

Women in family life.

In an enquiry specifically concerned with "Organisations", the family has not received much close attention, but simple facts of observation indicate that the African woman is here doing more than her fair share. She is active over a very wide field of happenings which, in a European family, would be considered a man's task.

There are, firstly, remainders from her tribal chores which still seem to be considered a woman's job even in her new environment. It has, for example, quite often been noticed that it is the woman who is supposed to whitewash the house and paint the walls of the rooms. When there is a garden, it is often the woman who is supposed to do the gardening and the tidying up. I only know of a few cases (all evolved men) where the husband has taken to gardening as a "hobby", but not like the woman whose "job" it is supposed to be.

The whole domain of the children seems to continue to be her responsibility. When there is trouble at school, it is the woman who generally tries to do something about it, not the man. It is the woman who goes and talks with the school principal, in spite of her woman-helplessness in her dealings with men of such status. In one case, the principal was "even rude, and threatened me". In another case, the mother had to persist to the extent of writing to the school-inspector. It is striking that not once did the mothers complain that their husbands did not act or help. They seem to regard it as completely normal that it is the mother's business, and just one of the many things she has to do.

This agrees with the experience of a European clinic worker who tells me that in cases of adoption "the initiative comes from the wife". But not only this, but also: "It is she who often comes to the office and goes through all the preliminaries".

Women also seem to show greater concern and assume greater responsibility for the care of the members of the elder generation. Several women's groups have been found which have as their purpose the building of an old age home. Women's societies often provide the money for a decent burial of parents, either in town or in the country. While the husband will, in many cases, assist his own parents, he is seldom inclined to help his wife's parents, and
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whilst, as the evidence suggests, the money for his parents is provided from the joint earnings, the wife herself is left to look after her own parents with her own money.

Daughters seem, on the whole, to be desired rather than sons, specially by unmarried mothers. Granted that there is the Lobola, but women often say in answer to one's question as to the reason why they want a daughter: "She can work for me". Daughters are a better security against old age than sons.

The general trend of the evidence would indicate that the woman, while continuing to carry these responsibilities which were hers in tribal life, has also taken on herself, many, if not most, of the new urban responsibilities which should be carried by her husband. From whatever angle one looks at it, it does not seem an exaggeration to say that women carry by far the heavier share of the burdens, human and environmental, of the many transitions.

There is much evidence to suggest that they simply had to pick up the burdens which were discarded by the men or were never assumed by them.

But before dealing with the men's aspect of the situation, it may be useful to examine the reasons for this remarkable state of affairs, which will serve as an introduction to the theme of the "husbands",

Some of the reasons.

From the explanations given me by experts, the following points emerge:

1) The Western impact first touched African men, who were "thrown into the industrial revolution alone and without their families". This sudden shock experience caused far reaching dislocation of personality, through a too sudden change of total life, and circumstances and entry into an abnormal, emergency situation, comparable to the war environment of soldiers, but lasting over more than one generation. For the women this impact came more gradually. It came either indirectly and "cushioned" while she was still living in the reserves, in her own familiar surroundings, sustained by familiar social patterns, or more directly and more completely because they came into closer contact with Europeans as domestic servants and "Nannies".

Whilst/....

Whilst the men were kept away from Europeans contact in compounds, the women obtained experience and knowledge of European life through intimate participation in European homes.

Some African men insist that the reason why "the women got out of hand" is precisely because they saw and still see their Mistresses commanding the servants and her husband, even shouting at him, and "now they want to do what they have seen their Mistresses do". Other men told me that "our women have become sensitive like European women", husbands are no longer allowed to hit their wives, and "now the wife answers back. Formerly what the husband said was right, he hit his wife and the thing was over".

2) The women, left alone in the reserves, had to take on the whole responsibility for the home, the children, the old people and all property. Thus she developed a habit of independent action, and if later she joined her husband in town, she could not so easily change over again to another way of doing things. According to Mrs. Eileen Krige, this situation repeats itself in certain locations which are too poor to employ the men. (For instance, Grahamstown location). This same applies to certain Reef locations. The men have once more to leave and go elsewhere to find work, and the women are again left in sole charge.

