

BOLLINGEN SERIES XXXII





PAIR OF ROYAL FIGURES. Bronze, h. 12 in. *Ife, Nigeria*

# African Folktales & Sculpture



BOLLINGEN SERIES XXXII

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with the collaboration of Elinore Marvel

Introduction to the tales by Paul Radin

Sculpture selected with an introduction  
by James Johnson Sweeney

## Foreword to the Second Edition

SINCE THE publication of the original edition of this book in 1952, most of native Africa has become politically independent (see p. xiv). For the second edition, accordingly, the preface, captions, catalogue of plates, map, and index have been revised to take historical changes into account; and population figures have been revised in accordance with the United Nations *Population and Vital Statistics Report* for Jan. 1, 1964. In order to illustrate works of sculpture that have become known during the last decade, James Johnson Sweeney has added twenty-two new photographs and a postscript of comment. The text of the folktales and the introductions by Paul Radin (1883-1959) and James Johnson Sweeney have otherwise not been altered.

For assistance in the preparation of the new material for the second edition, grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Robert Goldwater, director of the Museum of Primitive Art, New York; to Mrs. Tamara Northern and Miss Elizabeth Little, of the Museum staff; and to Mr. John J. Klejman and Mr. Arnold Newman, both of New York.

For the second printing (1966), the following name changes should be considered to apply: Botswana for Bechuanaland; Kinshasa for Leopoldville; Lesotho for Basutoland; Republic of South Africa for Union of South Africa; Rhodesia for Southern Rhodesia; Tanzania for Tanganyika and Zanzibar; Zambia for Northern Rhodesia.

## Preface

IN THIS volume, "native Africa" is understood in the sense defined by the great Africanist C. G. Seligman: 'Africa south of an imaginary line running from the Senegal River, on the Atlantic coast, east through Timbuktu and Khartoum, then south and east to the Ethiopian border roughly at latitude 12° N., and then along that border to the Juba River and the Indian Ocean (see map, facing p. xii). North of this line are, in general, Caucasian Hamites and Semites; south of it Negroes, people of dark skin and woolly hair. But throughout native Africa (perhaps 140,000,000 people) there is admixture, greater or less, of Hamitic stock and culture. The true Negro—that is, the type that has remained almost free of Hamitic strains—is found in a relatively restricted area: roughly, the Guinea coast and its hinterlands, from the mouth of the Senegal River eastward to the mouth of the Cross River, in eastern Nigeria. All the rest of native Africa consists of (1) people of varying Negro-Hamite mixture—the Nilotes, the "half-Hamites," the many millions of Bantu-speaking tribes—and of (2) non-Negro peoples: Bushmen, Hottentots (both of the southern extremity), and the Pygmies (in small, scattered groups in the densest rain-forest, near the equator; particularly interesting and particularly little known; but not dealt with in this book). We are of course not concerned with the comparatively few (perhaps less than 3,000,000) Europeans, Arabs, and Orientals who have settled among the native Africans.

The two parts of this book, folktales and sculpture, coincide and interrelate only in part. The great sculpture area of native Africa encompasses practically all of the west Africa of the true Negro and most of the Bantu-speaking region centering in the Congo. For reasons not entirely understood, almost no plastic art of much interest has come from the Nilotic, the eastern and southern Bantu, and the Bushman-Hottentot areas. But for the folktales this does not hold. Rich stores of the folktales are encountered everywhere. This volume contains only a selection. It does not touch at all some native African art of admitted value, such as the rock-paintings of the Bushmen, music, and much of the domestic craft-arts, inasmuch as it is the outgrowth of folkloristic and plastic interests. The following

1. *Races of Africa* (London, 1930), p. 53. This work has been drawn on for much of the material contained in this preface.

rather impressionistic notes on, among other things, the ethnography of native Africa are not meant for the anthropologist, the student of primitive art, or their like, but for the general reader who may not possess very much organized information about this subject.

## PREFACE

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The true Negroes share some cultural features. They practise intensive agriculture; they own domesticated dogs, goats, pigs, and chickens, but not cattle. They work in iron, bronze, wood, and ivory. Until lately, cannibalism and human sacrifice were surely not unknown. The people waged war with bows, swords, and wicker shields, but not clubs or slings. Their achievement in plastic art not only is the highest known among aboriginal peoples, but compares more than favourably with that of the major European and Asiatic civilizations. It reached a zenith in southern Nigeria, among the peoples of Ife and Benin.<sup>2</sup> Music plays a role almost as great; it is exemplified by their well-known drums and amazing drum-language, and their harp, really a peculiar kind of guitar. They also perform on the musical bow, seemingly a primitive fiddle. West African social-political organization consists typically of the clan, upon which have been superimposed monarchy and stratified classes. Pre-eminent are the secret societies, often arranged in graded series, with elaborate rituals of initiation. In their observances, masks and carved wooden figures often are part of the trappings. There are societies for both men and women, youths and the mature. Some are occasionally antisocial in function, and terrorism is not uncommon (viz., the Leopard Society). But most are mutual-benefit clubs, whose membership confers social distinction and adds to prestige.<sup>3</sup>

The culture of the tribes of west Africa centres along the Guinea coast, notably in the highly organized states of Ashanti, Dahomey, Yoruba, and Benin. These extend inland and in a sense are embedded in the western Sudan. In the vast parkland stretching westward to the Atlantic we find a melange of the pagan, Christian, and Moslem. To the west are the Mandingo, a people whose ancestors, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, ruled the most powerful Sudanese state of which there is authentic record. The Mende of Sierra Leone and the Bambara of Mali are related to them. The Bambara have occupational guilds and a clan structure in which the "joking relationship" figures: colleagues in the alliance can publicly exchange insults without giving offense. Serpents, rats, donkeys, goats, and other animals are sacred as the mounts of divine ancestors. The Bambara wear startling animal masks, such as their towering "Tji-Wara" headdress, in their agricultural feast-dances. North of them, in a rocky plateau at the bend of the Niger River, live the Dogon, or Habe. Their villages sometimes are built on steep rock cliffs and are reached only by rope ladders. Surrounded by Moslems, the Dogon have yet kept free of Islamic influence, and until recently were prolific carvers of masks and figures. Some other tribes of west Africa, having been converted to Islam, have

2. Aspects of African Negro art, such as this one, are treated in more detail in an essay preceding the plates and in the

notes that are interspersed among the catalogue of plates.

3. See glossary, s.v. "Egbo."

abandoned representational art and destroyed the specimens on their hands. The Baga, of Guinea, are such iconoclasts, though some pieces of their pre-Moslem art have survived. Along the central Guinea coast the secret societies especially thrive, among the tribes of the two ex-slave territories, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and those of the Ivory Coast. Here live the Mende and the Dan, and here is the powerful Poro Society, which Ptolemy may have known of in the second century. In Mendeland, little steatite (soapstone) figures are sometimes dug up; they are called *nomori*, "rice people," they are concerned with the success of the rice crop, nothing is known of their origin, and they are probably not ancient. The Baule, of upper Ivory Coast, migrated in the eighteenth century from Ashantiland, country of their kinsmen, and settled among the Senufo, a Sudanese people, with whom they have mingled cultures. They like to embellish useful objects, such as spoons, gong mallets, bobbins, and combs, with decorative carving. They honour artists in a remarkable way.

The Ashanti are the most prominent people of Ghana. The Ashanti king rules over a hierarchy of provincial chiefs, who in turn hold sway over subchiefs and village headmen. The king is not absolute; his government is an aristocracy rather than a personal despotism. Still, at one time, theoretically at least, he had power to take life whenever he chose. The Ashanti are famed for their Golden Stool, which seems to have come into being during the reign of their fourth known king, Osai Tutu (1700-1730). According to legend, a man named Anotchi appeared among the Ashanti and announced that he had been sent by the sky-god to make them a powerful nation. Osai Tutu summoned a great convocation to his capital, Kumasi, where Anotchi proceeded to draw down from the sky a wooden stool overlaid with gold. This, he told the assemblage, contained the soul of the Ashanti, their health, bravery, and welfare. Today every Ashanti chief has a stool that is the repository of his soul and that, when he dies, will be placed in the stool-house along with those of his ancestors. The religion of the Ashanti, like that of all the Guinea coast tribes, is highly developed and intricate. An earth goddess is acknowledged, and a supreme god in the firmament, called Nyankonpon or Nyame, from whom stems a bureaucracy of lesser gods, the Abosom, graded in a descending scale. The really operative part of Ashanti religion is the cult of the dead—or, precisely, of dead kings. It formerly was celebrated in a rather violent ceremony, the Odwira, impressive to Europeans for the quantities of spirits drunk and of human blood spilt. The Ashanti design and cast little bronze weights, by the *cire-perdue* method, for the weighing of gold dust. These may represent human figures, beasts, birds, fish, insects, fruit, weapons, useful objects, or even abstractions. They have vitality and wit, qualities that also distinguish much of Ashanti folklore, such as the cycle of Kwaku Ananse, or Spider, tales. (Ananse has survived in American Negro folklore as "Aunt Nancy," a metamorphosis of both species and sex.) The kinsmen of the Ashanti—the Baule, the Bron, the Lobi—also cast weights and ornaments of bronze. The Krachi, most of whom live in Ghana, have much in common, too, with the Ashanti.

The ancient kingdom of Dahomey surrounds its royal city of Abomey. The

Dahomans were formerly celebrated for, *inter alia*, their corps of female soldiers, whom they called "our mothers." Well into the nineteenth century, women numbering up to 2,500 composed the king's bodyguard, being armed with blunderbusses, muskets, and knives like eighteen-inch razors. They were sworn to celibacy (but the king could take any of them to wife). While some observers reported the ferocious courage of these ladies and their penchant for taking human heads or jawbones as battle trophies, another (Sir Richard Burton) noted that "they were mostly remarkable for a stupendous steatopygy, and for a development of adipose tissue which suggested anything but ancient virginity."<sup>4</sup> In Dahomey, upon the king's death, not only were the palace furnishings destroyed, but hundreds of his women and of soldiers, Amazons, eunuchs, and poets killed themselves in order to join their lord in the spirit world. Arts were a royal monopoly in Dahomey, at least brass-casting, clay-modeling, the appliquéing of cloth, and the carving of calabashes. Wood-carving alone was everyone's right. Besides working in brass, the Dahomans wrought cleverly out of the iron got from ships wrecked off the Slave Coast. They share some deities with the Yoruba.

In southern Nigeria, the Yoruba worship a numerous pantheon of gods and consecrate to them many carved figures and ritual objects. The goddess Oduua is honoured by statues of a nursing mother; Shango, god of thunder and lightning, is represented as an armed horseman. There is a special god for twins, whom the Yoruba hold sacred. If a twin dies, the parents commission the carving of a pair of small figures, one of which is hidden away, while the other, replacing the dead child, is bathed, dressed, and offered food at the same time as the surviving twin. In the north, around Nok, terracotta heads were excavated a few years ago which belong to a culture of *circa* the first millennium B.C. In southeast Nigeria and western Cameroon we find such peoples as the Efik-Ibibio and the Ekoi, all with less complicated social and ceremonial structures, but otherwise typically west African in culture. In this neighbourhood we are near the Bantu line, and some tribes are identified as semi-Bantu.

In northern Nigeria and its environs live the Hausa, who are mostly Moslems. The Hausa confederation of kingdoms attained great political power in the Middle Ages and held it until the Fulani, also Islamic in religion, came as conquerors in the nineteenth century. But today the Hausa, over five million of them, dominate the country; they are considered to be good farmers, stock-breeders, traders, and artisans.

Hamitic influence has been marked physically and culturally in two parts of east Africa. One is the area comprising most of Kenya and northern Uganda, near the boundary of the new nation of Sudan, and northern Tanganyika. The tribes living here are primarily the Masai, Nandi, and Suk, often categorized by the ethnologists as "half-Hamites." In their culture the dominant economic factor is cattle, the dominant social factor the arrangement of all males (who go, or went, naked) in a well-developed system of age-grades. Each cow is known by name; special words, not simply special grammatical forms, refer to cattle and to milk;

4. Cited in Seligman, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

milk itself is sacred, and precautions are taken to prevent its mixing with meat in one's stomach.

To the northwest, on the banks of the Nile in Sudan and south into Uganda, are peoples similarly Hamiticized physically and culturally. These the ethnologists categorize as Nilotes. Representative tribes are the Shilluk, the Lango, the Dinka, and the Nuer. Cattle, too, dominate their culture. A Dinka young man is, at puberty, given a bull by his father; he virtually "identifies" with it psychologically, assuming the bull's name and spending hours singing to and playing with it. Hippopotamus flesh is important provender of the Dinka and the Nuer. The Shilluk and the Dinka are celebrated for the special position of their kings or rainmakers. The Shilluk monarch is our best example of what Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, called the "Divine King." He is believed to incarnate the spirit of the Shilluk culture hero, and formerly was slain directly he betrayed signs of ill health or of declining vigour as regarded his large group of wives; for the hero-spirit had to reside in a healthy body. The Dinka rainmaker himself commanded and supervised his own living burial, when he deemed himself too old to perform his duties competently.

## PREFACE

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Two thirds of native Africa speak Bantu languages. Bantu is, indeed, a linguistic term, applied to peoples of marked diversity. The Hamitic strain which sets them all apart from the true Negro is most marked in the area of the great lakes, is still strong in the east and south, and becomes minimal in the north and west. Ethnologists have been able to draw, with what they consider tolerable accuracy, a line representing the Bantu boundary. On the basis of geographical distribution, the only really feasible basis, the Bantu fall into three main groups, eastern, southern, and western.

The eastern Bantu include the tribes, almost nations, on the shores of the great lakes. Prominent among them are the Baganda, who, along with the Batikara, are the only Bantu folk who have developed cultures at all comparable to those of west Africa. But art is not highly developed. The Baganda government is a monarchy superimposed (as in west Africa) on a clan organization. The first king and empire founder was a legendary personage named Kintu, who brought from the north one each of cow, goat, chicken, banana root, and sweet potato. His retinue were white-skinned; this probably is legendary disguise of an historical fact, an invasion by Hamitic peoples. Yet the Baganda must have offered strenuous resistance to the invader, to judge from the persistence among them of many old true-Negro cultural traits. They build handsome dwellings, with lofty high-pitched thatched roofs, supported by slender columns of palm, and verandahs decorated with elephant-grass canework. A neighbour tribe, the Banyankole, keeps a sacred herd whose milk may be drunk, with due ceremony, by no one but the king. Another, the Banyoro, upon the death of their king, used to bury him in a grave lined with the living bodies of his wives and retainers, whose arms and legs had been broken to prevent their escaping.

Near by are the populous Akamba; their kinsmen, the Akikuyu; and, on the

slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, the Chaga. All are cattle-herders. The Akamba are divided into totemic clans, with age-grades and rank-classes, position within which determines the part of the goat a man may eat. Anyone may join a grade upon paying the proper fee. The Akamba bleed their cattle, catching the blood in a calabash and drinking it on the spot or, later, as soup. The Akikuyu, good farmers, observe a rite known as the symbolical second birth, undergone by all at the age of ten; it apparently consists of a dramatization of the experience of birth. The Chaga do not have villages; each man has his own homestead in the midst of his own banana grove, stables his cattle in his hut, and feeds them grass cut and carried up from the valley (owing to the scarcity of grazing on Kilimanjaro). The Makonde, of southeastern Tanganyika, are the only people of the eastern and southern Bantu who carve human figures and masks. The artistic activity of the other tribes is confined almost altogether to decoratively carved headrests, bowls, and shields. Also in the extreme east, around Zanzibar, are the Swahili, all of them converts to Islam. But they have kept their language (which, diluted with Arabic, Portuguese, Galla, and Somali, has become the *lingua franca* of east Africa) and many of their minor customs and beliefs. The Baila and the Bena Mukuni, of Northern Rhodesia, represent a westerly-migrating branch of the eastern Bantu, and serve as a connecting link with the western Bantu.

The southern Bantu outnumber all other groups of native inhabitants of south Africa. In the Union of South Africa they number over 11,500,000, in contrast to barely 3,300,000 persons of European origin. These people, among all native Africans, have probably had the most poignant experience of the white man. They are divided into multifarious tribal units; while in mode of life, social organization, and religion the southern Bantu have broad resemblances, in details of history, language, and culture there are many important differences. The Zulu and the Xosa (sometimes called the Kafir, locally) are the dominant element among the eastern group of the southern Bantu. Their speech contains clicks, probably borrowed from the Bushmen. Ancestor worship is the chief basis of Bantu religious life. The Zulu also have the concept of a non-universal deity, a creator god, called Unkulunkulu. The Thonga and the Baronga, related peoples, also belong to the southern group. A central group is represented by the Bavenda, of the Transvaal; a northern by the Mashona, of Southern Rhodesia and Mozambique; and a western by the Herero, of South West Africa, and the Mbundu, of Angola. The southern Bantu usually live in small settlements, or kraals, each inhabited by the members of a single family. Their livestock are herded at night into a fenced cattle-fold. Milk, usually sour, is an important staple. Some of the tribes maintain sacred fires and sacred fig-trees. The tribal life is deteriorating more rapidly in the Union of South Africa than anywhere else on the continent.

The western Bantu are spread over an enormous area, constituting what has always been called the "heart of Africa." It spans Cameroon, Gabon, the two Congo republics (formerly French and Belgian), and parts of Northern Rhodesia and Mozambique. Most of it goes to form, along with west Africa, the great sculpture area of the Negro. There is a baffling intermingling of tribes and diffusion of cul-



### Key to the Tribes

Shaded areas indicate the locations of tribes mentioned in this book.

