

Mrs M's reminiscences

In case you haven't tuned in before, Mrs M was our landlady in Rhodesia during our just married days of the late 1950's and she loved to reminisce.



When she discovered that the two of us were interested listeners; long ago incidences of her life tumbled into her mind, falling one upon another, like stones tipped into a pond. Consequently, those stored memories spilled out and rippled into stories for us, her ever eager audience.

Now, Mrs M and her husband, long since deceased; had, during the early part of their marriage, way back at the beginning of the 1900s, lived in Nyasaland, where they ran a coffee plantation. She often talked about those days; her eyes misty and sad. Here is one such tale she told us of that time:

Ignorance isn't always bliss

A splendid solution to a problem only added to their burden

It so happened that a dam for more efficient irrigation to the plantation was planned and Mr M employed a number of local men; specifically for their muscle power, to start with the excavation. At that time, those particular men had never been exposed to the world outside their bush existence. They'd in fact, never encountered construction equipment of any sort; apart from shovels with which to dig a hole that is.

On a visit to the site one day, Mr M noticed that the labourers removed the stones and soil in oil drums, which they carried on their heads. In order to lighten their load and also speed things up; he invested in a number of wheelbarrows to help them with the task.

Imagine his surprise a few days later, when he witnessed them now carrying the loaded wheelbarrows filled with stones. Oh heck; whatever next. He had to patiently demonstrate to them, how wheelbarrows were used. That quite astonished them and they laughed and exclaimed at such a wonder.

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At any rate we both found the very thought of it so funny that we roared with laughter and Mrs M did likewise as her mind again pictured that long ago scene.

In fact, the tale sounded almost improbable; but we were assured that it had happened and that even she had not believed her husband's story, until witnessing it for herself.

What an eye-opener for those labourers and even more so, whew; what relief they must have experienced when the barrows' function was explained; because of course, they would have been much heavier than the oil drums for sure.

In this day and age, it now seems almost impossible that anyone could have been that ignorant. But, would you not agree that *time has taken wings* and even what we knew ten or less years ago has suddenly become – outdated, old fashioned, not done, from the Ark, or even laughed at by our kids.

Anyway, I have a couple more stories from Mrs M and the next one is titled "*The Hunter became the Hunted.*" Till then chow.

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