3) Because of her economic independence under the tribal system, the woman seems to have a certain predisposition towards being solely responsible for keeping the home, and feeding and clothing the children. In the tribe, the smallest economic unit was the mother and her children.⁽¹⁾ This very important fact causes the women either to continue quite naturally the old familiar tribal pattern, but now considerably enlarged and complicated, in her new development in town, or to revert to her old role when urban conditions demand this. In both cases, this role is to be the actual "provider" for her small family unit, leaving the man to continue his "tribal functions" unchanged.

4) A further reason should be mentioned. Women belonging to cultures with a patrilocal rule of residence ⁽²⁾ have a long ingrained habit of adapting themselves to a new and often inimical environment.

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(1) Winifred Hoernlé "Religion in Native Life", p.88 in "Thinking with Africa", New York, 1927; S.B. Ngcobo "The Bantu People", p.62/4 in "The South African Way of Life", London, 1953.

(2) George Peter Murdock, "Social Structures", New York, 1949.

All these reasons would explain why and how the women have remained, as is so often repeated, more "balanced", more "integrated", more "rooted" and more "responsible" human beings notwithstanding the tremendous changes which urban life has brought to them.

The "husband" (1)

In spite of all this, however, there is much evidence to support the view that the urban woman would not have availed herself of all her opportunities, now would she have done so with such desperate resolution, if the husband had assumed earlier and to a greater extent his new responsibilities as father of the family in a European sense.

There is a correlation between the economic independence of the women and the far-gone irresponsibility of the men. Which is cause and which is effect in such an interdependent relationship between two variables? One might with some justification say that, although the women's increasing independence reacts on the men in loosening their ties and intensifying their feeling of uselessness and lack of control, it is precisely the men's irresponsibility which forced the women to avail themselves of their chances, and not only that, but to seek and assert new possibilities of independent action. There is, however, in this again something of the "vicious circle" of all African life.

Two general factors have tended to hinder the development of man from the tribal husband and father to the Western husband and father, and which are additional to certain basic predispositions which have been mentioned above.

The men are more affected by the general despair and defeatism than the women. - Inevitably the economic restrictions of the colour bar, though leaving their mark on the whole of African society, affect the men more personally and directly than the women. Further, the Western way of life, which for the women is a liberation and expansion of personality, is for the men rather a restriction of former liberties and an addition of former responsibilities. In tribal life, the structure of which centred around male desires, wants and pleasures, men were accustomed to "lord it over creation", their responsibilities were light, their pleasures many. Their status was fixed and unalterable existing/.....

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- (1) In a report on women, the men naturally only figure from the women's point of view, namely, as "husbands" and "fathers". Different aspects of this subject are dealt with in the Section on the Class Structure, and under the Community Service Groups.

existing by virtue of being a man and irrespective of merit, Woman if she status, had to acquire it by many a painful childbirth, by sagacity and wisdom of judgment.

The reality seems to be that many men just did not seem to have the "guts" to take it. And this is aggravated by the economic limitations which prevent him to re-assert himself in the economic sphere.

Amongst my notes are many statements to this effect. Some are here selected as illustrations.

An African man:

"The women show a greater fighting spirit than the men. I really believe that. I remember one woman said, speaking to a man - I was there - he wanted to prevent her from speaking. 'So shut up,' she said, 'you men do nothing. If it had been left to you men, we would not have successfully boycotted the busses.'"

A young unmarried, educated woman:

"Our men are very weak. They can't reason, I don't know.....is it mentally that something is wrong with them? It is not enough to learn 2 plus 2 and a-b-c-d.....They won't think backward and forward.....They live as it comes."

Deep down the women know that "something has gone wrong" with their husbands. They cannot explain what it is, but they feel betrayed, and often rebellious. They do not easily talk about it with Europeans, for the long ingrained habit of respect and awe for the male is still present. They are also loyal as well as brave. But sometimes it does express itself.

A semi-educated woman said:

"Those men.....they never do anything. When you try and stir them into action, they say we do not respect them. But we do respect them, only the trouble is they just sit and say: 'ttttt.....Umlungu (Europeans)!! That's all they can say or do. They shake their heads and say : 'tttt..Umlunga'."

"As if," she added, "the Europeans are the reason of all the evil in the whole world. Everything according to them is due to the Europeans."