Agni	B2	Bena Lulua	C2	Lobi	B1
Akamba	E2	Bena Mukuni		Makonde	E3
Akikuyu	E2	(Lenje)	D3	Mama	C1
Ashanti	B1	Bobo	B1	Mandingo	A1
Baboa	D2	Bron	B1	Manyema	D2
Bachokwe	C3	Bushmen	C4	Masai	D2
Baga	A1	Chaga	E2	Mashona	D3
Baganda	D2	Dan	A2	Mbundu	C3
Baila	D3	Dinka	D1	Mende	A1
Bakongo	C2	Dogon	B1	Mossi	B1
Bakota	C2	Efik	B2	Mpongwe	C2
Bakuba	C2	Ekoi	B2	Nama	C4
(Bushongo)	D2	Ewe	B2	Nandi	D2
Bakwele	B2	Fang	C2	Nuer	D1
Baluba Warua	D2	Fon	B2	Oseba	C2
Bambara	A1	Guro	A2	Senufo	B1
Bamum	C1	Hausa	B1	Shilluk	D1
Bangwa	B2	Herero	C3	Suk	D2
Bapende	C2	Hottentot	C4	Swahili	E2
Baronga	D4	Ibibio	B2	Thonga	D4
Bashilele	C2	Ife	B1	Toma	A1
Basonge	D2	Kanioka	D3	Tonga	D3
Bateke	C2	Kissi	A1	Warega	D2
Baule	B2	Krachi	B1	Xosa	D4
Bavenda	D3	Kurumba	B1	Yangere	C2
Bayaka	C2	Landuma	A1	Yoruba	B1
Bekom	C1	Lango	D2	Zulu	D4

Based on the map in G. P. Murdock, *Africa: Its Peoples and Their Culture History* (New York, 1959)

NATIVE  
AFRICA

Liam Dunne

tural elements, and on the fringes the Bantu type merges with other Negro types: for example, in Cameroon, where Bantu and true Negro elements meet. Here are found the Bekom, the Bangwa, and the Bamum, who all manufacture sculpture, both figures and masks. A strong ancestor cult prevails. In Gabon, there are the roving tribes grouped under the name Fang; the Bakota, who have no masks but have carved figures; and the Ogowé River people, who have no carved figures but have masks. (Variants of Fang: Pangwe, M'Pangwe, Fanwe, Pahouin, Paanway, etc.; a neighbouring but distinct tribe is named Mpongwe.) The Fang, who range over the Spanish colony of Rio Muni, as well as Gabon and Cameroon, attained considerable notoriety, some years ago, as cannibals; it was said that they had no slaves, no prisoners of war, and no cemeteries. The Bakota keep their ancestors' bones and skulls in boxes or bags, over which they mount characteristic mortuary figures made of copper-covered wood. The Ogowé River masks are noted for their Oriental quality.

A southerly outpost of the western Bantu is the Bachokwe tribe, of Angola and lower Congo (Leopoldville). (Another name with marked variants: Vatchivokoe, Batshioko, and Kioko, among others.) Around the mouth of the Congo River are the Bakongo, Kakongo, or Fjort. In this area the powerful Congo empire once held sway. It was evangelized by Portuguese friars in the fifteenth century, was vehemently Christian for two centuries, and then reverted to the native faiths. In the last century missionaries who returned found that saints' images were being worshipped as pagan gods. Hereabouts also the Lunda empire rose and fell.

Among the congeries of tribes of the Congo basin notable for their art production are the Warega, the Basonge Mino, the Bena Lulua, the Kanioka, the Manyema, the Bashilele, the Warua, and the Bakuba. The last named (also called Bushongo, after their throwing-knife, the *shongo*) have a line of kings that can be traced from the sixteenth century. The reputedly ninety-third king, or *nyimi*, Shamba Bolongongo, was a genuine culture hero. For years he wandered abroad, like the Buddha, seeking and apparently gaining wisdom. Upon assuming the throne, he reorganized government, taught the weaving of cloth, banned the *shongo*, sponsored the importation of tobacco, honoured craftsmen and artists, and instituted the custom of carving a wooden image of the *nyimi*, a custom which was maintained up to recent times. These statues are considered to represent one of the peaks of Negro art. The Baluba, to the south, are noted for making crouching figures that support a stool. The Bayaka, descendants of the Jaga, who invaded the Congo region at about the time the first Portuguese arrived on the coast, manufacture the most terrifying masks in Africa.<sup>5</sup>

The peoples of the far south of the continent, the Bushmen and the Hottentots, stand apart from Negro Africa; they have marked peculiarities of physical type and culture. Both are yellow or yellowish brown in colour; the Hottentots are slightly taller, are more prognathous, and are steatopygous. The Bushmen formerly

5. For a note on another people possibly allied to the Bantu, see glossary s.v. "Hill Damara."

dwelt over practically all of south Africa; their relics, rock-paintings, skeletal remains, and place-names are widespread. Today they are restricted almost altogether to the central and northern Kalahari Desert and the northern part of South West Africa. They form three tribes, each speaking a different language, though all have the celebrated clicks, one of which resembles the sound with which we urge on a horse. They are nomads, hunters and food-collectors, in fact the only ones left in Africa. Yet they executed polychrome paintings and engravings on the walls of caves and rock shelters which are of very high artistic merit. Many are of comparatively recent date, though the gift has now disappeared from the Bushmen. The paintings depict cattle-raids, dances, religious scenes, and such. The only form of Bushman art today is the ornamentation of ostrich-egg shells, which hold water. The Bushmen represent the oldest of native African peoples, excepting possibly the Pygmies. Between their stronger Hottentot and Bantu neighbours and the white man, their culture is rapidly dying out.

The culture of the Hottentots, represented today mainly by their southwestern division, the Nama, differs markedly from that of the Bushmen. They are a pastoral people, herding long-horned cattle and flocks of fat-tailed sheep. They smelt iron and they have clans; in general, their culture is superior to that of the Bushmen, yet they do not make rock-paintings and never did. They are apparently a mixture of Bushmen with early invading Hamites. They, too, are a passing people. Indeed, the once large Hottentot groups near the Cape of Good Hope have been transmuted, by admixture of European and Oriental strains, into the present-day "Cape Coloured."

Barely in the last decade, the greater part of native Africa has achieved political independence. Of the former French territories, most have retained their old names: Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Dahomey, Niger, Chad, and Gabon. Ubangi-Shari is now the Central African Republic. French Sudan revived for itself the name of the famous medieval empire of Mali (or Melle), which, in the thirteenth century, was the most powerful Sudanese state of which there is authentic record. Middle Congo, on the northwest bank of the Congo River, has become the Republic of the Congo; the name of its capital, Brazzaville, is usually affixed to distinguish it from its namesake over the river, former Belgian Congo, whose capital is Leopoldville. Cameroon and Togo were the French-administered parts of the trust territories of Cameroons and Togoland; the British part of the former joined the new Commonwealth of Nigeria, and of the latter, the Republic of Ghana. Ghana itself, the former British colony of Gold Coast, revived the name of another great Negro empire of the Middle Ages, located actually somewhat northwesterly, in almost the same region as Mali. The most easterly extreme of the Sudanic belt extending four thousand miles across sub-Saharan Africa is former Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, now the mainly Arab state of Sudan. The former British protectorates of Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Kenya and the former trust territory of Tanganyika likewise are independent. Nyasaland and the Rhodesias, still under British hegemony, are in a transitional phase.

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Neighboring to or within the Union of South Africa are the British protectorates of Bechuanaland, Swaziland, and Basutoland. The mandated territory of South West Africa is under the control of the Union. The former Belgian-administered trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi has become the Republic of Rwanda and the Kingdom of Burundi. Portuguese Guinea, Angola, and Mozambique remain at present under Portuguese control, and Fernando Po and Rio Muni under Spanish.

If the reader bears in mind the vast complex of cultures that makes up native Africa, he will understand why the folktales of many tribes have been omitted or given minimum representation. The number of examples from the Ashanti may seem disproportionate; this is owing to the richness of the material from this region and its unusual excellence and authenticity.

As sources of the folktales, publications in English have chiefly been relied upon. This does not imply that the many folktale collections in other languages are inferior in quality or importance; indeed, a number of the tales here presented, although published in English, were collected by Swiss, French, German, or Swedish scholars. But most types of folk-literature wanted for this book were to be found in English.

As far as possible, this collection was limited to folktales recorded in the original or by individuals who knew the native language well. Some of the translations have been revised for smoothness of diction, sometimes rather extensively, as in the case of tales from the Bushmen, certain of the Bantu tribes, and the Ashanti, which had been perhaps too literally translated. The basic content, however, was not changed, though some titles have been shortened or altered. The object was to present native African folk-literature in its full range and variety, both as to subject-matter and literary form, in so far as it can be done with eighty-one tales out of more than seven thousand in print.

If the sophisticated folktale and novelette has been overstressed at the expense of the folktale proper, or *Märchen*, it has been deliberate. The intention was to correct the erroneous impression, still widely current, that native African folk-literature is mainly animal tales and to bring home the fact that it is possibly the most sophisticated and realistic of all aboriginal literatures.

The narratives are in four groups. Group I, "The Universe and Its Beginnings," is self-explanatory. In Group II, "The Animal and His World," we have man's conception of the world as seen through animal eyes—a world much like man's, but where man is absent or incidental. In Group III, "The Realm of Man," we see man, with his loves and his hatreds, his cleverness and his stupidity, pitted against his fellow man, against the physical and the social environment, depicted objectively yet pitilessly. Man can be absent from the animal's world, but the animal can never be absent from man's. Group IV, "Man and His Fate," depicts man helpless and bewildered in the hands of chance, at the mercy of unknown forces both within and outside himself. Material was selected in terms of these categories, and for the last three groups was available in abundance throughout native Africa. For the first group this was not found to be so, for true creation myths are uncommon.

## PREFACE

A glossary and an accounting of the sources of the tales will be found following the tales themselves.

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Usage in the spelling of African tribal names varies considerably. This volume follows, in general, the preferences indicated in the *Anthropological Bibliography of Native Africa*, edited by H. A. Wieschoff (American Oriental Series, Vol. XXIII; New Haven, 1948).

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NATIVE AFRICAN FOLKTALES

## Introduction

ABOUT FEW PEOPLES are there more misconceptions in the minds of Western Europeans than there are about the aboriginal inhabitants of Africa. The reasons are, perhaps, easy to explain. African cultures belong to those which laymen, particularly in the United States and England, have been accustomed for generations to regard as primitive in every sense of that much-abused term. They are supposed to possess all those characteristics which laymen, and not a few scientists brought up under the influence of the evolutionary theory as formulated by Herbert Spencer in the last three decennia of the nineteenth century, predicated for societies belonging to the lower stages of man's development. However, another fact of perhaps greater import is involved here. These cultures belong to a race that from the fifteenth to well into the nineteenth century had been enslaved. And even where members of this race had been freed, it was their fate to be forced into a position of social inferiority. They were segregated from the white population and relegated to the most menial tasks; in short, they were compelled to live a life impoverished economically, spiritually, and intellectually.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that incredulity and scepticism greeted the appearance of the early collections of native African folktales, for they gave the most clear-cut evidence that their creators were not primitive. It is a tribute to the missionaries who compiled these collections that they themselves remained open-minded, at least to the extent of equating these native folktales with our own *Märchen* and nursery tales. One man in particular must be singled out, Bishop Callaway, who in two famous works, *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus* (1868) and *The Religious System of the Amazulu* (1870), laid the foundations for the scientific study of native African religion and folklore.

Many otherwise open-minded people find it difficult to believe that the Negroes, of all aboriginal peoples, should possess an oral literature of any artistic distinction which could be equated in many respects with our own folktales. The well-known German Africanist, Carl Meinhof, relates,<sup>1</sup> for in-

1. *Die Dichtung der Afrikaner* (Berlin, 1911).

stance, that when a collection of folktales from the Cameroons was published in Germany in 1888, many of the white people who had lived in daily contact with the natives for many years protested quite vigorously and indignantly and insisted that no Negro could possibly have composed them.

Today, of course, no serious person not totally bound by prejudice or too hopelessly conditioned academically can close his eyes to the high quality of the oral literatures of aboriginal peoples. Yet in many quarters a belief is still prevalent that the peculiarities of native African mythologies, as contrasted, for instance, with Polynesian, Indonesian, and American Indian mythologies, are due not to special historical and cultural conditions but rather to certain innate deficiencies of the Negro mind. The implication here is that the Negro mind is more primitive than that of other aboriginal peoples. The German anthropologist, Hermann Baumann<sup>2</sup>—and many of his fellow anthropologists throughout the world would be in agreement—actually insists that the Negro is devoid of the gift for true myth-making and that this is evidenced by the absence in his folk literature of true cosmological myths.

Now in so far as this statement is simply the reflection of Baumann's views concerning the correlation of a given type of mentality with a given race, we need pay no attention to it. Few theories have now been so thoroughly exploded as this one. However, as it is a fact that cosmological myths—for instance, myths dealing with the origins of the heavens and of the celestial bodies—are rarely encountered in Africa, an explanation is called for. An explanation is, indeed, all the more urgent because of the fascination exercised on our minds by the cosmological myths and speculations of the Polynesians and the American Indians as embodied in their highly imaginative folk literatures. Explanation accordingly there must be, but it must in no way differ in kind from that which we seek when we attempt to account for the special traits of any mythologies.

Only an adequate knowledge of the historical development of a people can, of course, give us a full explanation; this, in the absence of all written records for aboriginal civilizations, we can never obtain. Yet the situation is not completely hopeless. We now possess unusually rich data for a study of comparative folklore and a reasonable knowledge of a large number of cultural sequences—enough information, I feel, to justify our hazarding certain assumptions of fundamental significance for the development of mythologies and of literatures.

Briefly stated, these assumptions are the following: All peoples are endowed in equal degree with the mythopoeic imagination. The type of mythology found today is not necessarily, nor even probably, the only type a given people ever possessed. Myths and *Märchen* have changed as the social-economic structure of a civilization and the ideas developed in connection with it have changed. The changes in their content and style may be ascribed primarily to

2. *Schöpfung und Urzeit des Menschen im Mythos der afrikanischen Völker* (Berlin, 1936).

two factors: the extent to which transformations in the social-economic structure have enabled the specific ideologies flowing from and accompanying such structures to become dominant, and the extent to which the old cultural traditions and background have been reorganized, reinterpreted, and given new forms, particularly by artistically gifted individuals. All the evidence at our disposal today—and it is not inconsiderable—justifies our assuming that, from the very beginning of man's history, artistically gifted individuals have existed among all peoples.

Now for the great historic civilizations of Asia and Europe, it has been contended by some theorists<sup>3</sup> that the mythopoetic imagination has been most profoundly stirred and has found its richest expression at three historic periods and in three specific areas, India, Greece, and Christian Europe of the Middle Ages. It is always dangerous to hazard precise dates, but I do not think it would be far from wrong to assign the Indian period to somewhere in the early part of the second millennium B.C., the Greek to the early part of the first millennium B.C. Moreover, according to the same theorists, it is not really of much importance whether or not the plots, themes, and motifs found among the Greeks and in the Christian Middle Ages did or did not come ultimately from India, as the great scholar Benfey<sup>4</sup> once contended. What is important is the nature and the intensity of a people's preoccupation with them.

That reputable folklorists and culture-historians should have taken it upon themselves thus to limit and restrict this stirring of the so-called mythopoetic imagination to just a few periods in the history of specific peoples is almost incomprehensible. Possibly it can be explained by the well known limitations of the academic mind and the narrowness of its vision. Needless to say, nothing is actually further from the truth.

On the basis of data obtained in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries concerning the unwritten literatures of aboriginal peoples, it is now quite clear that at certain periods in their history, the mythopoetic imagination had been as vitally stirred and had expressed itself among them as richly and voluminously as was ever the case in Greece, India, and Christian medieval Europe. It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that the mythopoetic imagination has been at work among aboriginal peoples from the beginning of their history and that it was still in evidence when they were discovered by the Europeans. This would be a dangerous illusion. No aboriginal tribe exists that does not assign its mythmaking to an earlier and very distant epoch in its history.

Yet although myths and *Märchen* exist among all tribes, their number and the manner in which they function varies materially in different areas. In the two Americas, until quite recently, their number was very large, as compared to that of other types of prose fiction, and their function of vital significance

3. Especially by the members of the Finnish school of folklore.

4. Theodor Benfey, introduction to his translation: *Pantschatantra* (Leipzig, 1859).

to the community. This held as well for Polynesia. But in other areas the situation was quite different. Among the Eskimo and among a few tribes in the United States, and in most of Melanesia and in practically all of Africa (the Bushmen and the Hottentots always excepted), the number of what can be properly designated as myths and *Märchen* is actually quite small. In the comparatively few places where true myths are found, they tend to become the life-histories of gods or divine beings, and *Märchen* to become fables in the strict sense, where they have not developed into animal-novelettes.

However, we are not interested here in trying to explain how this transformation has come about, but rather in pointing out that native Africa is not a unique case if true myths and *Märchen* are comparatively rare there.

It is in the perspective of what has been said above that we must approach the study of the folk-literature of that vast continent.

Bearing this in mind, let us now turn to our subject proper, the specific nature of native African folk-literature.<sup>5</sup> The first salient trait to be stressed is that native African folk-literature constitutes a single unit. Of no other region of comparable size in the world does this hold true. The similarities extend not merely to the types of plot-construction and to specific subject-matter, but to literary devices as well—for example, the role played by the songs in the prose text, the frequency of moralistic endings, and the marked prevalence of etiological explanations.

But even more striking and more fundamental than the similarities just mentioned are the stark realism, the insistent emphasis upon man in all his moods, the emphasis upon the contemporary scene, and the high degree of sophistication pervading the whole of native African oral literature. Rarely has man been depicted as more completely and inextricably anchored in this world, more obsessively earthbound. Contrary to the belief widespread throughout the world, man in aboriginal Africa is never thought of as having once possessed a portion of divinity and having subsequently lost it. Even in the few myths that deal with the so-called high gods and the heavenly deities, one detects an almost obsessive geocentrism. Man does not, for instance, ascend to heaven to have intercourse with the gods; the gods descend to earth. In some myths the gods once resided on earth and were forced for various reasons to ascend to the skies. The gods of native Africa, it may be said, must lose their earthly constituent, their earthly adhesions, before they can become properly divine.

The first six myths in this collection deal with this theme. It is perhaps best illustrated by the myth "The Separation of God from Man" (No. 2), found among the Krachi, of Togoland, west Africa, and the one here<sup>6</sup> entitled "The Sun and the Children" (No. 6), found among the Bushmen, of the extreme

5. Cf. Meinhof, *op. cit.*; Alice Werner, "African Mythology," in *The Mythology of All Races*, Vol. VII (Boston, 1925); and other authorities on this folk-literature.

6. The title as given by W. H. I. Bleek and L. C. Lloyd, in *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore* (London, 1911), is "The Children Are Sent to Throw the Sleeping Sun into the Sky."

southern portion of the continent. That the Bushmen should possess a myth with this theme is an indication of its universal distribution in Africa, for in most other respects their myths and *Märchen* are distinct and separate.

In the Krachi myth, the sky-god, Wulbari, is represented as residing on earth—as lying directly upon Mother Earth. There is, in consequence, very little room to move about. In the Bushmen myth, the Sun is lying on the ground and the children, who are the heroes of the myth, are being admonished by their mother to lift up the Sun's armpit. "Children," she says, "you must wait for the sun, who is making us so cold, to lie down to sleep. Then approach him gently and, all together, lift him up and throw him into the sky."

Now the theme of the close union of heaven and earth as the primary stage in the evolution of the cosmos is fairly widespread. It was known to the Greeks, the Japanese, the ancient Aztecs, and the Polynesians, to give but a few instances. In all those mythologies the sky-god is pictured as dwelling on high. In the Polynesian version<sup>7</sup> man, to survive and properly function (for he then dwelt in darkness, within the embrace of his parents—and this is true for the Greek version as well), must castrate his divine parent, push him farther upward into the dome of heaven, and after innumerable adventures and tribulations, finally make his way to freedom. In the African counterpart, the separation of Wulbari from the Earth is fundamentally different. Wulbari rises to the sky, our Togo narrator tells us, because of the many indignities he has suffered at the hands of man. "The divinity . . . in disgust . . . rose up to the present place where one can admire him but not reach him."

