chairs.

If the housing situation permits, which depends on the size of the house and of the family, there is a separate dining-room. This is the case, for instance, in upper-middle class homes in Evaton, Sophiatown, Lady Selborne, Kwa Thema, etc. Generally, however, when there is a "parlour", it is the kitchen which serves as the dining-room.

#### The dining-room cum reception-room for the middle-middle class.

Here the dining-room furniture is a "scheme", often of the omnipresent "emboya" with its linenfold edge and claw and ball feet legs, covered with a sheet of cut-to-pattern glass, under which is a doylie. There is a matching "side-board" with an opulent display of cut-glass bowls, jugs, fruitsets, etc., again with doylies under each item. There are matching chairs, some of which are placed around the table and others against the walls.

To show its double purpose, there is generally a settee against one of the walls, (which may or may not serve as an additional bed at night).

The essential element here is the "dining-room table" in the middle of the room, and the fact that it is part of a "scheme".

#### The "general room" for the "lower-middle" class.

Here the central room of the house is this "general" room, which serves as reception-room, dining-room, and often at night as bedroom. In very small houses, or large families, this room is also the kitchen. There is generally a couch indicating its use at night.

The/.....



The main characteristic is the utilitarian nature of the furniture, the plain wooden, or painted, often oil-cloth covered, table, the "kitchen" chairs. There may be a "sideboard" which is either of utilitarian type, or of a highly ornamented "Victorian" style, giving the impression of having been bought second-hand. It is sometimes, however, of the super-modern, glass-and-aluminium style, and stands as an anachronism or as a first expression of higher aspirations amidst the other furniture.

Applying these criteria to the forty-one women whose homes I know and whose class has been roughly evaluated from the total picture of their personality and habits, the following results emerge:

Parlour: 20. Of these, Upper-middle class - 18. 2 border cases.  
 Dining-room: 17. Of these, Middle-middle class - 11. 6 " " .  
 General room: 4. Of these, lower-middle class - 2. 2 " " .

This means that of the twenty women who had a "parlour", eighteen would have been classified by me as "upper-middle class" according to other criteria, and two belonged in all other respects to the middle-middle class. Of these two, one is a widow who had known better times, when her husband was still alive, and the other I cannot explain, except through personal "social climbing".

Of the six border-line cases among women who had a "dining-reception-room", two would have been "classified" on evaluation as lower middle class, but they are minister's wives; one is definitely upper class, but is a minister's wife living in cramped quarters with four young children; one is a dressmaker and just in the upper class range, but she needs the table for cutting, and the room for receiving her clientele; one is definitely upper class, but is much away from home and not house-proud and generally a disorderly woman; and one is according to most criteria upper class, but she is a widow and generally not very class conscious.

Of the two border-line cases among women who have a "general room", one belongs in all other respects to the middle-middle range but she has a good-for-nothing husband and many children; the other is a notorious "middle-man" and "receiver", and not exactly house-proud.

If/.....

If any conclusions can be drawn from this first and very general evaluation of class, it would be that the room-arrangements seem to be, in general, a confirmation of the class of a woman as determined by other factors, and that this may apply rather more in the lower and upper ranks of the broad middle class group than in the middle strata, where class expression is more fluid and varying and many more other factors play a part.

It appears that the "parlour" type of woman is more numerous in Johannesburg than in Durban where this particular form of sophistication is less represented.

The position and class-expression of the widow is naturally unstable and unpredictable. Amongst the upper-middle class women with parlours, three are widows. Of these, one is a wealthy property-owner, and the two others owe their status to considerable organisational activity, which in one case is combined with "Wealth" and in the other with "position". On the whole, however, the upper-middle class woman, when she becomes a widow, tends to fall back to middle-middle class patterns.

For any more detailed correlation between "class" - "home interior" "widow", the numbers are insufficient and the general emphasis of this investigation too much directed to "organisational activity" in which widows are over-represented, to afford a more generally valid knowledge.

This seems the place to mention that as can be seen most clearly in "home-interior", - the domain par excellence of the woman - there is as yet no desire or capacity for originality. Conformity with recognised patterns is the highest aim. Where the recognition of these patterns come from is difficult to ascertain. Certainly, the hire-purchase furniture shops of Johannesburg carry much of the responsibility. Added to this is the fact that the women who can best afford furniture have very little chance to see the house interiors of Europeans and learn by example. (1)

Here is a need, or rather several needs, and this is the place to mention some of these (2):-

- 1) The Africans are large buyers of furniture, and will be increasingly so. Certainly the money accruing to European shops from African purchases could be made to

benefit/.....

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- (1) How eager they are to imitate must become evident to anyone who receives African women in her house, and succeeds in making them feel sufficiently at home to ask questions about pictures, lampshades, and other objets d'art.
  - (2) Other related needs are dealt with in the Section on the Home-Makers Clubs. See also the Nurses Report.

benefit the African community by encouraging African furniture shops, with African shop assistants, and African carpenters and cabinet-makers, If any over-charging were done, it would at least profit an African businessman or tradesman.

Of course, this has to be combined with an educational effort to try and eradicate the idea that "the City" and only "the City" (epitomised in "Eloff Street") has the fashionable shops where a fashionable woman buys fashionable things.

- 2) Lectures and demonstrations ought to be given to teach African women the suitability of pieces of furniture <sup>(1)</sup>. Most of the furniture the Africans buy is far too bulky, unnecessarily so, for small rooms and small houses. The super-abundance of plush and heavy tapistry makes it impossible to keep them clean, certainly without vacuum cleaners. Bulk and weight seem to be the criterion of "fashionableness" and "smartness".
- 3) Knowledge about values and prices should also be inculcated. The prices paid seem inordinately high. Unscrupulous exploitation of ignorance by voluble European salesmen, intimidation and overcharging, as well as other unethical practises, should be counteracted.
- 4) The whole hire-purchase system should receive attention, also from the angle of African buyers.

This is all part and parcel of a much larger need: the whole buying situation of African women should be investigated and ways and means found to stop malpractises, unfair discriminations, and many other restrictions and difficulties, which handicap even those African women who know how and what to buy.

- 5) Shops eager to capture the growing African market could be invited to give "home-interior" exhibitions in the townships, so that the women could be introduced to sensible, inexpensive, and even tasteful, furniture.

An outsider wonders why a fashion for so-called "Swedish" furniture could not be started. It is cheap, easy to clean, takes up little room, can be moved around without

great/.....

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(1) The difficult question of "taste" is here left out of consideration.

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