According to the men, everything is due to the Europeans - and the passes. "If only we did not need to carry passes", they say. And this gives rise to all the usual stereotypes: passes are what dehumanises them; that is what frustrates them; and the women can

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well talk, they do not need to carry passes.....An African BA., Soc. Sc., who has done some research on African family life, exclaimed: "Passes are the shield behind which the men hide their impotence, and the excuse for their inactivity and their helplessness ". "But," as Mrs. M. (Durban) said: "It is only due to the women's firm stand that they do not carry passes. They organized themselves and beat the Government".

The situation in this respect seems worse in Durban than in Johannesburg. I would venture the (very personal) impression, that the Zulu husband has stood up less well to the challenges of his new environment and the humiliation of his masculinity. He also seemed to be the more "unreasonable" ⁽¹⁾ husband.

Durban women seem to have developed a much greater activity in the economic field. The main reason generally given for this very marked phenomenon is the example, stimulus and competition coming from the Indian population. In my opinion, it has also something to do with the Zulu husband. ⁽²⁾

Male energies and brains are increasingly directed towards "Politics" and "Sports": (Both these outlets in which male energies are drained off are purposely put in inverted commas).

One quotation, though rather lengthy, from an African lecturer at the University of Natal, will speak for itself:

"What are the men doing? All they can do is fight in the Advisory Boards who will be Chairman, and fight in the Football clubs who will be President...No Advisory Board member does anything. They are all dummies, and they know it. But they think if they shout hard nobody will notice that they have nothing to say....And the football clubs and their supporters. They all fight together, they fight terribly. They are all medicated before a game. Yes, they are given some powerful medicine which is supposed to make them win.

That is our menfolk! That is what interests them! That is their only activity.....

And gambling. That's where all the money goes to. Horse-racing and drink and gambling, and they all hope that one day the miracle will happen and they will be rich!

Then, look at the women...I mean as to the application of their energies to the conditions in which we all find ourselves. Their resourcefulness in finding some way out is truly remarkable. Specially if you think of their traditional submission to the men.

They could not even/.....

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- (1) For the meaning of this frequently used epithet see the section on the Class structure.
- (2) This seemingly less real and profound Westernisation of the Zulu men in Durban as against those of Johannesburg is all the more astonishing if one considers that the whole westernising process has been slower, the missionary activities more intense, the kraal-connection more close, and the general race-relation atmosphere more paternal.

even suggest anything at home. And now? All the things, all the organizations are run by the women. The men do nothing.

After my investigation, I came away with that idea. The women are more active....the men do nothing. I would even go further and say that the men are a handicap to the women, they make things even difficult for them. They try and hold them back....."

A (male) experienced, trained social worker:

".....we should try and get the men interested in organizing themselves. But we failed always. They are just not interested. Except one: arranging the Advisory Board elections. That is the only large organization of the men. That is the only thing which has been able to draw large groups of men together".

"There was one exception recently, when the women said they wanted playcentres for the pre-school children. They wondered what will the husband say? Will they allow us to go ahead? They asked us to meet the men and explain to them. We did. More than 60 men came, it was the largest gathering we ever had".

(So the only time the men came together, apart from for reasons of "politics", was at the instigation of the women! And only because the women did not dare to do the necessary convincing themselves.)

From conversations with male social workers from the Reeftowns the impression is gained that their main task with the men is to try and persuade them to allow their wives to organise, and to explain to them the reasons why they should do so. Only the more profoundly Westernised men understand, allow and even encourage their wives' activities; the majority of men are suspicious and disapproving. (1)

From the European point of view, Advisory Boards and sports clubs may be useful safety valves whereby aggression and frustration are allowed to escape into "safe channels". They are, in reality, increasingly becoming "unhealthy", like cancerous growths over wounds where healthy flesh should have been allowed to develop. The political faction-fights in the townships are beginning to assume all the characteristics of "Politics" in the worst American sense, with all the gangsterism and terrorisation accompanying this. (2)

To have given African men, at this stage of their development, and transition, authority without responsibility, has led to unhealthy developments.

The meaning/.....

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- (1) Reliable reports from "further up North" indicate that in some territories the independence of the women is beginning to make the men very worried indeed, and they are approaching the authorities in order to obtain the introduction of passes for the women in order to curb their widespread activities!
 - (2) This refers to local politics only. Politics on a more nationwide scale are left out of consideration.