I know of nothing even remotely similar to this myth in any other mythology. A long and peculiar history must lie behind such realism, such geocentrism and such cynicism.

However, African realism is not always nor generally accompanied by cynicism. It can deal with more pleasant subjects, with the joys of daily life, the love of parents and children, with loyalties, duties well-performed and properly rewarded. The Routledges, in their book *With a Prehistoric People*,<sup>8</sup> recount the tale of a brother whose love for his sister was so great that when, largely through his own negligence, she is abducted, he sets out in search of her and endures untold hardships and sufferings until he has found her. Since she no longer resides on earth he cheerfully renounces his kinsmen and the joys of earth to stay with her. The story of Kintu (No. 16) stresses the tests to which a man will submit in order to obtain the woman he loves.

Yet, in the main, little romanticism is found in African myths and definitely no sentimentality. It is emphatically not a literature in which wish-fulfilment plays a great role, not one where we can assume that the hero will triumph at the end or that wrongs will always be righted. How are we to explain this?

7. Given in Paul Radin, *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (New York, 1927), pp. 305 ff.

8. W. S. and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People: The Akikuyu of British East Africa* (London, 1910).

Here again we must be very careful not to make hasty and unwarranted assumptions and generalizations though, regrettably, this is a field where they are always made, particularly by historians of literature. Even a man of such astounding depth of knowledge and understanding as Wilamowitz-Moellendorff succumbed. According to him,<sup>9</sup> it was only the Ionians of the sixth century B.C. who possessed the capacity for composing a realistic tale (*Novelle*), because only the Ionians had learned to depict man in proper human terms. This knowledge they had obtained, he contended, from the Orient, for it is of the Orient we always think when we speak of realistic tales and their narrators.

If such evaluations are made as between different members of the great historic cultures, it is not strange that they should be made where the difference is so great as that between the historic and the aboriginal cultures. Yet nothing is more erroneous than to describe one people as being more realistic, as such, or more imaginative, as such, than another. The Negro, in short, is no more nor less realistic than is any other race.

That we find a free, unhampered play of fantasy and imagination among the ancient Greeks, the ancient Japanese, the Polynesians, and most American Indian tribes does not make them specially gifted in this regard. The presence or absence of specific plots and themes, a realistic or non-realistic handling of a plot, merely signifies that the culture and literary tradition in question tends to exclude the one and include the other. These literary traditions are often unbelievably rigorous. Among the Eskimo, for instance, few animal tales exist. The hero of a tale is generally a human being, and the subject-matter is as unmitigatingly realistic as that of the tales from Africa. Among the Winnebago of Wisconsin and Nebraska, on the other hand, the literary tradition is different. There we find a division into myths and *Märchen* on the one hand and novelettes on the other, a twofold division clearly recognized as such, and having special designations. In the first category, we are dealing with a far distant past, and with a world and actors utterly different from those of today. All *Märchen* must end happily, with the hero triumphant and virtue rewarded. In the novelettes, on the contrary, we are dealing with the contemporary or at least the historic scene. The *dramatis personae* are always human beings, the heroes face realities and the vicissitudes of human existence, and the dénouement is always tragic. On the other hand, among the Polynesians no such division of tales exists and no one type of ending is prescribed.

Nor should we be too arbitrary in our concept of what constitutes fantasy and imagination. There has always been a tendency in the Germanic countries (this includes England and the United States), since the beginning of the Romantic period of the early nineteenth century, to define these notions too narrowly—in conceive them largely in terms of Shakespeare's and Aeschylus's imagery. But this is simply a form of provincialism owing to the influence of

9. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Die griechische Literatur des Altertums," in: Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and others, *Die griechische und lateini-*

*sche Literatur und Sprache* (3rd ed., Berlin, 1912; *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 8), p. 56.

our own literary conventions. There are many kinds of imaginative play and fantasy; the tales in this collection, we shall see, are replete with them. In Navaho mythology, which all anthropologists regard as notably rich in the kind of imagery to which we assign so high a value, I can think of nothing superior in imaginative quality to the short narrative prologue to the tales in this book. There we have the figure of a mouse scurrying from house to house, watching the doing of secret things, burrowing from one treasure-chamber to another, and then creating out of her experiences "story-children" which she clothes in different colours and which she adopts because she has no children of her own. Now this is a type of imaginative play and symbolism of a high order. It implies a type of cultural maturity and a sophistication conspicuously absent in most aboriginal societies and strangely reminiscent of the more complex Oriental civilizations.

To sum up briefly. The subject-matter of myths and folktales is not determined by the psyche of a people, as has so frequently been contended directly or indirectly by so many social theorists. There is no such psyche. Nor are matters at all helped by having recourse to pseudo-substitutes for a tribal or national psyche, like culture-patterns or configurations. The subject-matter of myths and folktales is determined by historical circumstances, by the selectivity that a more or less fixed and concrete literary tradition and fixed literary conventions impose upon it, and by the transformations and reinterpretations to which it is subjected by specially gifted individuals. These individuals do not live in a vacuum, nor are they interested in art for art's sake.

All this must be duly remembered before we embark on the somewhat adventurous journey of trying to explain why African folktales have acquired their particular and peculiar physiognomy, why certain themes and motifs are present and others absent, why certain stylistic treatments are accepted and others rejected.

## INTRODUC- TION

7

## II

THE intercommunicability of the different parts of Africa has frequently been commented upon. To so competent an Africanist as Alice Werner, this is of vital importance for the study of native African culture. She insists that "whether one studies Africa geographically, ethnologically or psychologically, one feels the absence of definite frontiers more and more as one goes on."<sup>10</sup> However, while this intercommunicability and the absence of frontiers are facts to be given due significance, by themselves they really explain very little. To understand the cultural physiognomy of aboriginal Africa it is far more

<sup>10</sup> Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

fruitful to turn to the political events of the last two thousand years. Throughout this long period, native Africa has been in a state of profound turmoil and unrest, because of the repeated and persistent influences that have come from the more complexly organized civilizations of the Mediterranean in general and northeastern Africa in particular. We are not dealing here with the spread of individual or even multiple cultural traits only by peaceful means but also, and more generally, with their dissemination by force and brutal conquest. We can safely assume likewise, that influences of a vital and transforming nature came to Africa from ancient Egypt, even if only indirectly and marginally, possibly as early as 2000 B.C.

While it would be incorrect to regard all these influences as directly responsible for the types of societal structure encountered among the majority of the west African and Nilotic tribes and not a few of the south central and southeastern Bantu groups, they clearly played a not insignificant part in their creation and crystallization. The native African civilizations just mentioned, in the form in which we find them today, are probably not more than six or seven hundred years old. They betray their mixed origin in innumerable ways, perhaps in none more markedly than in the multiple facets and the lack of integration of their political and ceremonial organization and religious beliefs. This lack of integration, often bordering on chaos, probably goes much farther back than A.D. 1300. The explanation for this confusion must be sought in the repeated impact upon aboriginal Africa of peoples on a much higher economic and technological level and with correspondingly more complex ideological superstructures. This impact thwarted, where it did not nullify, all efforts at unification. That attempts at unification must have been made our data indicate only too clearly. That they were frustrated at different stages of success, this, too, our data indicate just as definitely. It was not only because each invasion of foreign ideas and peoples arrived before the impact of a previous one had spent itself. The old and the new cultural traits were so different in kind and so antagonistic that the process of harmonizing and welding them into a new whole was an almost hopeless task.

Specific and local developments are to be found in abundance. In some places, right in the centre of the major west African cultures in fact, the older political and economic structure showed amazing powers of resistance. This holds true to an even greater extent among the southern Bantu and, of course, among such peoples as the Congo Pygmies, the Bushmen, and the Hottentots. But the general picture certainly is one of civilizations in a state of confusion and bewilderment, and at loose ends.

It goes without saying that the conflict and disorganization engendered in people by a forced acculturation extending over so many centuries would leave a permanent residue in their oral literature. Folktales which were predominantly wish-fulfilment fantasies—the *Märchen* proper, in short—were pushed into the background. Human heroes with plots taken from purely human situations forged to the front. In the latter, with uncompromising

realism, man was pitted against man, as is inevitably the case when individuals are living in an economically and politically disturbed and insecure world.

Assuredly we have the right to infer that it is largely because these people are living in an insecure and semi-chaotic world, with its loss of values and its consequent inward demoralization, that cruelty and wanton murder loom so large in many of their tales. So it does among the Eskimo, where the environment is so persistently inimical, and so it did in the Russia of the nineteenth century. Yet to judge from the very tales where cruelty and murder are the main themes, so strong in these cultures was the resistance to personal and cultural disintegration that the teller of the tales, the author-raconteur, felt it necessary to attach to them a clear-cut moral to the effect that death is the inevitable fate of those who fail to resist disorganization, and that outward disorganization is followed remorselessly by inward disintegration. This is brought out with remarkable sharpness in our tale entitled "How an Unborn Child Avenged Its Mother's Death" (No. 49). It is brought out in an even more symbolical and poetical form in a Bantu (Baila) tale, "Let the Big Drum Roll."<sup>11</sup>

The plot is simplicity itself. A young king joins some people on a trading expedition. He brings back a large amount of goods and is killed by persons jealous of his good fortune. His body is thrown into the bush and the murderers go on their way apparently unconcerned. But the king changes into a little bird and he perches on the top of a tree in front of the murderers and sings:

*"Let the big drum roll! Let the big drum roll!  
It flaps the wings,  
The little bird that has come out from the deep river,  
From the great river of God. Let the big drum roll!*

*Let the big drum roll! Let the big drum roll!  
At the great river of beads and pearls I have found  
fools which pound,  
Using mortars hewn from blood-trees.<sup>12</sup>*

*Let the big drum roll! Let the big drum roll!  
Using mortars hewn from the blood-trees,  
Their beads are all white.  
Here! Nemba,<sup>13</sup> where are you?*

*Let the big drum roll! Let the big drum roll!  
Here! Nemba, where are you?  
Start threading pearls,  
Brilliant pearls.<sup>14</sup>*

11. J. Torrend, *Specimens of Bantu Folklore from Northern Rhodesia* (London and New York, 1921), pp. 24-26.

12. That is, "crying vengeance for the blood spilt."

13. The king's sister.

14. To be put on for mourning.

*Let the big drum roll! Let the big drum roll!  
Start threading pearls,  
Brilliant pearls,  
From the land where I-wash-the-wrongs.<sup>15</sup>*

*Let the big drum roll! Let the big drum roll!  
The land where I-wash-the-wrongs!  
It is far here where you have brought me,  
Me who have no feet."*

The murderers hear the song and kill the bird. Hardly have they resumed their march than they see the bird again. Once more he sings his song; once more he is killed. Finally, the bird perches on top of the royal house. The retainers of the king see the bird and they hear him sing his song. The murderers have now approached the kraal. However, to get the full impact of the ending it must be given in the words of the narrator:

*"So you have reappeared!"* [The retainers are speaking.]

*"We have reappeared."*

*"And the king, where have you left him?"*

*"On the road."*

*"Really? On the road! Come and see a little bird which is on the roof of the royal house."*

*They at once said, "Let us kill it."*

*Meanwhile, some people are digging a hole in the ground. Then Nemba says, "No, don't kill it. Let us hear the news first."*

*Just then the little bird started its song again.*

*"Go into the hut [the retainers are speaking] that you may explain to us exactly what the little bird sings."*

*They went and sat down in the hut on the mat spread there, but then powowowo, they tumbled down into the hole. Boiling water was brought at once and poured on top of them. That is how they died.*

This emphasis upon man and the mundane contemporary scene did much more, however, than assure to the tales dealing with them a major place. It brought about a humanization of the animal stories as well as a reinterpretation and a new utilization of the *Märchen* themes and motifs proper. This emerges very clearly in the case of the animal tales. These are assuredly very common in Africa. Yet I doubt whether they are any commoner there than in other aboriginal tribes. There are, in fact, areas in Africa where animal tales are quite rare. Torrend,<sup>16</sup> one of the outstanding authorities on African folk literature, states, for instance, that among certain tribes of Northern Rhodesia, as well as among such important tribes as the Xosa and Zulu, tribes who do not remember ever having been enslaved, the number of animal tales is insignificant and evidently borrowed.

15. The land of the dead.

16. *Op. cit.*, p. 6, note 2.

If a belief to the contrary exists among laymen and many students of folklore, this is due to the comparative ease with which animal tales are obtained and the new uses to which they have been put. It is not the number of such tales that the folklorist should stress for Africa, but the process by which the animal has been, or is still in the process of being, transformed into a human hero and the manner in which adventures and behaviour supposedly peculiar to animals have been remodelled and converted into ones authentically human. Even Hare, who seems to have kept his original identity more tenaciously than other animals, has, among the Zulu, at times been fused with a quasi-human being named Hlakayana.<sup>17</sup> In parts of eastern Africa he has even been confused with an historical personage, the Arab poet Abu Nuwas (756?-810), "the hero," Miss Werner tells us, "of many more or less discreditable adventures."<sup>18</sup> We are not dealing here with anthropomorphization but with a humanization of animals, which has a certain family resemblance to what developed in medieval Europe.

However, a knowledge of the background, political and social-economic, which led to displacement of one type of folktale by another, like the intercommunicability of the various parts of Africa, will give us only a partial answer to our question. It presents us with a matrix within which this change was brought about, but it tells us nothing about the men and women who directed it and gave it the imprint of their genius. But before we can profitably consider them it will be necessary to review briefly some of the views held by scholars, both anthropologists and non-anthropologists, concerning the existence of such gifted individuals in aboriginal societies, as well as the larger question as to whether true literatures exist there.

The anthropologists and the laymen who have collected aboriginal folktales tell us, as a rule, very little about their informants except that some have the reputation of knowing more, some of knowing fewer narratives, and that some are good, some poor narrators. This dearth of information is not accidental. It flows from two assumptions that the collectors make, often consciously. One is to the effect that there is no true individual authorship; the other, that there is no true literature in the strict sense of the term. Most of these collectors are profoundly ignorant, let me add, of the conclusions to which representative students of the European folktale and *Märchen* have come.

Yet, while these last-mentioned students are now convinced that the European-Asiatic *Märchen* represents a true art-form and must be studied as we study all literary expressions, they unfortunately are still under the illusion that American Indians, Negroes, Malays, Polynesians, and so on are really primitive peoples in the older, simple, naïve, and uncomplicated evolutionary sense. There are a few, of course, who know better, notably Louise Pound.<sup>19</sup> Most of the German folklorists, however, would accept Robert Petsch's state-

17. G. McCall Theal, *Kaffir Folk-lore*

(London, 2nd edition, 1886), pp. 89 ff.

18. Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

19. *Poetic Origins and the Ballad*

(New York, 1921).

ments in his well-known work, *Wesen und Formen der Erzählkunst*.<sup>20</sup> For him the folktales of aboriginal peoples are simply antecedent forms of the narrative art. *Vorformen*, he calls them. They are concerned exclusively with descriptions of what transpires before one's eyes and have as their ultimate purpose, primarily, the heightening of the sense of existence. No constructive imagination is involved. They serve a purely practical function, and aesthetic functions, at best, only marginally and inconsistently.

Petsch's viewpoint is shared by a considerable number of well-known anthropologists who have probably never heard his name. All the members of the so-called functionalist school share it—for instance, particularly, Malinowski. They admit grudgingly enough, Malinowski excepted, that some rudimentary delight in the telling of a story for its own sake may exist among preliterate peoples. But such tales, they claim, are not free. They possess practical entanglements of numerous disturbing kinds. Petsch (and the functionalists, if they are at all to be consistent with themselves, must here acquiesce) contends that only the great historical civilizations could rise to the artistic height of telling a story for its own sake. In other words, only among them can we expect to find the *Märchen*, the *Urform* of all true literature.

Nothing could be more erroneous. Every field-worker in anthropology who has the slightest understanding of literature knows today that literary artists exist in every preliterate community, that they are recognized as such by the community, and that, moreover, fictional and semi-historical narratives are told for the sheer delight of telling them. That presupposes, of course, an audience willing to listen and able to evaluate and appreciate. Petsch and the innumerable anthropologists who follow him, in fact if not in theory, would do well to read a little book written many years ago, the posthumous work of a great historian of literature, Wilhelm Scherer's *Poetik*.<sup>21</sup> They might also take to heart the consensus of a representative number of American and English poets and literary critics,<sup>22</sup> excluding those who, like I. A. Richards<sup>23</sup> and T. C. Pollock,<sup>24</sup> have been misled by Malinowski's verbal felicity.

But to return to the literary artist in aboriginal society. Sometimes it is comparatively easy to segregate him from the rest of the population. Among the Polynesians, for instance, it is clear that he belonged to the upper caste and that he was, on the whole, freed from many of his civic obligations so that he could have leisure to devote to his art. He is, to all intents and purposes, a professional bard and narrator. Because of the taboos of Polynesian society, his audience must have been limited to members of his own caste. In other tribes he is not so strictly set apart, and the whole group constitutes the audience. Yet, always, he is a specially qualified individual. At all times, social

20. Halle, 1934. Cf. particularly Chapter I, "Wesen und Werden der Erzählkunst."

21. Berlin, 1888.

22. For example, Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality* (London, 1937).

23. *Principles of Literary Criticism* (New York, 1924).

24. *The Nature of Literature* (Princeton, 1942). Cf. particularly pp. 57 ff.

position, membership in certain rituals, and specific theories of ownership and rights determine who may and who may not narrate a given myth or tale. All these factors necessarily bring about changes and introduce innumerable secondary stresses and nuances, over and above those flowing from the strictly personal interests and the personality of a given author-*raconteur*.

It has frequently been contended that the oral literature of preliterate peoples cannot claim to be counted true literature because it is never divorced from the major activities of the group and because, in the view of its creators or remodellers, as well as of its audience, it has practical purposes to fulfil. It has practical purposes to fulfil quite frequently. But this holds for every literature when it is functioning most significantly. Many folklorists and anthropologists, we know, are shocked by what to them appear to be the magical adhesions of aboriginal literature. The partly or wholly utilitarian conditions to which such myths and tales have to conform, they insist, take them out of the realm of literature. They are subscribing here, wittingly or unwittingly, to a crude form of the mid-Victorian "art for art's sake" theory. By this criterion they would have to exclude almost all lyric poetry and, most certainly, the whole of the classic Greek drama. I cannot imagine a more specifically magical-religious framework than that within which the great plays of Aeschylus matured. It is becoming increasingly evident, furthermore, that the *Oresteia* contains innumerable social and political implications,<sup>25</sup> as do, apparently, Shakespeare's historical plays. Aeschylus would probably have been the first to resent the vacuum in which the great classical scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have placed him.

What matters is not whether a particular poem-song or prose narrative has practical functions or a magical setting, or what the nature of its subject is, but whether an artist has worked on it. It is this we must determine. We shall, of course, always have to bear in mind that, in aboriginal societies as in our own, artists work with specific, traditional materials and in a limited number of styles. Only the supreme artists and craftsmen are moderately free and strike out in new and untried fields.

When, consequently, an eminent Africanist like Gerhard Lindblom<sup>26</sup> stresses the fact that the Akamba, in common with many other aborigines, will not tell stories in the daytime, no more significance should be attached to this custom, as such, than to the fact that Aeschylus composed his dramas in connection with specific and set ritualistic occasions. The east Africans believe that an infraction of this custom will cause their cattle to be attacked by wild beasts. Very well, it might be retorted, the Greeks too would doubtless have insisted that dire consequences would befall the community if dramas were performed at any but the prescribed time. Professor Lindblom adds, as though it were a peculiarity of the Akamba, that to them story-telling is not

25. George Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens* (London, 1941).

26. "Kamba Tales of Animals" in his *Kamba Folklore* (Uppsala, 1928; Archives d'Études Orientales, XX, 1), p. vi.

only a diversion but something in the nature of a magical act and that mystical power is attributed to those tales that refer to their forefathers. "They are part of the homage which is paid to the ancestral spirits, and contribute to make them favourably disposed towards descendants now alive."<sup>27</sup> Even the Greeks of Aeschylus's time, not to speak of the century preceding, would have found nothing extraordinary in such a belief.

We are now prepared to put to ourselves the fundamental question: In what fashion, if any, did the African author-raconteur differ from his colleagues in other preliterate civilizations? We must seek the answer in strictly historical terms despite the inadequacies of our sources.

There is little evidence for assuming that in Africa author-raconteurs were ever a special and privileged class as in Polynesia. There is, however, ample evidence for believing that two general types of professional author-raconteurs existed there, one type attached rather closely to a leader or "monarch,"<sup>28</sup> the other free. The function of the first was to extol the regime and the *status quo*. They were the official "historians," the "laureates," of the ruling class. They dealt, in consequence, primarily with contemporary events and with actual men and women. In all probability they were not recruited to an overwhelming degree from the ranks of the ruling class, however. We can be certain that many of them were priests. That they were steeped in the traditional oral literature of the tribe is certain. Their official preoccupation with the human scene and their particular relation to the governing minority determined much of the subject-matter they selected and the manner in which it was stressed and reinterpreted.

Plots with human heroes were to loom large; and, as pointed out before, animals were to be thoroughly humanized. Since considerable prestige attached to their artistic formulations, these spread to areas where tribal society was organized on entirely different and much simpler political-economic principles, that is, throughout southern Africa. Moreover, since one of the tasks of these author-raconteurs was to account realistically for the origin of earthly rulers and of tribal institutions, cosmological myths were pushed into the background. There is considerable evidence pointing to the former existence of such myths in many parts of Africa, particularly among the Nilotic and west African tribes. Yet it must always be remembered that speculative concern with the origin of the universe or of celestial objects and deities is not a preoccupation of the layman. It is always the product of the thinking and the imagination of the priest-philosopher. Here in Africa, if we can regard the Ewe of Togoland or the Baila of Northern Rhodesia as at all typical, this thinking has apparently been directed into slightly different channels. Instead of speculating upon the origin of the world and of the gods, philosopher-priests cogitate upon the nature of the world and the attributes and powers of the gods.

27. *Ibid.*

28. This is particularly true of west

Africa, but is found among the Bantu Baganda as well.

The general principles according to which these author-raconteurs reorganized and reinterpreted the animal tale in terms of human beings and the human scene have already been touched upon. It only remains now to illustrate concretely the processes involved, by discussing one of the stories in our collection—a tale of the Spider-Ananse cycle of the Ashanti, "How Spider Obtained the Sky-God's Stories" (No. 1).

This is an old animal tale containing elements of very wide distribution. It has the simplest of plots: how little Spider beguiles dangerous animals by means of cunning stratagems and then captures them. Originally the plot must have stood by itself. In the Ashanti version the original plot has been retained, but it has been completely subordinated to a special theme of a strange kind, namely a wager between a thoroughly humanized spider and an equally humanized sky-god. Spider is represented as approaching the sky-god in order to buy the sky-god's stories. To his request the sky-god replies, "Great and powerful towns . . . have come but they were unable to purchase them, and yet you who are but a mere masterless man, you say you will be able [to do it]?" Then he gave the price. Spider must bring the sky-god a python, some hornets, a leopard, and a fairy. The wager is accepted. Boastfully Spider assures him he will bring them all. "I will add my old mother . . . to the lot," he exclaims. The account of how the animals and the fairy are captured then follows.

Clearly, however, the interest is centred not on the prizes or the stratagems used to capture them but on the wager and the two main actors. In the final scene Spider is shown bringing his last two payments, the fairy and his mother. The sky-god then calls a council of elders and puts the matter before them. "Very great kings have come," the sky-god tells them, "and were not able to buy the sky-god's stories, but Kwaku Ananse, the spider, has been able to pay the price. . . . Sing his praise." And when they had done so the sky-god continued, "Kwaku Ananse, from today and going on forever, I take my sky-god's stories, and I present them to you. . . . My blessing, blessing, blessing."

A secondary consequence of the reorganization and reorientation of so many of the animal tales is the practical disappearance of the so-called trickster and culture-hero types of tale, in all those areas where the author-raconteur was essentially an official scribe. Both types are encountered all over the rest of the aboriginal world; they are developed most richly, perhaps, where assuredly political events were more than normally contributory. The existence and prominence of trickster and culture-hero tales among the Bushmen indicates that they must once have been found in other parts of Africa too. Indeed, those Bantu tribes where there is no division into stratified classes, where, in consequence, there is no tendency for the activities of the author-raconteur to become closely identified with the interests of a leader at times exalted to the rank of ruler, these do actually possess a trickster-culture-hero, namely, the Hare. His creative function has, it is true, disappeared. But this holds for many American Indian tribes as well.

## INTRODUC- TION

In marked contrast to the role played by these more or less officially designated author-raconteurs is that of the story-teller proper. These story-tellers are to be encountered in every group, in every village. Here in Africa, they played a particularly important role at the great gatherings and markets where goods were exchanged, and where, incidentally, stories passed readily from tribe to tribe. While these story-tellers are assuredly absent in no portion of Africa, it is in the predominantly non-stratified societies of southern Africa that we can best see them at work. They, too, reformulate and reorientate the traditional subject-matter, but primarily in order to bring it up to date, to make it understandable and palatable to a contemporary audience. This, in fact, is their function in all aboriginal societies. However, because of the rapidity with which, even in southern Africa, societies were transformed, this meant much more than it meant in other parts of the aboriginal world. Thus, for instance, while the actors of the animal stories have not escaped the process of humanization, the plots have remained intact and persist in their older form. But they have been reduced often to mere skeletons of their former selves. Take, for example, the following from the Thonga, of southern Africa (cf. No. 30):<sup>29</sup>

*One day the Hare said to the Grey Antelope: "Let us go and sow peas." "I don't like peas, I prefer wild beans," said the Antelope. So the Hare went by himself to sow peas. When they began to sprout, he noticed that they were disappearing, so he hid himself in the field, and caught the Antelope digging up his peas. "Aba!" said he. "You are a thief. Pay the fine!" She gave him a hoe and he went off.*

*He met some women who were digging clay with sticks. He said to them: "Haven't you got any hoes?" "No," they said, "we haven't a single one." "Then take this one," said he, "you can give it back later on." When they had finished, the last one who used the hoe broke it. Then the Hare sang the following words:*

*"Clay-diggers, give back my hoe, my friends,  
My hoe which the Antelope gave me,  
The Antelope who paid the fine for my peas."*

The tale concludes with the women each giving him a pot.

Here the animal plot is retained in its full form, but the animal hero has been thoroughly humanized. In other instances where this holds true, either the animal hero is displaced by a human hero or a human figure is introduced who competes in importance with him.

Analogous transformations took place in the forms given to older myths and *Märchen* of southern Africa. Despite their more conservative tendencies and their very close relationship to the older traditional folktales, the southern

29. Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (London, 1913), Vol. II, p. 223.

raconteurs, like their northern colleagues, were deeply affected by the chaos and disorganization which has characterized native African history of the last seven hundred years. The realistic tale, the novelette, came to the fore here as it did in the north. Indeed one gets the impression that the reflection of the political-economic background is more direct here, in southern Africa, than among the northern Bantu or the Nilotic and west African tribes. Human relations must have become unusually intense and unbearable to have produced a novelette like that entitled "How an Unborn Child Avenged Its Mother's Death" (No. 49). It is worth while commenting upon it, because it represents the work of an author-raconteur of unusual skill and acute psychological and philosophical insight.

The plot has a mature simplicity. A pitiless physical environment is pitted against a husband and prospective father. The man fails to meet the test and thereby isolates himself, internally and externally, from his social group. He stands before us, naked, stripped of all his moral values and standards. Punishment and retribution follow inexorably. The full realization of the crime he has committed is symbolized in a twofold fashion. A sudden accession of fear comes upon him and he must run, run from the dead body of the wife he has wantonly murdered and from himself. Then from the womb of the dead woman emerges her unborn child, who starts in rapid pursuit of the murderer to drive him back into the arms of the society from which he has cut himself off, and to his death.

At times we have incorporated in the novelette plots, themes, and motifs belonging to *Märchen*, which have been divorced from their older settings and employed secondarily and symbolically. As an example let me cite the very profound tale "The Wonder-Worker of the Plains" (No. 62).

Here we have a magical and supernatural animal transferred to a purely human, contemporary scene. This transference necessitates the complete transformation of the animal, a wonder-working buffalo. He is no longer a mere animal or a supernatural being but the symbol of that aspect of the external world upon which man must subsist. The human heroes in the tale refuse to conform to the traditional mores of their group. The boy will not permit his parents to select his wife; he will not marry within his own group; he will not permit his parents to visit the parents of the girl he finally selects as bride and bring them the bride-price in person. He is depicted as behaving in this fashion because of his excessive confidence in himself and because, ostensibly at least, he wishes to spare his bride the pain she might suffer from his parents' hard admonitions.

The girl refuses to conform, in a different but an equally egotistical fashion. Instead of accepting the woman helpers her parents place at her disposal, she demands the wonder-working buffalo. "Give me . . . the Wonder-Worker of the Plains. Let him serve me," she demands. Not only is her behaviour thus extremely antisocial, but she completely misunderstands man's relation to nature, to the external world. Nature is to be compelled to be subservient to her.

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It is a very subtle touch of the author-raconteur that makes the buffalo visible only to her and not to her husband, when the two set out for their home.

The plot demands that the man be chastised for his recalcitrance and his false self-sufficiency. However, he is not represented as sinning against the elementary conditions of human existence and human happiness; he is not to be overwhelmed and destroyed in the final catastrophe; his punishment is to take another form. He is to be the instrument that is to bring about the final catastrophe.

The woman (as one might expect, in view of the nature of her demand upon her parents) is never quite to understand the nature of her sin and her profound misconception of reality. Her punishment, as well as the essential tragedy of the situation, lies precisely in this fact. In the scene where, weeping and full of remorse, she attempts to resuscitate the dead buffalo, some glimmering of the heinousness of her behaviour seems to dawn upon her, and she intones a mystical song:

*"Ab, my father, Wonder-Worker of the Plains,  
Indeed they have told me: You would go through the deep darkness; that in  
all directions you would stumble through the night, Wonder-Worker of  
the Plains;  
You are the young wonder-tree plant, grown out of ruins, which dies before  
its time, consumed by a gnawing worm. . . .  
You made flowers and fruit fall upon your road, Wonder-Worker of the  
Plains!"*

Yet this awareness is never much more than a glimmering. The woman cannot, at bottom, be forgiven. No sooner has she restored the buffalo to life and he begins to move his limbs than the real world she has so flagrantly outraged intervenes, first in the person of her husband and second in that of her mother-in-law. And so the buffalo dies, in his death presaging the utter destruction of her people and herself.

This concept of tragedy as flowing from a misunderstanding of man's relation to nature is widespread among all aboriginal civilizations. It holds wherever man's attitude is ambivalent, wherever his control of the external world is inadequate, and where, in addition, societies are not organized on a class basis. I can find no expression of it, for instance, among the northern Bantu, the west African, or the Nilotic peoples.

An interesting variant of the theme of the Wonder-Worker of the Plains is found among the Bushmen in a tale entitled "The Young Man Who Was Carried Off by a Lion" (No. 41). It should be remembered that among the Bushmen *Märchen* and simple animal tales are still overwhelmingly dominant. The basic theme of this tale is that Nature can, after a fashion, misunderstand its relation to man just as man his relation to Nature.

The plot is the following: A young man falls asleep while hunting. A hungry lion seizes him. The man, to save his life, feigns death, and the lion,

convinced that he is dead, carries him to a tree and forces his body tightly between its branches. Then he departs to quench his thirst. The man frees himself and flees to his home, where he begs his kinsfolk to hide him from the lion, who, he feels, is bound to trail him. His mother accordingly hides him. Soon the lion appears and threatens the community with destruction if the young man is not turned over to him. Arrows and spears are discharged at the lion, but all to no avail. As a last recourse, human beings are thrown to him to devour. He will have none of them. He insists upon recovering the young man he had seized and who had duped him by feigning death. Finally the community, in desperation, demands that the mother deliver her son to the lion so that the others may be saved. This is done. But the lion, too, must die, for he has made an unwarranted demand, one lying beyond his rights. Thus, we are taught, Nature can transgress and must be brought to terms as best one can. That is what the words of the youth's mother imply when at the end she acquiesces and says: "Be it so. Give my child to the lion. In no wise, however, must you allow the lion to eat him, in no wise must you allow the lion to continue walking about here. You must kill him and lay him upon my child. Let the lion die and lie upon my son."

And now to conclude. If what I have said is even moderately correct, it is erroneous to equate the prose literature of aboriginal Africa with that of other aboriginal peoples except in the most general manner, excluding, of course, Polynesia. The other myths, *Märchen*, and tales no more resemble the African folktale in its original form than do the conscious literary reworkings of Greek mythology resemble theirs. In fact they are on a higher level, I feel, than those reworkings. We are, essentially, in the presence of a true art form, often possessing a high degree of sophistication and formalism. The creators of African literature can at times be as sceptical and ironical as the Greeks. It would be difficult, indeed, to find a match for irony and sophistication comparable to the traditional beginning of an Ashanti tale:

*"We do not really mean, we do not really mean, that what we are going to say is true."*

Or the traditional ending:

*"This, my story which I have related, if it be sweet or if it be not sweet, take some elsewhere and let some come back to me."*

## INTRODUC- TION

## Prologue

**M**OUSE GOES everywhere. Through rich men's houses she creeps, and she visits even the poorest. At night, with her bright little eyes, she watches the doing of secret things, and no treasure chamber is so safe but she can tunnel through and see what is hidden there.

In olden days she wove a story child from all that she saw, and to each of these she gave a gown of a different colour—white, red, blue, or black. The stories became her children and lived in her house and served her because she had no children of her own.

[ E K O I ]

*We do not really mean, we do not really mean  
that what we are going to say is true*

I

# The Universe and Its Beginnings

## How Spider Obtained the Sky-God's Stories

**K**WAKU ANANSE, the spider, once went to Nyankonpon, the sky-god, in order to buy the sky-god's stories. The sky-god said, "What makes you think *you* can buy them?" The spider answered and said, "I know I shall be able." Thereupon the sky-god said, "Great and powerful towns like Kokofu, Bekwai, Asumengya, have come, but they were unable to purchase them, and yet you who are but a mere masterless man, you say you will be able?"

The spider said, "What is the price of the stories?" The sky-god said, "They cannot be bought for anything except Onini, the python; Osebo, the leopard; Mmoatia, the fairy; and Mmoboro, the hornets." The spider said, "I will bring some of all these things, and, what is more, I'll add my old mother, Nsia, the sixth child, to the lot."

The sky-god said, "Go and bring them then." The spider came back, and told his mother all about it, saying, "I wish to buy the stories of the sky-god, and the sky-god says I must bring Onini, the python; Osebo, the leopard; Mmoatia, the fairy; and Mmoboro, the hornets; and I said I would add you to the lot and give you to the sky-god." Now the spider consulted his wife, Aso, saying, "What is to be done that we may get Onini, the python?" Aso said to him, "You go off and cut a branch of a palm tree, and cut some string-creeper as well, and bring them." And the spider came back with them. And Aso said, "Take them to the stream." So Ananse took them; and, as he was going along, he said, "It's longer than he is, it's not so long as he; you lie, it's longer than he."

The spider said, "There he is, lying yonder." The python, who had overheard this imaginary conversation, then asked, "What's this all about?" To which the spider replied, "Is it not my wife, Aso, who is arguing with me that this palm branch is longer than you, and I say she is a liar." And Onini, the python, said, "Bring it, and come and measure me." Ananse took the palm branch and laid it along the python's body. Then he said, "Stretch yourself out." And the python stretched himself out, and Ananse took the rope-creeper and wound it and the sound of the tying was *nwenene! nwenene! nwenene!* until he came to the head.

Ananse, the spider, said, "Fool, I shall take you to the sky-god and receive

the sky-god's tales in exchange." So Ananse took him off to Nyame, the sky-god. The sky-god then said, "My hand has touched it, there remains what still remains." The spider returned and came and told his wife what had happened, saying, "There remain the hornets." His wife said, "Look for a gourd, and fill it with water and go off with it." The spider went along through the bush, when he saw a swarm of hornets hanging there, and he poured out some of the water and sprinkled it on them. He then poured the remainder upon himself and cut a leaf of plantain and covered his head with it. And now he addressed the hornets, saying, "As the rain has come, had you not better come and enter this, my gourd, so that the rain will not beat you; don't you see that I have taken a plantain leaf to cover myself?" Then the hornets said, "We thank you, Aku, we thank you, Aku." All the hornets flew, disappearing into the gourd, *fom!* Father Spider covered the mouth, and exclaimed, "Fools, I have got you, and I am taking you to receive the tales of the sky-god in exchange."

And he took the hornets to the sky-god. The sky-god said, "My hand has touched it; what remains still remains."

The spider came back once more, and told his wife, and said, "There remains Osebo, the leopard." Aso said, "Go and dig a hole." Ananse said, "That's enough, I understand." Then the spider went off to look for the leopard's tracks, and, having found them, he dug a very deep pit, covered it over, and came back home. Very early next day, when objects began to be visible, the spider said he would go off, and when he went, lo, a leopard was lying in the pit. Ananse said, "Little father's child, little mother's child, I have told you not to get drunk, and now, just as one would expect of you, you have become intoxicated, and that's why you have fallen into the pit. If I were to say I would get you out, next day, if you saw me, or likewise any of my children, you would go and catch me and them." The leopard said, "O! I could not do such a thing."