The meaning of "my husband" :

Not much is yet known about what it means when a woman talks about "my husband". I may mean roughly any of these four unions:

The legally constituted marriage:

That is "Church", Court and Lobola" as the women say. "That is best". There is then a reasonable chance that the woman has a real husband and is really married. Many women keep their marriage certificates as their most precious possession, as a raft to cling to in a stormy ocean. And the photo in wedding garments gives it respectability.

The Common Law marriage:

A man and a woman live together over a long period but nothing has ever been legalised. Here the partners are and stay together because of a common bond and a long-established habit. Though less respectable than the former, it is generally not considered to give less security.

The short temporary union:

The women will then say: the father of child A is....., of child B is the same, of child C it is..... But she knows who the fathers are, although there are more than one, and although they have disappeared and are always disappearing.

The completely loose union:

In this case the woman does not know quite for certain who are the various fathers of the different children. (1)

It will be noted that the gradation here (which is by the way also a gradation according to "social status") is one concerning mother-child relationship, and not father-child relationship. The stable factor in all these unions is the mother-and-child. It is the pivotal pattern on which African urban society oscillates in the no-man's land of its transition from a Bantu tribal to a modern Western concept of marriage.

The mother-child relationship is brought out in even fuller relief, through the high rate of illegitimacy, which is authoritatively estimated at probably 50%.

The insecurity of marriage:

The general insecurity of marriage is a fact of observation and intimate experience with the women, although it is less well known as the general insecurity of tenure. It works, ofcourse,

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- (1) In any survey on Marriage and family life, the facts will be hard to establish, since the woman will not say: "This is my illegal husband". In my experience, the women, at first acquaintance, are always "married" and there is always "my husband".

both ways: men are uncertain about their wives and wives are uncertain about their husbands.

An African man said to me:

"What does marriage help the women? Does it give them any more security than when they are not married? The women are the heads of the family, and the men are the transient units!".

In the locations it appears common knowledge that Marriage Certificates can be obtained from the Native Commissioner against payment of 2/6. Cases are known to me of single women who go to great lengths to procure a man willing to lend his pass, which seems to be the only requisite for obtaining such a certificate. And the women want this "because then the Superintendent will give me a house". Sensible women have told me that in their opinion these Marriage Certificates have become a form of "legalised prostitution", "a permit to live together", and "valid only for 6 months, like a work-permit". No wonder that the Marriage Certificate is beginning to lose whatever meaning it originally had.

The lack of appropriate legal adaptations, the blame for which must fall squarely on the European "guardians", in the whole complex marriage-situation, as well as the growing inability to enforce whatever few laws would protect the women leave them in a legal and actual vacuum as far as marriage security is concerned.

In the enormous change over from the Bantu tribal marriage and its validation to the modern Western marriage and its registration/consecration, the women have somehow remained stuck in between. As yet, nothing has been introduced which can replace Lobola in its main meaning of giving the women the "feel" of really and truly being married. (1) In a Lobola-marriage whether or not embellished by Church-ceremony and civic registration, both partners know the required behaviour patterns, for these were laid down by tribal wisdom since centuries. Both know their duties and rights. In a relationship without Lobola the partners are lost in a network of confusing and only half-understood conventions of Western type, and there is no precedent of time-honoured and custom-sanctioned behaviour. Husband and wife are like actors in an unrehearsed play. They can only follow their own momentary inclinations.

Eileen/.....

(1) From an analysis of Attitudes to Lobola, through the questionnaire used in the Nurses Report, it appeared that one of the most important reasons why the Nurses thought the Lobola to be a "good thing" was "because then he will respect me". On the other hand, the knowledge is gaining ground that it is precisely Lobola which gives the husband a right to the children, which he will assert and safe-guard, if necessary, by sending them to his parents for "safe-keeping", and that it is Lobola which gives him the right to his wife's earnings.

Eileen Jensen Krige wrote in 1936 ⁽¹⁾ that external forms and festivals of religious and civil marriage have been taken over "but the values and ideals without which these social institutions are meaningless and ineffective are conspicuous by their absence", which, although the number of marriages based on European patterns do exist, is largely still true now-a-days.

On the one hand, Lobola as expressed in money may amount to anything between £50 and £200, (verily an impossibly high sum of money for men earning £15 to £20 per month!), which is in many cases prohibitive, and, on the other hand, a marriage without Lobola is for the majority of parents, if not for most younger people, simply unthinkable and, in my opinion, in view of the above indicated very slow assimilation of European marriage-ideas and ideals, possibly undesirable as yet there is simply no way out of the dilemma.

The slow disappearance of the Lobola transaction ⁽²⁾ is, however - and this is my personal opinion and must be stated as such - no indication of the degree of "urbanisation" or "Westernisation", but rather a reflection of the measure of security and lastingness which Western-institutions, as afforded to Africans, are giving them.

And this feeling of security does not seem to be very great.

There is strong evidence, and this may sound incredible, to show that many women, deep in their inscrutable hearts, are not quite sure what constitutes marriage in their new modern environment.

The following question from Malitaba's Postbag (Bantu World, 30 October, 1954, fully signed with name and address), cannot be regarded as typical or general, but is nevertheless significant.

Question asked:

"The man whose baby I have has been away for over a year and neither writes nor sends money. He paid £15 damages. Am I free to take another man?"

Answer given:

"You are, of course, not married to the baby's father. There is nothing to prevent you from marrying a different man".

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(1) "Marital Relations and Parental Duties", Africa, Jan. '35, Vol. IX pp. 1-22.

(2) Some experts were of the opinion that Lobola was again on the increase. They seemed to attribute this to the fact that Lobola, although highly commercialised and deprived of much of what gave it meaning, is becoming a symptom and symbol of the new African nationalism.

Why do women want to get married?

In any "Normal" environment this would be a peculiar question to ask, yet in the Johannesburg and Reef locations it appears as the usual result of discussions on the marriage situation.

1) Woman has to be a mother. She must have children. A woman without children does not count. She has no status, she is nothing. She has failed in her life's task, she is useless and wasted. If she cannot get married, she must at least have children. Some persons have stated that in some cases of their experience, the fear of being barren, or of being called so by neighbours and friends is a worse offence and stigma than having an illegitimate child, and in many cases is the main reason for it. An unmarried woman with an independent income and without children will try to adopt some.

2) She must be married. She must have a husband and be able to say "my husband". He may have left her but she will still be regarded as "married". The status of the unmarried woman is still nil, though some exceptional women of my acquaintance are not married, but then force of personality must compensate for public contempt. Some European experts prophesy a rapid increase in the number of "unmarried career women", and this prophesy would seem logically and economically probable of fulfillment if things human were proceeding according to logical and economical laws only.

3) She needs a protector. And this in the literal sense of the words, namely, a man with fists and a knife. This tragic fact will be enlarged upon below.

The role of the husband and father.

In tribal life, the husband's function (omitting his sexual and protective role) was religious, legal and protective. That certain aspects of his religious function took on economic forms, such as caring for the cattle, was accidental. The economic aspects of life were woman's function. Man was not the actual provider. In a self-sufficient subsistence economy in which the women tend the fields this is self-evident.

According to European ideas (and in spite of our working women the man is predominantly the provider). And it is this which the African family in the towns has had no chance to learn. When the men came to town, he may or may not have sent money back home to the family but it can never have been the larger part, since he needed that in town for his own requirements. When the women later joined him in town,

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it must have been difficult for him to concede to her and the family the greater part, and remain with less for his own personal expenditure. In view of everything that has been said above, those men who have achieved the switch-over command one's admiration. But the majority of the men have not yet become husbands and family-fathers in the European sense of being the provider. In many cases the husband would not even pay the rent, if it were not that "the Europeans ask him for it", as the women put it. In most cases he gives his wife "a little bit" irrespective of the needs of the family, and it is left to the woman to make do or find the rest. Many a woman does not know what her husband is earning, and the husband would not tell her even if she emboldened herself to ask. (1)

Evidence suggests that the most frequent cause of quarrels in the husband-wife relationship is money. Sometimes it starts because the woman wants some extra money in a small emergency, (something gets broken, a child wants some money for a school function, etc.) and the husband maintains that he has given her her due allowance, and cannot give more. But often the quarrel starts because "the husband says: 'I want your money', and the wife says: 'I keep it' ". Amongst Africans it is not the wife nagging for money from her husband, but the husband ordering her to give him money!