Ananse then went and cut two sticks, put one here, and one there, and said, "Put one of your paws here, and one also of your paws here." And the leopard placed them where he was told. As he was about to climb up, Ananse lifted up his knife, and in a flash it descended on his head, *gao!* was the sound it made. The pit received the leopard and *fom!* was the sound of the falling. Ananse got a ladder to descend into the pit to go and get the leopard out. He got the leopard out and came back with it, exclaiming, "Fool, I am taking you to exchange for the stories of the sky-god." He lifted up the leopard to go and give to Nyame, the sky-god. The sky-god said, "My hands have touched it; what remains still remains."

Then the spider came back, carved an Akua's child, a black flat-faced wooden doll, tapped some sticky fluid from a tree and plastered the doll's body with it. Then he made *eto*, pounded yams, and put some in the doll's hand. Again he pounded some more and placed it in a brass basin; he tied string round the doll's waist, and went with it and placed it at the foot of the

odum tree, the place where the fairies come to play. And a fairy came along. She said, "Akua, may I eat a little of this mash?" Ananse tugged at the string, and the doll nodded her head. The fairy turned to one of the sisters, saying, "She says I may eat some." She said, "Eat some, then." And she finished eating, and thanked her. But when she thanked her, the doll did not answer. And the fairy said to her sister, "When I thank her, she does not reply." The sister of the first fairy said, "Slap her crying-place." And she slapped it, *pa!* And her hand stuck there. She said to her sister, "My hand has stuck there." She said, "Take the one that remains and slap her crying-place again." And she took it and slapped her, *pa!* and this one, too, stuck fast. And the fairy told her sister, saying, "My two hands have stuck fast." She said, "Push it with your stomach." She pushed it and her stomach stuck to it. And Ananse came and tied her up, and he said, "Fool, I have got you, I shall take you to the sky-god in exchange for his stories." And he went off home with her.

Now Ananse spoke to his mother, Ya Nsia, the sixth child, saying, "Rise up, let us go, for I am taking you along with the fairy to go and give you to the sky-god in exchange for his stories." He lifted them up, and went off there to where the sky-god was. Arrived there he said, "Sky-god, here is a fairy and my old woman whom I spoke about, here she is, too." Now the sky-god called his elders, the Kontire and Akwam chiefs, the Adonten, the Gyase, the Oyoko, Ankobea, and Kyidom. And he put the matter before them, saying, "Very great kings have come, and were not able to buy the sky-god's stories, but Kwaku Ananse, the spider, has been able to pay the price: I have received from him Osebo, the leopard; I have received from him Onini, the python; and of his own accord, Ananse has added his mother to the lot; all these things lie here." He said, "Sing his praise." "Eee!" they shouted. The sky-god said, "Kwaku Ananse, from today and going on for ever, I take my sky-god's stories and I present them to you, *kose! kose! kose!* my blessing, blessing, blessing! No more shall we call them the stories of the sky-god, but we shall call them spider-stories."

This, my story, which I have related, if it be sweet, or if it be not sweet, take some elsewhere, and let some come back to me.

[ASHANTI]

## The Separation of God from Man

IN THE BEGINNING of days Wulbari and man lived close together and Wulbari lay on top of Mother Earth, Asase Ya. Thus it happened that, as there was so little space to move about in, man annoyed the divinity, who in disgust went away and rose up to the present place where one can admire him but not reach him.

He was annoyed for a number of reasons. An old woman, while making her *fufu* outside her hut, kept on knocking Wulbari with her pestle. This hurt him and, as she persisted, he was forced to go higher out of her reach. Besides, the smoke of the cooking fires got into his eyes so that he had to go farther away. According to others, however, Wulbari, being so close to men, made a convenient sort of towel, and the people used to wipe their dirty fingers on him. This naturally annoyed him. Yet this was not so bad a grievance as that which caused We, the Wulbari of the Kassena people, to remove himself out of the reach of man. He did so because an old woman, anxious to make a good soup, used to cut off a bit of him at each mealtime, and We, being pained at this treatment, went higher.

Established in his new setting, Wulbari formed a court in which the animals were his chief attendants. Everything seemed to run smoothly for a time until one day Ananse, spider, who was Captain of the Guard, asked Wulbari if he would give him one corncob. "Certainly," Wulbari said, but he wanted to know what Ananse wished to do with only one corncob.

And Ananse said, "Master, I will bring you a hundred slaves in exchange for one corncob."

At this, Wulbari laughed.

But Ananse meant what he said, and he straightway took the road from the sky down to the earth, and there he asked the way from Krachi to Yendi. Some men showed him the road and Ananse set out. That evening he had gone as far as Tariasu. There he asked the chief for a lodging, and a house was shown him. And when it was time to go to bed, he took the corncob and asked the chief where he could put it for safe keeping. "It is the corn of Wulbari; he has sent me on a message to Yendi, and this corncob I must not lose."

So the people showed him a good place in the roof, and everyone went

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to sleep. But Ananse arose in the night and gave the corn to the fowls and, when day broke, he asked for the cob and lo! it was all eaten and destroyed. So Ananse made a great fuss and was not content till the people of Tariusu had given him a great basket of corn. Then he continued on his way and shortly sat down by the roadside, as he was weary from carrying so great a load.

Presently there came along a man with a live fowl in his hand which he was bringing back from his field. Ananse greeted him and they soon became friends. Ananse said that he liked the fowl—in fact, he liked it so much that he would give the whole of his load of corn in exchange if the man would agree. Such a proposal was not to be met with every day; the fellow agreed, and Ananse went on his way carrying the fowl with him.

That night he reached Kpandae, and he went and saluted the chief from whom he begged a night's lodging. This was readily granted and Ananse, being tired, soon went to bed. First, however, he showed his fowl to the people and explained that it was the fowl of Wulbari and that he had to deliver it to Yendi. They were properly impressed with this information and showed Ananse a nice, quiet fowl-house where it would be perfectly safe. Then all went to bed.

But Ananse did not sleep. As soon as he heard every one snoring, he arose and took his fowl and went outside the village and there sacrificed the poor bird. Leaving the corpse in the bush and placing some of the blood and feathers on the chief's own doorpost, he went back to bed.

At cock-crow Ananse arose and began shouting and crying out that the fowl of Wulbari was gone, that he had lost his place as Captain of the Guard, and that the unfortunate village of Kpandae would most certainly be visited by misfortune. The hullabaloo brought everyone outside, and by this time it was daylight. Great indeed was the clamour when the people learned what the fuss was about, and then suddenly Ananse pointed to the feathers and blood on the chief's doorpost.

There was no use denying the fact—the feathers were undoubtedly those of the unfortunate fowl, and just then a small boy found its body. It was evident to all that their own chief had been guilty of a sacrilege too dreadful to think about. They, therefore, one and all, came and begged Ananse to forgive them and to do something or other to divert the approaching calamity, which everyone thought must be inevitable.

Ananse at last said that possibly Wulbari would forgive them, if they gave him a sheep to take to Yendi.

"Sheep!" cried the people. "We will give you any number of sheep so long as you stop this trouble."

Ananse was satisfied with ten sheep and he went his way.

He had no further adventures until he reached the outskirts of Yendi with his sheep. He was a little tired, however, and sat down outside the village and allowed his sheep to graze. He was still resting when there came toward him

a company of people, wailing and weeping. They bore with them a corpse, and when Ananse saluted them and asked what they were doing, they said that a young man had died and that they were now carrying him back to his village for burial.

Ananse asked if the village was far, and they said it was far. Then he said that it was more than likely that the body would rot on the road, and they agreed. He then suggested that they should give him the corpse and in exchange he would give them the ten sheep. This was a novel kind of business deal, but it sounded all right and, after a little while, the company of young men agreed and they went off with the sheep, leaving their dead brother with Ananse.

The latter waited until nightfall and then walked into the town, carrying with him the corpse. He came to the house of the chief of Yendi and saluted that mighty monarch, and begged for a small place where he could rest. He added:

"I have with me as companion the son of Wulbari. He is his favourite son, and, although you know me as the Captain of Wulbari's Host, yet I am only as a slave to this boy. He is asleep now, and as he is so tired I want to find a hut for him."

This was excellent news for the people of Yendi and a hut was soon ready for the favourite son of Wulbari.

Ananse placed the corpse inside and covered it with a cloth so that it seemed verily like a sleeping man. Ananse then came outside and was given food. He feasted himself well and asked for some food for Wulbari's son. This he took into the hut where, being greedy, he finished the meal and came out bearing with him the empty pots.

Now the people of Yendi asked if they might play and dance, for it was not often that a son of Wulbari came to visit them. Ananse said that they might, for he pointed out to them that the boy was an extraordinarily hard sleeper and practically nothing could wake him—that he himself, each morning, had had to flog the boy until he woke, and that shaking was no use, nor was shouting. So they played and they danced.

As the dawn came, Ananse got up and said it was time for him and Wulbari's son to be up and about their business. So he asked some of the chief's own children who had been dancing to go in and wake the son of Wulbari. He said that, if the young man did not get up, they were to flog him, and then he would surely be aroused. The children did this, but Wulbari's son did not wake. "Hit harder, hit harder!" cried Ananse, and the children did so. But still Wulbari's son did not wake.

Then Ananse said that he would go inside and wake him himself. So he arose and went into the hut and called to Wulbari's son. He shook him, and then he made the startling discovery that the boy was dead. Ananse's cries drew everyone to the door of the compound, and there they learned the

dreadful news that the sons of their chief had beaten Wulbari's favourite child to death.

Great was the consternation of the people. The chief himself came and saw and was convinced. He offered to have his children killed; he offered to kill himself; he offered everything imaginable. But Ananse refused and said that he could think of nothing that day, as his grief was too great. Let the people bury the unfortunate boy and perhaps he, Ananse, would devise some plan by which Wulbari might be appeased.

So the people took the dead body and buried it.

That day all Yendi was silent, as all men were stricken with fear.

But in the evening Ananse called the chief to him and said, "I will return to my father, Wulbari, and I will tell him how the young boy has died. But I will take all the blame on myself and I will hide you from his wrath. You must, however, give me a hundred young men to go back with me, so that they can bear witness as to the boy's death."

Then the people were glad, and they chose a hundred of the best young men and made them ready for the long journey to the abode of Wulbari.

Next morning Ananse arose and, finding the young men ready for the road, he went with them back to Krachi and from there he took them up to Wulbari.

The latter saw him coming with the crowd of youths and came out to greet him. And Ananse told him all that he had done and showed how from one single corncob Wulbari had now got a hundred excellent young slaves. So pleased was Wulbari that he confirmed Ananse in his appointment as Chief of his Host and changed his name from Anyankon to Ananse, which it has remained to the present day.

Now Ananse got very conceited over this deed and used to boast greatly about his cleverness. One day he even went so far as to say that he possessed more sense than Wulbari himself. It happened that Wulbari overheard this, and he was naturally annoyed at such presumption. So, next day, he sent for his captain and told him that he must go and fetch him *something*. No further information was forthcoming, and Ananse was left to find out for himself what Wulbari wanted.

All day Ananse thought and thought, and in the evening Wulbari laughed at him and said, "You must bring me *something*. You boast everywhere that you are my equal, now prove it."

So next day Ananse arose and left the sky on his way to find *something*. Presently he had an idea and, sitting down by the wayside, he called all the birds together. From each one he borrowed a fine feather and then dismissed them. Rapidly he wove the feathers into a magnificent garment and then returned to Wulbari's town. There he put on the wonderful feather robe and climbed up the tree over against Wulbari's house. Soon Wulbari came out and saw the garishly coloured bird. It was a new bird to him, so he called

all the people together and asked them the name of the wonderful bird. But none of them could tell, not even the elephant, who knows all that is in the far, far bush. Someone suggested that Ananse might know, but Wulbari said that, unfortunately, he had sent him away on an errand. Everyone wanted to know the errand and Wulbari laughed and said, "Ananse has been boasting too much and I heard him say that he has as much sense as I have. So I told him to go and get me *something*." Everyone wanted to know what this *something* was, and Wulbari explained that Ananse would never guess what he meant, for the *something* he wanted was nothing less than the sun, the moon, and darkness.

The meeting then broke up amid roars of laughter at Ananse's predicament and Wulbari's exceeding cleverness. But Ananse, in his fine plumes, had heard what was required of him and, as soon as the road was clear, descended from his tree and made off to the bush.

There he discarded his feathers and went far, far away. No man knows quite where he went, but, wherever he went, he managed to find the sun and the moon and the darkness. Some say that the python gave them to him, others are not sure. In any case, find them he did and, putting them into his bag, he hastened back to Wulbari.

He arrived at his master's house late one afternoon and was greeted by Wulbari who, after a while, asked Ananse if he had brought back *something*.

"Yes," said Ananse, and went to his bag and drew out darkness. Then all was black and no one could see. Thereupon he drew out the moon and all could see a little again. Then last he drew out the sun, and some who were looking at Ananse saw the sun and they became blind, and some who saw only a little of it were blinded in one eye. Others, who had their eyes shut at the moment, were luckier, so they lost nothing of their eyesight.

Thus it came about that blindness was brought into the world, because Wulbari wanted *something*.

## The Creator Nyame and His Four Wives

NYAME WAS MARRIED to Akoko, the barn-door fowl, but after a while he took to himself four other wives. Akoko, of course, retained her rights as the head wife, and the other four wives obeyed her.

One day Nyame called the four newcomers together and asked each one what present she would give him in return for his having raised her above other women in the tribe. The first one promised that she would always sweep his compound for him and keep the place neat and tidy; the second said she would always cook for him and never complain when there were many visitors; the third agreed to spin cotton for him and to bring him all the water he might require; and the fourth one said that she would bear him a child of gold.

This last promise pleased Nyame, and every day he killed a sheep for this woman. But the child was long in coming. Just when Nyame's patience was giving out, the woman conceived, and Nyame detailed Akoko to tend and care for her.

So Akoko took the woman into her hut and, when the time of delivery was at hand, Akoko told her that, whatever else she did, she was to be sure to shut her eyes when the child was born and not to open them until she was told to do so. The woman obeyed, and Akoko hurried out and brought back a big pot.

Now it happened that the woman bore twins. The first one to be born was made entirely of silver, and Akoko at once took the babe and placed it in the pot. The second child was of gold, and Akoko placed it in the pot. Then she hurried outside and found two frogs. Returning with these, she placed them on the couch and then told the mother to open her eyes and see her children.

Then Akoko hastened out of the hut with the pot and ran with it as fast as she could to the far, far bush, where she found a dead odum tree. There she hid the pot with the two babies and then returned swiftly to Nyame's compound, passing by his hut on the way. She told her husband that the children had been born and asked him to go with her to see his offspring.

Nyame at once arose and went to the hut where the mother was lying. To his consternation and anger, he found two frogs instead of the expected child of gold. He gave orders that the frogs were to be killed at once and

that the woman should be sent into the farthest corner of his kingdom.

Now it chanced that Nyame had a certain hunter whose hut was situated in the far bush. He happened to be out hunting on the day the children were born and his chase led him to the odum tree. There his eye was attracted by the glitter of the golden child and he cried out, "Why, what is this?"

The children answered him, "We are the children of Nyame." But he could not believe that.

He took some of the dust that had fallen from their bodies, however, and put it into his bag. Then he took up the children and carried them to his hovel. There he kept them secretly, nor did he tell any man of what he had found.

And every time the hunter wanted money he would gather some of the children's dust. Thus he became a very rich man. Instead of having a solitary hovel in the bush, he built a huge compound and round him there gathered a great town.

Now not very far away there lived Ananse. One day he went out into the bush to gather some white ants for his fowls and he came across the new town. He was astounded to see that in the place where he expected a hovel there was so much wealth and so many people. His curiosity aroused, Ananse entered the town to learn how the change had come about. By sheer accident he espied the former hunter playing with the children. At once Ananse knew that the latter were the lost children of Nyame, and he hurried back home to send a message to their father. But the hunter had also seen Ananse, and he knew full well that that busybody would betray his secret. Therefore he called the children and told them that, as they claimed they were the children of Nyame, he proposed to take them to Nyame.

The next morning he prepared hammocks and fine clothes for the children and proceeded on the way to Nyame. On the road the children called their foster-father and told him that he must collect some stones with which to play *wari*, as they themselves could not speak to their father, but that the stones would tell him the whole story.

The man did so, and they arrived before Nyame. There the hunter placed stools and asked Nyame if he would play a game of *wari* with him. Nyame agreed, but the silver child said, no, he himself wished to play, that the stones would tell the story for which they had come.

Then the silver child and Nyame sat down to the game and, as the stones went round and round the board, the golden child sang the story of their adventures from the time of their mother's promise until their birth; he sang of the baseness of Akoko and of the kindness of the hunter who had fed them instead of killing them for their silver and gold.

Then Nyame knew them to be his children, and he sent straightway into the far, far bush to call back the woman whom he had exiled. When she arrived, she was dirty all over and her hair was uncut and unkempt. Nyame

himself washed the woman, and when she was all clean and nice again he sent for Akoko.

Great was Nyame's wrath. He tied the evil fowl Akoko, his first wife, by her foot to a stick and cursed her. Then he threw her down from the sky and gave orders that every time the fowl wished to drink she would first have to raise her head to him and beg. Further, Nyame gave orders that every man would in the future sacrifice fowls as the ordinary sacrifices to the gods.

Are not these things done to this day?

As for the children—once every year they are washed, and dust from them falls upon the earth. Some falls on men, and these are the lucky ones who become wealthy.

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[ KRACHI ]

## How Abosom, the Lesser Gods, Came into the World

THERE ONCE WAS a certain woman who bore eleven children. Every day when she got up and cooked food the children ate it all and the mother did not get any of it. She pondered long about the matter, and went off to the plantation and spoke to the silk-cotton tree, saying, "I shall send my eleven children to come beneath you here to pluck pumpkins; and when they come, pluck off eleven of your branches and kill those children of mine."

The silk-cotton tree said, "I have heard, and I shall do it for you."

The mother then went home and said to her children, "You must go to the plantation beneath the silk-cotton tree; there are pumpkins there. Go pick them and come back."

The children set off. They went and reached the silk-cotton tree. Number Eleven said, "Number One, stand still; Number Two, stand still; Number Three, stand still; Number Four, stand still; Number Five, stand still; Number Six, stand still; Number Seven, stand still; Number Eight, stand still; Number Nine, stand still; Number Ten, stand still; and I myself, Number Eleven, I have stood still."

Number Eleven then addressed them, saying, "Do you not know the sole reason why Mother said we must go and pick pumpkins?"

His brothers answered, "No."

Thereupon he said, "She has told this silk-cotton tree that, when we go there, he must pluck off branches and beat us. Therefore all of you cut sticks and throw them against this silk-cotton tree."