Anthropologists have assured me that in the tribe a woman's earnings are her own and that the husband can only use these for the benefit of the tribe. Also, that a husband disposing over his wife's earnings is a Western borrowing. In that case, it is certainly the most frequent and thorough form of "Westernisation" encountered in the marriage relationship! It is of much more frequent occurrence than Europeans suspect, and not limited to the uneducated and semi-educated classes. On the contrary, it is the situation "at home" of many a European-dressed and European-mannered clerk in our offices. (2)

In this/.....

(1) Some of the taboo surrounding the man-cattle relationship has been transferred on to the man-money relationship. See under Funeral Societies about the transition from "cattle" to "money".

(2) I speak here not without emotion. Too many wives of educated men ("so Westernised" or "such a pet") have been sobbing helplessly while I sat with them, equally helpless. A Superintendent of a location in my presence asked his entire staff of male clerks and constables, the question: "When a wife earns money, whom does the money belong to?". All of them answered without hesitation: "The money belongs to the head of the family", or "She has to bring the money to me, and I give her". From the wives I knew that one of these husbands earned £20 per month and gave his wife "£1.10. and then two or three or four months he give me nothing". Another of these men earned £18 and gave his wife £5 "every month, oh yes, every month!" She was considered "lucky".

In this difficult situation, a wife can do very little. She can complain to the European authorities who will order the husband to pay her more. He will either deny the charge or promise to pay her more, and there it remains. The women have learned that complaints and charges bring about no permanent improvement and often reprisals. Many women also dare not complain. "I cannot disgrace my husband," they say. The age old habit of respect persists.

In this, the unofficial union without Lobola has great advantages for the women, they do not feel their ancient obligations of being a provider so strongly. They say: "If he did not pay Lobola it's all right with the money, but if he paid Lobola then he bought me, and then I must work for him, and all I earn belongs to him".

Generally her reaction is: "I'd better work for myself, and earn my own money, and I keep it".

And that is what she generally does.

That the husband is losing his religious function in the towns, the basis of which has already been undermined by Christianisation, needs no special mention. The aura of awe, which surrounds the tribal male persists in the city, although its magico/religious "raison d'être" is fading away. This furnishes a good example of what has been mentioned that the formal expression of a human situation may disappear in times of transition but the emotional response to that situation may persist a long time afterwards.

This persistence is aided by the legal dependence of the women on their men. The widow often needs the goodwill of the male relative, the elder son, the husband's brother, etc.

The men are still very conscious of their legal function in the family.

In the Nurses Report, amongst the 16% of the nurses whose "most important person" had been the father, most gave reasons for this, whereas when the mother was mentioned as the most important person, no reasons were given. Queried about this, the members of the study group said: "Of course, this is most unusual. Generally, father is only the magistrate".

Father "lays down the law and settles disputes". It is an important and useful function. An experienced Missionnary who runs a number of small Home Makers Clubs, said that the main reason why the

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husband's co-operation must be gained is "to settle disputes and quarrels. They often go on endlessly and when a man comes he settles it in one minute. The man is the head, indisputably".

The man is eminently the adviser of the family. Granted some few exceptions, it is in this giving of advice that the best fatherhood shows itself. On the other hand, it is to this giving of advice that fatherhood is often restricted.

"We must as fathers be able to advise the whole family", has been the answer from the fathers to the problem of illegitimacy. (1)

The old protective function of the tribal male has received a new meaning in the unsafety of the locations, of the servants quarters in European districts, of the backyards, briefly, wherever there are Africans. It is not possible for a woman to be without a man for a long time. Widows must remarry (even though they can cope financially because they live in constant fear. At night drunken men come and knock on their doors demanding entry. In the streets, they are molested and importuned. They seem a sort of free-for-all for drunken males and lawless gangsters. Divorced women must remarry, or at least take on a man, because "their husbands come and want them back". In the continuous change of "boy-friends", an old boy friend can hardly be left before a new one has been procured, for the new one has to protect the girl from the old one.

European women are becoming increasingly afraid to go into the locations unaccompanied, but hardly ever seem to realise how their African sisters are affected by this same lack of safety. It must once more be said: respectable women and girls are not protected by law, and hardly by the police, so they are increasingly providing their own protection.

Even if there is a law, it cannot be enforced. Moreover, and this is a more important point, many aspects of the European form of justice are not understood, and are, mainly through the absence of restitution or compensation, unsatisfactory to the Africans.

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- (1) In the Conference on the problem of Illegitimacy convened by the Clubleaders of the Transvaal Association of Girls' and Clubs and Youth Clubs, the attendance consisted of men and women, leaders of organizations. The men spoke in their capacity as "social workers" the women spoke as "mothers". Whilst they spoke about "giving the example" and "doing something about it", the men spoke about "giving advice".

The inevitable result of the European's omission to find adaptations between tribal and European law is that Africans are increasingly "taking the law into their own hands". Murders are revenged quickly and efficiently, thieves are punished in a way which Africans understand, women are fought for and about.

Legal insecurity, physical unsafety, and the urge towards sheer survival of the body are powerful forces moulding Africans in a big town like Johannesburg. In their effects they are generally underestimated in favour of economics, political and educational forces.

For the Women it means that the men have reverted to their oldest role: that of protector. And so the vicious circle closes upon itself. Needless to say that sometimes, she also needs protection against her own husband.

Whilst the man reverts to being the protector, woman reverts to being the provider, and the husband again has authority without responsibility. He is the honoured guest who spends most of his time away from his wife and family, ⁽¹⁾ and when he comes home, must be given food and bed. Frequently breakfast is not given to the man before he leaves for work, but supper is never refused. A man must be fed and he must be "satisfied". Whilst a woman will put up a fight for her money, she will not do so for her body.

The "division of labour"

In the tribe each of the marriage partners had their well defined role and function in a strict division of labour, and in the woman's own domain she was left considerable freedom of execution. Although as yet very little is known about the main feature of the husband-wife partnership, evidence collected in the course of this study suggests, that, in the majority of cases, man still "advises" and the woman "acts!". Man gives his consent, and the woman goes ahead. African man proposes and African woman disposes.

Fundamentally, very little has as yet been changed, although everything is on an extended scale, and infinitely more complicated. Man still generally says the "WHAT" and woman still has considerable freedom to carry out the "HOW". Yet it would appear that women's emancipation, consists in the fact that over and above this extension of the woman's "how", she is beginning to clamour for a say in the "What", and has obtained already quite a considerable say in this.

(1) A story told by the man himself: His wife had moved two weeks before to a new house. One evening the man coming home late could not find his house, and knocked at the door of the nearest house where he saw some light. It was opened by a woman in whom he recognized his daughter-in-law, widowed, and whom he thought lived "somewhere else". He went to bed and next morning discovered that he had slept in his own house!

This presupposes, amongst other things, that she must keep her own money. Unless she has a very evolved, Westernised husband, which is generally the privilege of only a small minority of upper-middle class women, she cannot assert her rights as a person without the financial backing of "my own money". It seems, therefore, more realistic to encourage a definite arrangement about who pays what, while both keep their own moneys, than the much vaunted "pooling" of the moneys which is generally stimulated by Europeans. For this "pooling" means in reality often this: "We pool our money, and then my husband gives me from that for the household needs". And the amount he gives her from her own money for her household needs is decided by the husband.

As yet, woman's emancipation shows itself rather in independence from the husband, in finance and activities, which is probably for the time being the safer course, until the women have succeeded in steering the family-ship into the new Western harbour. The sharing with the husband of money and interests is as yet a characteristic of only a very few evolved couples.

In the majority of cases each pursues his or her own interests and goes his or her own way, which means that the woman bears the brunt of the duties, the responsibilities, the tasks, as well as the worries and the cares. The nearly unanimous opinion of experienced Europeans is that: "Generally they do not share their earnings. The man normally pays the rent, but the woman pays for food, clothing, everything concerning the children, and the children's education". Inevitably she will then also assert her authority.

On each side of this majority, representing the bulk of the population, are the two extremes: the still "very backward and tribal" marriages on the one hand, where "the woman is tied to the house and the man does very much as he pleases", and on the other hand "the very advanced people", who share and consult about responsibilities, interests and wages. Here is the beginning of a common social life. Here the wife trusts her husband, and she need not be more emancipated than she feels.

The women's "Tour de force"

It may be objected that the very real role of the man in the family has been underestimated in the above exposition. But the point is exactly that the very position of authority of the man, combined

with/.....

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