They cut the sticks and threw them against the silk-cotton tree. *Pim! pen! pim! pen!* was the sound they made. The silk-cotton tree supposed that the children had come. He took off eleven of his branches and let them fall to the ground. Little Number Eleven said, "You have seen—had we gone on there, the silk-cotton tree would have killed us."

They picked up the pumpkins and took them to their mother. She cooked them. And at once the children had eaten all! Their mother said, "Ah! as for this matter, I cannot bear it! I shall take these children and give them to the sky-god."

The next morning, when things became visible, she went and told the sky-god all about it, saying, "The children to whom I have given birth eat so fast and so much that when I wish to eat, I can't get anything. Hunger is killing me. Therefore, I implore you, let the children be brought and killed, so that I may get something to eat."

The sky-god said, "Is that really the case?"

The woman said, "I am speaking with a head, the inside of which is white."

So the sky-god picked out messengers, and they went and dug a large pit in which they placed broken bottles. The sky-god himself went and fetched a snake and a leopard, put them in the pit, and covered it over. And now the messenger went to call the children.

No sooner did they reach the place where the pit lay, than Number Eleven said, "Number One, stand still; Number Two, stand still; Number Three, stand still; Number Four, stand still; Number Five, stand still; Number Six, stand still; Number Seven, stand still; Number Eight, stand still; Number Nine, stand still; Number Ten, stand still; and I myself, little Number Eleven, I have stood still. You must pass here, but you must not pass there."

His brothers said, "Why, when a wide path lies there, must we pass through the bush?"

Now, as they were going along, they all carried clubs. Number Eleven said, "Throw one of these clubs upon this path." They threw a club upon the path, and it fell through into the pit. *Yiridi* was the sound of its fall. Number Eleven said, "There you are! You see! Had we passed there, we should all of us have died."

So they took a bypath and went off to meet the sky-god. The sky-god had caused holes to be dug, covered over, and stools placed upon them, so that when the children came to sit on them, they would fall into the holes. Soon the children arrived before the face of the sky-god. He spoke to them: "Stools are set there. You may go and be seated upon them."

Then Number Eleven said, "Who are we that we should be able to sit upon such very beautiful stools? So, sire, we are going to sit aside here."

Thereupon the sky-god gazed at the children and he said to himself, "I shall send these children to Death's village."

The next morning, when things became visible, he called the children and said, "You must go to Death who lives yonder and receive from her a golden pipe, a golden chewing-stick, a golden snuffbox, a golden whetstone, and a golden fly-switch."

Number Eleven said, "You are our master, wherever you will send us, we shall go."

The sky-god said, "Be off!"

So the children set out for Death's village. When they arrived there, Death said, "Why, when no one must ever come here, have you come here?"

They replied, "We were roaming about and came here quite by chance."

Death said, "Oh, all right then."

Now Death had ten children. With herself added, they made eleven. When things began to disappear—that is, when it became dark—Death divided up the children one by one and gave one to each of her children, while she herself and Number Eleven went to rest. When it was dark, Death then lit up her teeth until they shone red so that she might seize Number Eleven with them.

Number Eleven said, "Death, I am not yet asleep."

Death said, "When will you be asleep?"

Number Eleven said, "If you were to give me a golden pipe to smoke for a while, then I might fall asleep."

And Death fetched it for him.

A little while later, Death again lit up her teeth in order to go and seize Number Eleven with them.

Number Eleven said, "Death, I am not yet asleep."

Death said, "When will you be asleep?"

Number Eleven said, "If you were to bring me a golden snuffbox, I might go to sleep."

And Death brought it to him.

Again, soon afterward, Death was going to seize Number Eleven.

Number Eleven said, "I am not yet asleep."

Death said, "When will you be asleep?"

Number Eleven said, "If you were to go and fetch a golden chewing-stick for me so that I might chew it for a while, then I might fall asleep."

Death fetched it for him. A short time passed, and Death was about to seize him.

Number Eleven said, "Grandmother, I am not yet asleep."

And Death said, "Then when will you be asleep?"

Number Eleven said, "Grandmother, if you were to go and bring me a golden whetstone, then I might sleep."

And Death went and brought it. Again, soon afterward, Death rose up once more.

Number Eleven said, "Oh, Grandmother, I said I was not yet asleep."

Death said, "And what will be the day when you will be asleep?"

Number Eleven said, "If you were to go and take a calabash full of holes and go and splash water in it and boil some food for me to eat, then I might sleep."

Death lifted up a strainer and went off to the stream. When she splashed the water into it, the holes in the strainer let it pass through. Now Number Eleven said to his brothers, "Rise up and flee away." Then they rose up and fled, and Number Eleven went and cut plantain stems and placed them where his brothers had lain and took cloths and covered them over.

Now Death was at the stream splashing water. And Male Death called to Female Death, saying, "Ho there, Death!"

She replied, "*Adwo.*"

He said, "What are you doing?"

She replied, "Alas, is it not some small child whom I have got! When I am about to catch him, he says, 'I am not yet asleep.' He has taken all my things, and now he says I must take a strainer and splash water."

Male Death said, "Ah, are you a small child? If you pluck leaves and line the inside of the strainer and then splash water, would it not be all right?"

Female Death said, "Oh, how true!"

She plucked leaves, placed them inside, and splashed the water and went off. Number Eleven said, "Death, you have come already? Boil the food." Death cooked the food; she lit up her teeth in order to kill Number Eleven's brothers and cook them for food. When she went, she did not examine them carefully, and she herself killed all her own ten children.

The next day, very, very early, when things became visible, Death rose up and sat there by the fire. Number Eleven said, "Grandmother, a tsetse fly is sitting on your breast."

Death said, "Fetch the fly-switch which is lying there and kill it for me."

Number Eleven said, "Good gracious me! A person of your consequence—when a tsetse fly settles on you and a golden fly-switch lies there—you would use this old thing! Let me fetch the golden fly-switch and come and kill it."

Death said, "Go and fetch it from the room."

Number Eleven went and brought it. He purposely drove the fly away; he didn't kill it. Number Eleven said, "Oh, today, where this tsetse fly will rest, there I shall rest with him."

Then Number Eleven went to the room and took his bag in which lay the golden pipe and all the things. He said, "Grandmother Death, nothing will suffice save that I get the tsetse fly, put it in this bag, and bring it to you."

Number Eleven set off—*yiridi! yiridi! yiridi!* He reached the end of the town and said, "Ho, there, Grandmother Death! Pardon my saying so, but if you were not a perfect fool, could I have relieved you of all your things, could my brothers with whom I came have found a way of escape, and could I have made you also kill all your ten children? As for me, I am going off."

Death said, "You, a child like this! Wherever you rest, there I shall rest!"

Number Eleven leaped off—*yiridi! yiridi! yiridi!* and Death, too, went to chase him.

As Number Eleven was going, he overtook his brothers who were sitting on the path. They were making a bird-trap. Number Eleven said, "Have you not gone yet? Death is coming, so let us find some way to escape."

Now Death came upon them. Number Eleven took medicine and poured it on his brothers, and they went on top of a silk-cotton tree. And Death stood at the foot of the silk-cotton tree. She said, "Just now I saw those children, and where have they gone?"

Number Eleven was sitting above. He said to his brothers, "I am going to make water upon her."

His brothers said, "E! she is seeking us to catch us, and we have fled and come and sit here and yet you say, 'I am going to make water on her.'"

Number Eleven would not listen, and he made water over Death.

Death said, "Ah, there you are! Today you have seen trouble." Death said, "You, child, who are sitting up there, *Kyere-be-ne, Kyere-be-ne!*" Thereupon one of the children fell down. "*Kyere-be-ne!*" a second one fell down. Soon there remained only Number Eleven.

Death said, "Child, *Kyere-be-ne!*" and Number Eleven leaped and descended on the ground, *kirim!* And Death then went on top of the silk-cotton tree.

Number Eleven said, "You, great big woman, you too, *Kyere-be-ne!*"

And Death, also, came down, *tum!* She was dead.

Number Eleven went and plucked medicine, rolled it between his palms, and sprinkled it on his brothers, and they rose up. Number Eleven was going to throw the medicine away, when some of it dropped on Death, and Death awoke. She said, "You have killed me, and you have also awakened me. Today you and I will have a chase."

Then they all started to run off at once, *kiri! kiri! kiri!* Now Death was chasing them. As they were going, there lay before them a big river in flood. When Number Eleven and his brothers reached it, the brothers knew how to swim and they swam across. Number Eleven alone did not know how to swim. The children stood on the other side; they cried and cried and cried; their mouths became swollen up. As for Number Eleven, he turned into a stone.

Death reached the river. She said, "Oh, these children! You stand there! Let me get a stone to throw and hit your swollen mouths." Death, when she looked down, saw a stone lying there. She picked it up and threw it. As the stone was travelling, it said, "Winds take me and set me on the other side." It alighted on the other side. Number Eleven said, "Here I am!"

Death said, "Ah, that child! I have no further matter to talk to you about. All I have to say to you is this: Go and remain at home and change into one of the lesser gods, and, if anyone whom I wish to take comes to where you are, do you inform me. If I so desire, I will leave him and make you a present of him; but what I wish in exchange you must receive it for me."

That is how the Abosom, the lesser gods, came into the world. They are descended from the small child Number Eleven.

## Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky

MANY YEARS ago the sun and the water were great friends, and both lived on the earth together. The sun very often used to visit the water, but the water never returned his visits. At last the sun asked the water why it was that he never came to see him in his house. The water replied that the sun's house was not big enough, and that if he came with his people he would drive the sun out.

The water then said, "If you wish me to visit you, you must build a very large compound; but I warn you that it will have to be a tremendous place, as my people are very numerous and take up a lot of room."

The sun promised to build a very big compound, and soon afterward he returned home to his wife, the moon, who greeted him with a broad smile when he opened the door. The sun told the moon what he had promised the water, and the next day he commenced building a huge compound in which to entertain his friend.

When it was completed, he asked the water to come and visit him the next day.

When the water arrived, he called out to the sun and asked him whether it would be safe for him to enter, and the sun answered, "Yes, come in, my friend."

The water then began to flow in, accompanied by the fish and all the water animals.

Very soon the water was knee-deep, so he asked the sun if it was still safe, and the sun again said, "Yes," so more water came in.

When the water was level with the top of a man's head, the water said to the sun, "Do you want more of my people to come?"

The sun and the moon both answered, "Yes," not knowing any better, so the water flowed in, until the sun and moon had to perch themselves on the top of the roof.

Again the water addressed the sun, but, receiving the same answer, and more of his people rushing in, the water very soon overflowed the top of the roof, and the sun and the moon were forced to go up into the sky, where they have remained ever since.

## The Sun and the Children

ONCE SOME children, at their mother's behest, very gently approached the sun's armpit, as the sun lay sleeping. They were to lift up the sun's armpit.

At the same time, another woman ordered her children to do the same thing. She told them that if they approached ever so gently and drew up the sun's armpit, then the rice of the Bushmen would become dry, and the sun, as it proceeded from place to place across the sky, would cause everything to become bright. For this reason it was that the old woman, their mother, coaxed her children to do as she asked. "But, children," she said, "you must wait for the sun, who is making us so cold, to lie down to sleep. Then approach him gently and, all together, lift him up and throw him into the sky." Thus, indeed, did both of the old women speak.

And so the children approached the sun. They first sat down and looked at him in order to determine whether, as he lay there, he was looking at them. Finally they saw him lying there very quietly, his elbow lifted up so that his armpit shone upon the ground. Before the children prepared to throw him up into the sky they remembered what the old woman, their mother, had said: "O children, going yonder, you must speak to him when you throw him up. You must tell him that he must be the sun altogether, so that he will proceed forward while he feels that he is altogether the sun—the sun who is hot and who, as he passes along the sky, causes the Bushman rice to become dry—the sun who is hot as he stands above in the sky."

Thus had their mother, the old woman, whose head was white, spoken. They had listened and were going to obey her.

When all was in readiness, they took hold of the sun, all of them together, lifted him, raised him, even though he was hot to touch, and threw him up in the sky, addressing him as they threw him up: "O sun, you must altogether stand fast and you must proceed along your way—you must stand fast while you are hot."

Then the children returned to their mother, and one of them went to her and said, "Our companion, who is here, this one, took hold of him. So did I. Then my younger brother and my still younger brother, they all took hold

of him. 'Grasp hold of him firmly,' I said, 'and throw him up. Grasp the old man firmly and throw him up.' Thus I spoke to them. Then the children threw him up, the old man, the sun."

Then another one of those who had been present—a youngster indeed—he also spoke to her and said, "Oh, grandmother, we threw him up, the sun, and we told him what you had told us, that he should altogether become the sun, the sun who is hot, for us who are cold. And we addressed him thus: 'O my grandfather, sun's armpit! Remain there at that place. Become the sun who is hot so that the Bushman rice may dry for us, so that you may make the whole earth light, that the earth may become warm in the summer, that you may altogether make heat. For that reason, you must shine everywhere. You must take away the darkness. You must come indeed so that the darkness will go away.'"

And thus it is. The sun comes, the darkness departs; the sun sets, the darkness comes and, then, at night the moon comes. The moon comes out; it brightens the darkness and the darkness then departs. It has taken the darkness away and now it moves along, continually brightening the darkness. And then the moon sets and the sun, following, comes out. The sun now drives away the darkness, indeed drives away the moon as it stands there. The sun actually pierces the moon with his knife and that is why it decays. Therefore the moon said, "O sun! leave the backbone for the children!" And the sun did so.

Then the moon painfully went away, painfully returned home. He went home to become another, a moon which is whole. He again comes to life although it had seemed that he had died. He becomes a new moon and feels as though he had put on a new stomach. He becomes large; he is alive again. Then he goes along at night, feeling that he is the moon once more. Indeed he feels he is a shoe, the shoe that Mantis threw into the sky, and ordered to become the moon.

That is what the sun has done—made all the earth bright. And thus it is that the people walk while the earth is light. Then people can see the bushes, can see other people. They can see the meat which they are eating. They can see the springbok, can hunt it in summer. It is when the sun shines, likewise, that they can hunt the ostrich. And so—because the sun brightens the earth, because he shines upon the path of men—the Bushmen steal up to the gemsbok, steal up to the kudu, travel about in summer, and go visiting one another. Because the sun shines hottest upon the path of men in summer, they always go shooting and hunting then, for they are certain to espy the springbok. It is in the summer that they lie contented in their little homes made of bushes, and they scratch up the earth. All this they do when the springbok comes.

The people of whom we are speaking were the first Bushmen, the men of the early race. It is they who first inhabited this earth and it was their chil-

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dren who worked with the sun, who threw the sun up and made him ascend so that he might warm the earth for them, and that they might be able to sit in the sun.

The sun, they say, was originally a man who lived on earth. In the beginning, he gave forth brightness for a space just around his own dwelling. As his shining was confined to a certain space just at and around his own house, the rest of the country seemed as if the sky were very cloudy—as it looks now, in fact, when the sun is behind thick clouds. This shining came from one of the sun's armpits as he lay with one arm lifted up. When he put down his arm, darkness fell everywhere; when he lifted it up again, it was as if day came. In the day, the sun's light used to be white, but, at night, it was red like a fire. When the sun was thrown up into the sky it became round and never was a man again.

The same is true of the moon. He, too, was once a man who could talk. But today neither the sun nor the moon talk. They just live in the sky.

[ BUSHMEN ]

## The Brothers, Sun and Moon, and the Pretty Girl

**H**OW DID IT HAPPEN? A wife was pregnant, she bore a child, Moon, to begin with. She returned, became pregnant again, and this time bore Sun. Far in the wilderness was a man, and he had a pretty daughter.

Sun and Moon grew up and one day went for a stroll. In the wilderness they came upon the pretty daughter, and they asked her, "Where have you got your house? We live in that wilderness," they said to the girl. "Show us exactly where you live."

She replied to them, "We live in that wilderness. And there a great many dangerous animals."

Moon, the elder one of the brothers, said to the girl, "Do you like us? Shall we woo you?"

She said to them, "Yes, I am capable of liking you but may not."

Sun then asked, "Who is it that does not like us?"

She said, "It is my father."

Moon said to the girl, "Well, then, we shall wait for two days, and on the third we shall come to your village. We shall send our father's children."

They waited for two days, and on the third they sent the children, then they started out for the wilderness. And when they were quite close, they caught sight of the girl far off at the other edge of the jungle. They went to meet her and asked her, "Well, where is your village?"

She said, "Our village is here in the wilderness."

They asked her, "*I, I!* Are there people that live in the place where there is no hut?"

She said, "Yes, we live in the wilderness, we have no hut."

They said, "We wish that you would show us where you live."

The girl said, "All right, then." And she went on ahead to show them the way.

A big snake then appeared. Sun and Moon said, "Let us not be afraid!" They were not frightened, but went along on their way. When they had got as far as the foot of a certain tree, they found a number of snakes confronting them; but they went farther along and came upon a place full of hairs like horsehair, forming a sort of darkness before them. Nowhere were they able to see any path to take.

Sun said to the girl, "You! Have you brought us here so we should die at your place?"

She said to them, "No, but we have not yet arrived at our village."

And he, Moon, said to Sun, "Brother Sun, what are we to do now?" They said to the girl, "Tell us if you like us, and whether we are to woo you? We now wish to return home."

The girl said to them, "Go, and come back the day after tomorrow!"

They went away and returned home.

They reached their home. And Moon loved the girl very much, more than Sun did. The following morning Sun went to herd their father's cattle, and Moon hid himself from Sun and went alone out into the wilderness to seek the girl and take her to wife.

When he had got there, someone said to him, "Who is it?"

He said, "It is I."

He was asked, "Who are you?"

He answered, "It is I, Moon."

He was asked, "Whither are you going?"

He said, "I am coming hither."

The other one asked him, "From where have you come?"

Moon said to him, "I come from our village." And he added, "And you, what are you doing here?"

"I am not doing anything in particular," said the stranger.

"And I, neither am I doing anything in particular—I am just out for a walk," answered Moon.

The other asked him again, "Why have you come here?"

"Not for anything special."

The other man said to him, "I, I? Not for anything special?"

Moon replied, "I, I! I did not come here for anything special! I, I have come here without any purpose."

The strange man said, "Why do you ask *me* what I am seeking, but conceal and refuse to reveal your own business?"

Then Moon was frightened and said to himself, "I do not know these people, and they do not know me. I will return home!"

He returned home and said to Sun, "Brother, when I left you I saw a lot of queer things."

Sun said to Moon, "Well, let us go some day and you shall show me those things; just now I am busy tending the cattle."

Their mother said to them, "Go ye and find the girl, I will do the herding."

They went, and when they got to the wilderness, they saw swords appearing. They fought against the swords but saw no human being. The swords disappeared, and they went on farther and saw trees which grew so densely before them that there was no path. Sun drew his sword and cut down some of the trees. The trees then disappeared altogether, and they did not see them again. They went farther ahead and came to a pond; they were

close to it. They saw teeth coming up out of the interior of the pond. They approached quite near. Two teeth passed right between them, one passed them to the left and another to the right. Moon fell back behind Sun; he was frightened.

Sun said to him, "I, I, Moon! Are you afraid? You are the elder one, go on ahead, let us walk on!"

"Yes, let us go on then! We are equally brave."

The teeth returned into the pond, and Sun and Moon walked on. When they had not got very far, they saw hairs coming up out of the pond. Moon looked at the girl's father, for it was he, and said to Sun, "My brother, here we shall perish!"

"It cannot be helped!"

The hairs returned, however, into the pond. When they had got close to the pond, again Sun sat down on a tree at the edge of the pond together with Moon. The beard of the girl's father came up to them but returned into the pond. Bones of dead people came up.

Moon said, "Oh! I am dying!" and suddenly he ran away.

Sun was left behind, alone there, sitting on the tree. The water rose, part of it came on one side of him and part of it on the other; it flowed all around him. He was sitting in the midst of the water, which presently returned to the pond. Sun did not budge from the spot. The water, however, returned to the river. Then smoke rose up out of the water. Sun said to himself, "I do not intend to die here, although my brother got frightened and ran away. I am going to remain, so that I may see that girl!" The smoke ceased, and the water flamed like fire. The fire, however, soon went out.

After that there came out of the water a human being—it was the girl. She came and took the young man by the hand and said to him, "Now we will go home to our place, and I shall give you food."

The girl said to the pond, "Get out of the way for this man! I am going to cook food for him." The water drew off to the side of the pond, went over to one side.

The girl went and cooked food which she brought and gave the young man, and he ate. She said to him:

"I, it is you that is to take me to wife, because you are a man who is not afraid of anything. And you, now you are my husband because you are not afraid of all the things that were shown you, but your elder brother ran away."

Then the girl's father said to Sun, "Take the girl. When you have gone home you are to tarry there with her for five days, and then you yourself and your father are to bring the girl back here!"

They started off. Moon had returned and sat down in the compound. He had a sword, and he said, "When Sun comes along with that girl, I shall kill him."

Then the girl approached, and Sun was walking in front of her. They

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came and found that Moon was in the compound. They asked him, "Moon, is there anyone at home in our village?"

"Sun, come here!"

Sun carried a sword. He went forward, and sat down. The mother came out and Sun said to her, "Mother, go and take that girl and conduct her into the village!"

The mother asked him, "This girl, is it you that have taken her to wife, or is it Moon?"

"She is my wife, Moon ran away." Sun repeated: "Moon ran away."

The latter grasped his sword. Sun looked up and saw the sword quite close to him, for Moon gave him a cut. And he, Sun, who also carried his sword, slashed Moon, and they fought. Sun was badly cut by Moon.

The mother cried a great deal. She took millet and other kinds of provisions and spoilt them for Moon. And she threw millet and all the other foodstuffs on the fire, saying, "You, Moon, have damaged Sun in this way. May you be destroyed in the same way!" And the mother took some milk, and she and her husband poured it into a calabash bowl along with millet and beer. Thereupon they blessed Sun, that he would shine brightly for mankind. The girl remained on in the village as Sun's wife, but Moon had no wife, and he who had formerly been more brilliant than Sun no longer was so.

Ever since that time and even now Moon avoids Sun; they will not agree to approach each other at the same fire, nor to eat food together. When Sun goes down, Moon comes out; when Sun comes out of the village, Moon rapidly runs away. Is not that a curse? Moon has become small, and Sun has become big.

## The Son of the Wind

THE SON OF THE WIND was once a man. When he was a man he used to go shooting and to roll a ball but later he became a bird and flew, no longer walking as he used to do when he was a man. When he had changed into a bird, he flew up and dwelt in a mountain hole. The mountain hole was his dwelling, and out of it he would fly every day and, later on, return. In this hole he slept and, awakening in the morning, he would leave in order to seek food. He sought it everywhere and he ate, ate, ate, until he had his fill. Then he would return to his mountain hole to sleep.

But when he was a man he had been quiet and still.

On one occasion when he was rolling his ball, he called out to Nakati, "Nakati, there it goes!" And Nakati exclaimed, "O comrade, truly there it goes!" He called him comrade because he didn't know the other's name. Yet it was truly he who is the wind, who had said, "Nakati, there it goes!"

Not knowing his name, however, Nakati went to his mother to question her. "Mother," he said, "do tell me the name of our comrade over there. He calls me by my name but I do not know his and I would like to know it when I am rolling the ball back to him."

"No, I will not at this moment tell you his name, that I will only do and let you utter it after Father has made a strong shelter for our hut. And then, when I tell you his name, the moment I have uttered it, you must at once scamper away and run home, so that you can seek the shelter of the hut."

Again Nakati went over to play with his companion and to roll the ball. When they had finished, Nakati went once more to question his mother, and she exclaimed, "He is *erriten-kuan-kuan*, he is *gau-gaubu-ti*!"

The next day Nakati again went to roll the ball with his companion. He did not, however, utter his playmate's name, for his mother had cautioned him to be silent on that matter, even when he was called by name. She had said, "When the time comes for you to utter his name, you must run home at once."

Now once more Nakati went to roll the ball with his friend, hoping and hoping that his father would finally finish making the shelter for their hut. At last he saw that his father had sat down, that he had indeed finished. Therefore, when he beheld this, he exclaimed, "There it goes, O *erriten-*

*kuan-kuan!* There it goes, O *gau-gaubu-ti!*" No sooner had he uttered it than he scampered away and ran home. His companion thereupon began to lean over, and then fall down. As he lay there he kicked violently upon the *vlei*. As he kicked, huts blew away, bushes vanished and the people could not see because of the dust. Thus was the wind blowing.

When the mother of the wind came out of her hut to grab him and set him on his feet again, he struggled with her for he wished to continue to lie down. However his mother took hold of him firmly and set him on his feet.

And so, because of all this, we who are Bushmen are wont to say, "The wind seems to be lying down, for it is blowing fiercely. When the wind stands on its feet then it is quiet and still. Thus it acts. The noise it makes comes from its knee; that is what makes the sound. I had wished that it might blow gently for us, that we might go out, that we might ascend the place yonder, that we might behold the river bed yonder, standing behind the hill. For we have driven the springbok from this place. They have gone to yonder dry river bed standing behind the hill."

[ BUSHMEN ]

## How the Stars Came

EBOPP, THE LEMUR, and Mbaw, the dormouse, were making a tour in the bush. They looked for a good place to make a farm. When they found one, they cut down the trees and took two days to clear enough ground. After this, they went back to the town where the other animals lived.

The next morning Ebopp said, "Let us go back to our new farms and build a small house."

This they did. Ebopp made his, and Mbaw his.

Now, before a new town is begun, a little shed called *ekpa ntan* is always made where the Egbo house is to stand. Ebopp and Mbaw accordingly set to work and built an *ekpa ntan*. Then they went back to their old town and rested for two days.

On the third day they went to work again. Ebopp worked on his farm, Mbaw on his. That night they slept in the huts they had built and at dawn started to work once more. When night came, Ebopp lighted a lamp and said:

"I do not want to sleep here. If we sleep here we shall sleep hungry. Let us go back to our old town."

When they got there their wives cooked for them. Ebopp said to Mbaw, "Come and join together with me in eating." So his friend came and ate with him.

Afterwards Mbaw said, "Let us now go to my house and have food there too." So they went thither.

After they had eaten all that Mbaw had cooked, Ebopp went home.

The next morning he went to call for his friend and said, "Go and get young plantains to plant on the farm." Both of them collected a great basketful and went to the place where the new farms were—Ebopp to his, and Mbaw to his. They worked hard.

At midday, Ebopp said, "Let us rest a little while and eat the food we have brought." To this Mbaw agreed, and after some time they set to work again.

About five o'clock Ebopp called, "Let us go back now to the old town, for it is very far off."

So they left off working and went back, but before they could get there night fell.

The next morning they took more young plantains and, again, worked hard all day. When it was time to go back, Ebopp asked, "How many of the young plantains remain to be planted?"

Mbaw answered, "About forty."

Whereupon Ebopp said, "Of mine also there remain about forty."

At dawn, the next day, they went to their old farms to get some more plantain cuttings. Then they went back to the new farms and began planting.

As soon as Ebopp had finished, he said, "I have finished mine."

To this Mbaw replied, "Mine also are finished."

Ebopp said, "My work is done. I need come here only for the harvest."

Then they both went back to their old town and told their wives, "We have finished setting out the plantains. We hope that you will go and plant koko-yams tomorrow. Try, both of you, to get baskets full of koko-yams for the planting."

To this the women agreed and, when they had collected as many as were necessary, they set out for the new farms.

When they arrived, Mbaw's wife asked the wife of Ebopp, "Do you think we can finish planting all these today?"

Ebopp's wife answered, "Yes, we can do it."

All day they worked hard, and at night they went home and said, "We have finished planting all the koko-yams."

Ebopp said, "Good, you have done well."

Now the name of Ebopp's wife was Akpan Anwan. She and her sister, Akadem, were the daughters of Obassi Osaw. When she got home she started to cook the evening meal for her husband. As soon as it was ready, she placed it upon the table, set water also in a cup, and laid spoons near by.

They were eating together when a slave named Umaw ran in. He had just come from the town of Obassi Osaw. He said, "I would speak to Ebopp alone." When Akpan Anwan had left the room, the messenger said, "You are eating, but I bring you news that Akadem your sister-in-law is dead."

Ebopp cried out aloud in his grief and sent a messenger to call his friend Mbaw.

As soon as the latter heard, he came running and said, "What can we do? We are planting new farms and beginning to build a new town. There is hardly any food to be got. How then can we properly hold the funeral customs?"

Ebopp said, "Nevertheless, I must try my best."

When Umaw got ready to return, Ebopp said, "Say to Obassi Osaw, 'Wait for me for six days, then I will surely come.'"

The next morning he said to Mbaw, "Come now, let us do our utmost to collect what is necessary for the rites of my sister-in-law."

They went through the town and bought all the food which they could find. Then Ebopp went back and said to his wife, "I did not wish to tell you before about the death of your sister, but today I must tell you. Make ready. In five days' time I will take you back to your father's town to hold the funeral feast."

Akpan Anwan was very grieved to hear of this and wept.

Ebopp said to Mbaw, "We must get palm wine for the feast, also rum for the libations. How can we get these? I have no money, and you also have none."

Mbaw said, "Go round among the townsfolk and see if any of them will lend you some."

Ebopp said, "Good!" He then began to walk up and down, begging from all his friends, but none would give to him, although it was a big town. At last he went down to the place where they were making palm oil by the river. Quite nearby lived Iku, the water chevrotain. Ebopp told him his trouble and begged help, but Iku said, "I am very sorry for you, but I have nothing to give."

Ebopp was quite discouraged by now and, full of sorrow, turned to go away. When Iku saw this he said:

"Wait a minute, there is one thing I can do. You know that I have 'four eyes.' I will give you two of them, and with them you can buy all that you need."

From out of his head he took the two eyes with which he used to see in the dark. They shone so brightly that Ebopp knew they were worth a great price. He took them home and showed them to his wife and his friend Mbaw.

The latter said, "From today you are freed from all anxiety. With those you can buy all that is needed."

The next morning they gathered together all that had been collected, the plantains and the two shining eyes. Ebopp, Mbaw, and Akpan carried the loads between them. They set out for the dwelling place of Obassi Osaw.

When they arrived at the entrance of the town, Akpan Anwan began to weep bitterly. She threw down her burden and ran to the spot where her sister lay buried. Then she lay down on the grave and would not rise again.

Ebopp carried his own load into the house where the dead woman had dwelt. Then he went back and got his wife's load which she had left behind.

The townsfolk said to Ebopp, "You have come to keep your sister-in-law's funeral customs today. Bring palm wine. Bring rum also for the libations, and let us hold the feast."

Ebopp said, "I have brought nothing but plantains. All else that is necessary I mean to buy here."

Now there was a famine in Obassi Osaw's town, so Ebopp put all of his plantains in the Egbo House. The next day he sent a message to Obassi Osaw to bring his people, so that the food might be divided among them. Each man received one plantain.

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Then Osaw said, "All that you have brought is eaten. If you cannot give us more, you shall not take my daughter back with you to your country."

Ebopp went to find his friend and told him what Obassi had said.

"Shall I sell the two eyes?" he asked. "They are worth hundreds and hundreds of plantains and many pieces of cloth, but if I sell them now, the people are so hungry they will only give a small price."

Mbaw said, "Do not mind. See, I will teach you how to get more sense.

"You hold one in your hand, and it is a big thing like a great shining stone; but if you put it in a mortar and grind it down, it will become, not one, but many stones, and some of the small pieces you can sell."

This Ebopp did. He ground up the great bright stones which had been Iku's eyes until they became like shining sand.

Then Ebopp and Mbaw went and procured a black cap which they filled with the fragments.

Mbaw said, "Now go and look round the town till you find someone who can sell what we need."

Ebopp did so, and in the house of Effion Obassi he saw great stores hidden—food and palm wine, palm oil in jars, and rum for the sacrifice.

Ebopp said to Effion, "If you will sell all this to me, I will give you in exchange something which will make all the townsfolk bow down before you."

Effion said, "I will not sell all, but half of what I have I will sell you."

So Ebopp said, "Very well. I will take what you give me, only do not open the thing I shall leave in exchange until I have returned to my own country. When you do open it, as I said before, all the townsfolk will bow down before you."

So the funeral feast was prepared, and the people were satisfied.

When the rites were finished, Obassi said, "It is good. You can go away now with your wife."

So Ebopp said to Mbaw and Akpan Anwan, "Come, let us go back to our own town. We must not sleep here tonight."

When they had reached home once more, Ebopp sent a slave named Edet to Effion Obassi with the message:

"You may now open the cap. I have reached my town again."

It was evening time, but Effion at once called the townspeople together and said, "I have a thing here which is worth a great price."

They cried, "Let us see it."

He answered, "My thing is a very good thing, such as you have never seen before."

He brought the cap outside and opened it before them. All the shining things fell out. As they fell, a strong breeze came and caught them and blew them all over the town. They lay on the roads and on the floors of the compounds, each like a little star.

All the children came round and began picking them up. They gathered

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and gathered. In the daytime they could not see them, but every night they went out and sought for the shining things. All that they picked up they put in a box. At length many had been gathered together and they shone like a little sun in the box. At the end of about a month nearly all had been collected. They could not shut down the lid, however, because the box was too full, so when a great breeze came by it blew all the shining things about again. That is why sometimes we have a small moon and plenty of stars shining around it, while sometimes we have a big moon and hardly any stars are to be seen. The children take a month to fill the box again.

When the sparkles were scattered about the town, Effion sent a messenger to Ebopp to ask: "Can you see the things shining from your town?"

At that time earth and sky were all joined together, like a house with an upstairs.

Ebopp went out and looked upward to the blue roof overhead. There he saw the small things sparkling in the darkness.

The next day he went to Iku and said, "Will you please go into a deep hole? I want to look at your eyes."

Iku went inside the hole. Ebopp looked at his eyes. They were very bright, just like the sparkles which shone in the sky.

The cause of all the stars, therefore, is Ebopp, who took Iku's eyes to Obassi's town.

Iku's eyes are like the stars.

The moon shines when all the fragments are gathered together. When it shines most brightly it is because the children have picked up nearly all the fragments and put them into the box.

[ E K O I ]

## How the First Rain Came

ONCE, LONG AGO, a daughter was born to Obassi Osaw, and a son to Obassi Nsi. When both of them had come to marriageable age, Nsi sent a message and said, "Let us exchange children. I will send my son that he may wed one of your girls, and you send your daughter down to my town, that she may become my wife."

To this Obassi Osaw agreed. So the son of Nsi went up to the heavens, carrying many fine gifts, and Ara, the sky maiden, came down to dwell on earth. With her came seven men slaves and seven women slaves whom her father gave her to work for her, so that she should not be called upon to do anything herself.

One day, very early in the morning, Obassi Nsi said to his new wife, "Go, work on my farm!"

She answered, "My father gave me the slaves, so that they should work instead of me. Therefore send them."

Obassi Nsi was very angry and said, "Did you not hear that I gave my orders to you? You yourself shall work on my farm. As for the slaves, I will tell them what to do."

The girl went, though very unwillingly, and when she returned at night, tired out, Nsi said to her, "Go at once to the river and bring water for the household."

She answered, "I am weary with working on the farm. May not my slaves at least do this while I rest?"

Again Nsi refused and drove her forth, and she went backward and forward many times, carrying the heavy jars. Night had fallen long before she had brought enough.

The next morning Nsi bade her do the most menial services, and all day long he kept her at work, cooking, fetching water, and making fire. That night, again, she was very weary before she was allowed to lie down to rest. At dawn on the third morning Nsi said, "Go and bring in much firewood." Now the girl was young and unused to work, so as she went she wept, and the tears were still falling when she came back carrying her heavy burden.

As soon as Nsi saw her enter crying he called her. "Come here and lie down before me. . . . I wish to shame you in the presence of all my people. . . ." Thereupon the girl wept still more bitterly.

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No food was given her until midday on the morrow, and then not enough. When she had finished eating all there was, Nsi said to her, "Go out and bring in a great bundle of fish poison."

The girl went into the bush to seek for the plant, but as she walked through the thick undergrowth a thorn pierced her foot. She lay down alone. All day long she lay there in pain, but as the sun sank she began to feel better. She got up and managed to limp back to the house.

When she entered, Nsi said to her, "Early this morning I ordered you to go and collect fish poison. You have stayed away all day and done nothing." So he drove her into the goat-pen, and said, "Tonight you shall sleep with the goats; you shall not enter my house."

That night she ate nothing. Early next morning one of the slaves opened the door of the goat pen and found the girl lying within with her foot all swollen and sore. She could not walk, so for five days she was left with the goats. After that her foot began to get better.

As soon as she could walk again, Nsi called her and said, "Here is a pot. Take it to the river and bring it back filled to the brim."

She set out, but when she reached the waterside, she sat down on the bank and dipped her foot in the cool stream. She said to herself, "I will never go back; it is better to stay here alone."

After a while one of the slaves came down to the river. He questioned her: "At dawn this morning you were sent to fetch water. Why have you not returned home?"

The girl said, "I will not come back."

When the slave had left her she thought, "Perhaps he will tell them, and they will be angered and may come and kill me. I had better go back after all." So she filled her pot and tried to raise it upon her head, but it was too heavy. Then she lifted it on to a tree trunk that lay by the side of the river and, kneeling beneath, tried to draw it in that way upon her head; but the pot fell and broke and, in falling, a sharp shard cut off one of her ears. The blood poured down from the wound, and she began to weep again, but suddenly thought, "My father is alive, my mother is alive; I do not know why I stay here with Obassi Nsi. I shall go back to my own father."

Then she set out to find the road by which Obassi Osaw had sent her to earth. She came to a high tree and from it saw a long rope hanging. She said to herself, "This is the way by which my father sent me."

She caught the rope and began to climb. Before she had gone halfway she grew very weary, and her sighs and tears mounted up to the kingdom of Obassi Osaw. Midway on her climb, she stayed and rested a while. Afterward she went on again.

After a long time she reached the top of the rope and found herself on the border of her father's land. Here she sat down almost worn out with weariness, and still weeping.

Now, one of the slaves of Obassi Osaw had been sent out to collect fire-

wood. He chanced to stray from his path and came to a place near where the girl was resting. He heard her sobs mixed with broken words and ran back to the town, crying out, "I have heard the voice of Ara. She is weeping about a mile from here."

Obassi heard but could not believe, yet he said, "Take twelve slaves, and, should you find my daughter as you say, bring her home."

When they reached the place they found that it was indeed Ara. So they carried her home.

When her father saw her coming he called out, "Take her to the house of her mother."

There one of the lesser wives, Akun by name, heated water and bathed her. Then they prepared a bed and covered her well with soft skins and fine cloths.

While she was resting, Obassi killed a young kid and sent it to Akun, bidding her to prepare it for his daughter. Akun took it and, after she had washed it, cooked it whole in a pot. Obassi also sent a great bunch of plantains and other fruits, and these, too, were arranged in orderly fashion upon a table before the girl. Then they poured water into a gourd and brought palm wine in a native cup, and bade her to drink.

After she had eaten and drunk, Obassi came with four slaves carrying a great chest made of ebony. He bade them set it before her, opened it and said, "Come here; choose anything you will from this box."

Ara chose two pieces of cloth, three gowns, four small loincloths, four looking glasses, four spoons, two pairs of shoes, four cooking pots, and four chains of beads.

After this Obassi Osaw's storekeeper, named Ekpenyon, came forward and brought her twelve anklets. Akun gave her two gowns, a *fufu* stick, and a wooden knife.

Her own mother brought her five gowns, richer than all the rest, and five slaves to wait upon her.

After this Obassi Osaw said, "A house has been made ready for you; go there that you may be its mistress."

Then he went out and called together the members of the chief society of the town. This was named Angbu. He said to the men, "Go, fetch the son of Obassi Nsi. Cut off both his ears and bring them to me. Then flog him and drive him down the road to his father's town, with this message from me: 'I had built a great house up here in my town. In it I placed your son and treated him kindly. Now that I know what you have done to my child, I send your son back to you earless, in payment for Ara's ear and the sufferings which you put upon her.'"

When the Angbu society had cut off the ears of the son of Obassi Nsi, they brought them before Obassi Osaw and drove the lad back on the earthward road, as they had been ordered.

Osaw took the ears and made a great *juju*, and by reason of this a strong

wind arose, and drove the boy earthward. On its wings it bore all the sufferings of Ara and the tears which she had shed through the cruelty of Obassi Nsi. The boy stumbled along, half blinded by the rain, and as he went he thought, "Obassi Osaw may do to me what he chooses. He has never done any unkind thing before. It is only in return for my father's cruelty that I must suffer all this."

So his tears mixed with those of Ara and fell earthward as rain.

Until that time there had been no rain on the earth. It fell for the first time when Obassi Osaw made the great wind and drove forth the son of his enemy.

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[ E K O I ]

## The Origin of Death

LONG, LONG AGO there was a great famine in the world, and a certain young man, while wandering in search of food, strayed into a part of the bush where he had never been before. Presently he perceived a strange mass lying on the ground. He approached and saw that it was the body of a giant whose hair resembled that of white men in that it was silky rather than woolly. It was of an incredible length and stretched as far as from Krachi to Salaga. The young man was properly awed at the spectacle, and wished to withdraw, but the giant, noticing him, asked what he wanted.

The young man told about the famine and begged the giant to give him some food. The latter agreed on condition that the youth would serve him for a while. This matter having been arranged, the giant said that his name was Owuo, or Death, and he then gave the boy some meat.

Never before had the latter tasted such fine food, and he was well pleased with his bargain. He served his master for a long time and received plenty of meat, but one day he grew homesick, and he begged his master to give him a short holiday. The latter agreed, if the youth would promise to bring another boy in his place. So the youth returned to his village and there persuaded his brother to go with him into the bush, and he gave him to Owuo.

In course of time the youth became hungry again and longed for the meat which Owuo had taught him to like so much. So one day he made up his mind to return to his master, and, leaving the village, he made his way back to the giant's abode. The latter asked him what he wanted, and when the youth told him that he wanted to taste once more of the good meat, the giant bade him enter the hut and take as much as he liked, but added that he would have to work for him again.

The youth agreed and entered the hut. He ate as much as he could and went to work at the task which his master set him. The work continued for a long time and the boy ate his fill every day. But, to his surprise, he never saw anything of his brother, and, whenever he asked about him, the giant told him that the lad was away on business.

Once more the youth grew homesick and asked for leave to return to his village. The giant agreed on condition that he would bring a girl for him, Owuo, to wed. So the youth went home and there persuaded his sister to go

into the bush and marry the giant. The girl agreed, and took with her a slave companion, and they all repaired to the giant's abode. There the youth left the two girls and went back to the village.

It was not very long after that he again grew hungry and longed for a taste of the meat. So he made his way once more into the bush and found the giant. The latter did not seem overpleased to see the boy and grumbled at being bothered a third time. However, he told the boy to go into the inner chamber of his hut and take what he wanted. The youth did so and took up a bone which he began to devour. To his horror he recognized it at once as being the bone of his sister. He looked around at all the rest of the meat and saw that it was that of his sister and her slave girl.

Thoroughly frightened, he escaped from the house and ran back to the village. There he told the elders what he had done and the awful thing he had seen. At once the alarm was sounded and all the people went out into the bush to see for themselves the dreadful thing they had heard about. When they drew near to the giant they grew afraid at the sight of so evil a monster. They went back to the village and consulted among themselves what they had best do. At last it was agreed to go to Salaga, where the end of the giant's hair was, and set a light to it. This was done, and when the hair was burning well they returned to the bush and watched the giant.

Presently the latter began to toss about and to sweat. It was quite evident that he was beginning to feel the heat. The nearer the flames advanced, the more he tossed and grumbled. At last the fire reached his head and for the moment the giant was dead.

The villagers approached him cautiously, and the young man noticed magic powder which had been concealed in the roots of the giant's hair. He took it and called the others to come and see what he had found. No one could say what power this medicine might have, but an old man suggested that no harm would be done if they sprinkled some of it on the bones and meat in the hut. This idea was carried out, and to the surprise of everyone, the girls and the boy at once returned to life.

The youth, who had still some of the powder left, proposed to put it on the giant. But at this there was a great uproar as the people feared Owuo might come to life again. The boy, therefore, by way of compromise, sprinkled it into the eye of the dead giant. At once the eye opened and the people fled in terror. But alas, it is from that eye that death comes, for every time that Owuo shuts that eye a man dies, and, unfortunately for us, he is forever blinking and winking.

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## The Origin of Death

AND HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

It is God who created men. And since God had pity, He said, "I do not wish men to die altogether. I wish that men, having died, should rise again." And so He created men and placed them in another region. But He stayed at home.

And then God saw the chameleon and the weaver-bird. After He had spent three days with the chameleon and the weaver-bird, He recognized that the weaver-bird was a great maker of words compounded of lies and truth. Now of lies there were many, but of the words of truth there were few.

Then He watched the chameleon and recognized that he had great intelligence. He did not lie. His words were true. So he spoke to the chameleon, "Chameleon, go into that region where I have placed the men I created, and tell them that when they have died, even if they are altogether dead, still they shall rise again—that each man shall rise again after he dies."

The chameleon said, "Yes, I will go there." But he went slowly, for it is his fashion to go slowly. The weaver-bird had stayed behind with God.

The chameleon travelled on, and when he had arrived at his destination, he said, "I was told, I was told, I was told. . . ." But he did not say what he had been told.

The weaver-bird said to God, "I wish to step out for a moment."

And God said to him, "Go!"

But the weaver-bird, since he is a bird, flew swiftly, and arrived at the place where the chameleon was speaking to the people and saying, "I was told. . . ." Everyone was gathered there to listen. When the weaver-bird arrived, he said, "What was told to us? Truly, we were told that men, when they are dead, shall perish like the roots of the aloe."

Then the chameleon exclaimed, "But we were told, we were told, we were told, that when men are dead, they shall rise again."

Then the magpie interposed and said, "The first speech is the wise one."

And now all the people left and returned to their homes. This was the way it happened.

And so men become old and die; they do not rise again.

## The Origin of Death

THE MOON, it is said, once sent an insect to men, saying, "Go to men and tell them, 'As I die, and dying live; so you shall also die, and dying live.'"

The insect started with the message, but, while on his way, was overtaken by the hare, who asked, "On what errand are you bound?"

The insect answered, "I am sent by the Moon to men, to tell them that as she dies and dying lives, so shall they also die and dying live."

The hare said, "As you are an awkward runner, let me go." With these words he ran off, and when he reached men, he said, "I am sent by the Moon to tell you, 'As I die and dying perish, in the same manner you also shall die and come wholly to an end.'"

The hare then returned to the Moon and told her what he had said to men. The Moon reproached him angrily, saying, "Do you dare tell the people a thing which I have not said?"

With these words the moon took up a piece of wood and struck the hare on the nose. Since that day the hare's nose has been slit, but men believe what Hare had told them.

[ HOTTENTOT ]

## How Diseases Came to the Ashanti

NOW THERE LIVED Kwaku Ananse, the spider, and he went to Nyankonpon, the sky-god, and said, "Grandsire, take your sheep called Kra Kwame, the one which you keep to sacrifice to your soul on a Saturday, and let me kill and eat it, that I may go and bring you a beautiful girl in exchange."

The sky-god gave him the sheep, and Ananse set out and returned to his village and killed the sheep and ate it. The spider then went to a certain village. In that village there was not a single male—all were women. Ananse married them all and he and they lived there.

One day, a hunter came and saw them. When he left, he went and said to the sky-god, "As for Ananse and that sheep of yours which he received, he has killed it and given it to some women to eat and then married them."

The sky-god said, "Is it true?"

The hunter said, "Grandsire, it is the truth."

The sky-god then sent messengers, telling them to go to that village and bring to him all the women who were there.

The messengers went off, met the women, and, with the exception of one woman who was ill, took them all to the sky-god.

Ananse said, "You who remain, what can I do with you? You can't do anything for me?"

The sick woman said, "Go and bring me a gourd cup." Ananse went and brought a gourd cup.

She said, "Bathe me, and take the water you have used and pour it into this gourd."

Ananse bathed her body and poured the water he had used into the gourd. She then became very beautiful; there was no woman like her in the tribe. Then Ananse married her again, although she was already his.

Now the hunter came again, and he saw this woman. He went off and reported to the sky-god, saying, "Ananse has made a fool of you, he sent you the ugly women and has kept the beautiful one for himself."

The sky-god sent messengers and directed them to go to the village where the spider was and to bring the woman to him.

They delivered the message of the sky-god to Ananse. He said, "Would he not like me to come also?"

The messengers said, "The sky-god said we must take the woman to him." Ananse said, "That is she sitting there, take her away." After she had been taken, Ananse went and got the gourd into which all the diseases he had taken from the woman had been poured, and he stretched a skin over the mouth of it. Then he stretched a skin over another gourd and gave it to his child, Ntikuma, and Ananse beat on the drum he had made and sang:

*Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
— Aso Ya-e!  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
Your eyes are red in vain!  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
You are bandy-armed!  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
Is that Aso Ya?  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
You are knock-kneed!  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
Your nose is a lump on your face!  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
Your feet are large as paddles,  
like those of a slave!  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den.  
Your head is like a cow!  
Y'odende dende den,  
Y'odende den."*

Ntikuma drummed and sang:

*"Beautiful maiden,  
Beautiful maiden!"*

And Afudotwedotwe or Belly-Like-to-Burst and Nyiwankonfwewa or Thin-Shanks, Ananse's children, danced. Anene, the crow, ran with speed and told the sky-god, "Ananse has a dance which is fitting for you but not for a spider."

Immediately the sky-god sent messengers there to Ananse to go and bring him this dance.

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Ananse said, "This dance of mine, we perform it only in the harem, and if the sky-god agrees then I shall bring it along."

The messengers returned and told the sky-god. The sky-god said, "That is nothing, let him bring it to the harem." Ananse went with the drums to the harem, and the sky-god came and danced, and all his wives danced.

Now, there remained the one who had been sick. When she saw that Ananse had stretched a skin over the gourd in which were all her diseases, because of that she said she would not dance. And now the sky-god forced her, and she came; and when she was about to dance, Ananse lifted up the gourd and struck the woman with it, and the diseases scattered with a sound like *tese!*

That is how syphilis, stomach-ache, headache, leprosy, Guinea worm, smallpox, yaws, fits, diabetes, and madness came among the tribe. Once there was no sickness among mankind. It was the sky-god who was the cause of Ananse's bringing diseases among the tribe.

## How the Mason-Wasp Fetched Fire from God

VULTURE, Fish-Eagle, and Crow were without fire, for there was no fire on earth. So, needing fire, all the birds assembled and asked, "Whence shall we find fire?"

Some of the birds said, "Perhaps from God."

Thereupon Mason-Wasp volunteered, saying, "Who will go with me to God?"

Vulture answered and said, "We will go with you, I and Fish-Eagle and Crow."

So on the morrow they took leave of all the other birds, saying, "We are going to see whether we can get fire from God." Then they flew off. After they had spent ten days on the road, there fell to earth some small bones—that was Vulture; later, there also fell to earth some other small bones—that was Fish-Eagle. Mason-Wasp and Crow were left to go on alone. When the second ten days were ended, there fell other small bones to earth—that was Crow. Mason-Wasp was left to go on by himself. When the third ten days were over, he was going along, reposing upon the clouds. Nevertheless he never reached the summit of the sky.

As soon as God heard of it, He came to where Mason-Wasp was; and, answering God's question as to where he was going, Mason-Wasp said, "Chief, I am not going anywhere in particular. I have only come to beg some fire. All my companions have dropped by the way; but nevertheless, I have persevered in coming, for I had set my heart upon arriving where the Sky-God is."

Thereupon God answered him, saying, "Mason-Wasp, since you have reached Me, you shall be chief over all the birds and reptiles on earth. To you, now, I give a blessing. You shall not have to beget children. When you desire a child, go and look into a grainstalk and you will find an insect whose name is Ngongwa. When you have found him, take and carry him into a house. When you arrive in the house, look for the fireplace where men cook, and build there a building for your child Ngongwa. When you have finished building, put him in and let him remain there. When many days have

elapsed, just go and look at him. And one day you will find he has changed and become just as you yourself are."

So it is today: Mason-Wasp, before he builds a house, looks for the fireplace, just as he was commanded by God.

[ B A I L L A ]

NATIVE  
AFRICAN  
FOLKTALES

— How Kintu Was Tested —  
before He Could Marry the Daughter  
of the King of Heaven

WHEN KINTU CAME FIRST to Uganda he found there was no food at all in the country. He brought with him one cow and had only the food with which the animal supplied him. In the course of time a woman named Nambi came with her brother to the earth and saw Kintu. The woman fell in love with him and, wishing to be married to him, pointedly told him so. She had to return, however, with her brother to her people and her father, Gulu, who was king of the sky.

Nambi's relations objected to the marriage because they said that the man did not know of any food except that which the cow yielded, and they despised him. Gulu, the father, however, said that they had better test Kintu before he consented to the marriage, and he accordingly sent someone to rob Kintu of his cow. For a time Kintu was at a loss what to eat, but he managed to find different kinds of herbs and leaves which he cooked and ate. Nambi happened to see the cow grazing and recognized it, and complaining that her brothers wished to kill the man she loved, she went to the earth and told Kintu where his cow was, and invited him to return with her to take it away.

Kintu consented to go, and when he reached the sky he was greatly surprised to see how many people there were with houses and with cows, goats, sheep, and fowls running about. When Nambi's brothers saw Kintu sitting with their sister at her house, they went and told their father, who ordered them to build a house for Kintu and to give him a further testing to see whether he was worthy of their sister. An enormous meal was cooked, enough food for a hundred people, and brought to Kintu, who was told that unless he ate it all he would be killed as an impostor. Failure to eat it, they said, would be proof that he was not the great Kintu. He was then shut up in a house and left alone.

After he had eaten and drunk as much as he could, he was at a loss to know what to do with the rest of the food. Fortunately, he discovered a deep hole in the floor of the house, so he turned all the food and beer into it and

covered it over so that no one could detect the place. He then called the people outside to come and take away the baskets. The sons of Gulu came in, but would not believe that he had eaten all the food. They, therefore, searched the house but failed to find it.

They went to their father and told him that Kintu had eaten all the food. He was incredulous, and said that Kintu must be further tested. A copper axe was sent to Kintu by Gulu, who said, "Go and cut me firewood from the rock, because I do not use ordinary firewood."

When Kintu went with the axe, he said to himself, "What am I to do? If I strike the rock, the axe will only turn its edge or rebound." However, after he had examined the rock, he found that there were cracks in it, so he broke off pieces of it, and returned with them to Gulu who was surprised to get them. Nevertheless, he said that Kintu must be further tried before they could give their consent to the marriage.

Kintu was next sent to fetch water and was told that he must bring only dew, because Gulu did not drink water from wells. Kintu took the waterpot and went off to a field, where he put the pot down and began to ponder what he must do to collect the dew. He was sorely puzzled, but upon returning to the pot, he found it full of water. So he carried it back to Gulu. Gulu was most surprised and said, "This man is a wonderful being; he shall have his cow back and marry my daughter."

Kintu was told to pick his cow from the herd and take it. This was a more difficult task than the others, because there were so many cows like his own that he feared he would mistake it and take the wrong one. While he was thus perplexed a large bee came and said, "Take the one upon whose horns I shall alight; it is yours."

The next morning Kintu went to the appointed place and stood and watched the bee, which was resting on a tree near him. A large herd of cows was brought before him, and he pretended to look for his cow, but in reality he was watching the bee which did not move. After a time, Kintu said, "My cow is not there." A second herd was brought and, again, he said, "My cow is not there." A third, much larger herd was brought, and the bee at once flew away and rested upon a cow which was a very large one, and Kintu said, "This is my cow." The bee then flew to another cow, and Kintu said, "This is one of the calves from my cow," and the bee went on to a second and a third cow which Kintu claimed as the calves which had been born during the cow's stay with Gulu.

Gulu was delighted with Kintu and said, "You are truly Kintu, take your cows. No one can deceive or rob you, you are too clever for that." He called Nambi and said to Kintu, "Take my daughter who loves you, marry her, and go back to your home." Gulu further said, "You must hurry and go back before Walumbe, or Death, comes, because he will want to go with you and you must not take him; he will only cause you trouble and unhappiness."