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CHILD TRAINING AT

SHAMA

BY M. M. KONING.

METHODIST BOOK DEPOT
CAPE COAST

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PREFACE

This essay is based solely on an investigation that I carried out in Shama. In order to collect the various information, I have had to visit Shama many times during the two previous holidays. On my visits, besides observation work, I have talked with parents on the upbringing of children, and on the memories of their own childhood so as to afford a reflection of the past and a comparison with the present. I have also met teachers and headmasters, people who are professionally concerned with children, and above all I have conversed with and interviewed children of various ages.

I should like to acknowledge the kindness and great help given to me by Egya Kwesi Mfrase, the Chief linguist of Shama, for the background history of Shama; Mr. J. S. E. Saighoe, headmaster of the Catholic Primary School, Mr. A. K. Acquah, a teacher of the Methodist Middle School, and the people in Shama who were willing to give me the information I needed. I am also very grateful to my tutor, Mr. B. H. G. Chaplain for reading over my essay and giving suggestions which I found very useful.

M. M. K.

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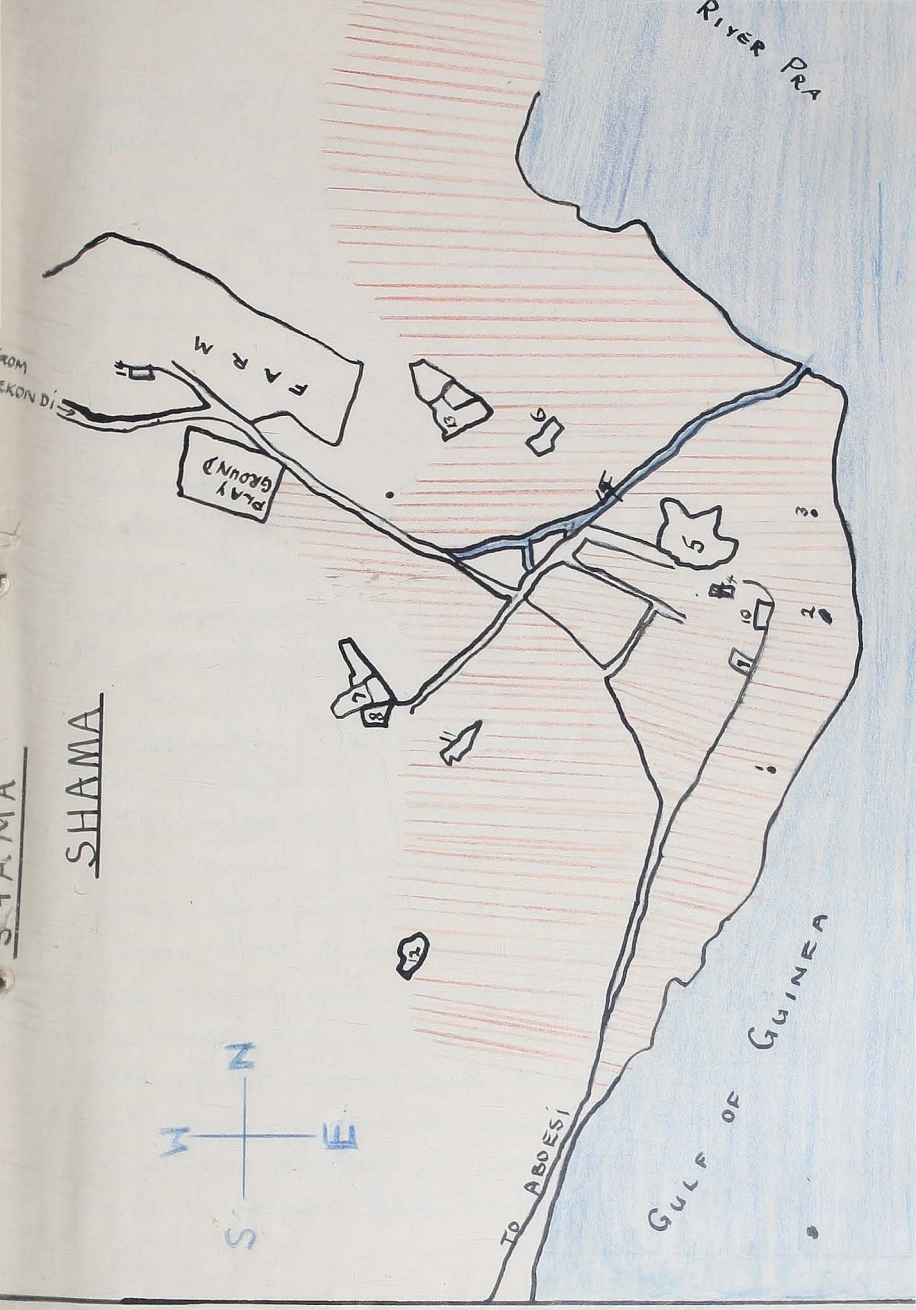
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INTRODUCTION

The particular problem to which I set out to find a suitable answer is mainly concerned with the bringing up of children in Shama, with the process by which the baby who arrived cultureless upon the human scene, becomes a fully fledged adult member of his society. A generation passes away only to be replaced by its youth so the education of the youth for life is a necessity. A child grows up in a society. The society, the physical environment and the culture of a people are so interrelated and interwoven that her youth cannot grow well in isolation of these factors, therefore, in this essay even if I have tried to steer the continuous course of the growing child, I have also indicated the various factors as well as explained how they exercise influence on the child and so make him imbibe such knowledge and experiences which affect his personality.

Shama is a fairly large, old coastal village which is situated in the Western Region of the Gold Coast, ten miles east of Sekondi. A branch road to Shama joins the Sekondi-Accra trunk road at Shama Junction. The village is bounded on the east by the sea, the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by farms. The River Pra enters the sea at less than half a mile from the eastern outskirts of the village. The River Pra has steadily been altering its bed nearest to the sea and this has resulted in the creation of a sandy islet serving as a barrier between the river and the sea. The River Pra is regarded as the god which supplies the people of Shama with fish. A cow is slaughtered

SHAMA



- 1,2,3 Fetish
- 4 Market
- 5 Fort
- 6 Wesley School
- 7 Catholic School
- 8 Catholic Church
- 9 Methodist Church
- 10 Water Compound
- 11 Garden
- 12 Old Rest House
- 13 Garden
- 14 Mosque
- 15 Drain

HOUSES

yearly for it in gratitude for its service. This practice gradually died out but it was revived two years ago when the priestess attributed the decrease in fish supply and the high death rate to the fact that no cow was slaughtered annually for the river for many years.

Shama has a local Council. The town area has many hills. The general view portrays a town with two major hills or elevations with a relatively large valley which drains water from west to east into the sea. On the tops of the two western hills are the Roman Catholic Schools and Mission House and the Omanhene's palace. The fort St. Sebastian is on a hill overlooking the sea in the east. On the south of the fort is the market. The 1948 census reports the total population of Shama as 5,155 persons made up of 2,598 males and 2,557 females. According to the same census there were 160 houses with 2,134 rooms, 32.2 persons in a house and 2.4 persons in a room. Most of the houses are built with mud and roofed with corrugated iron or zinc sheets. The houses are clustered on the hills and slopes. Some of the houses have been built without plans and as such one is unable to distinguish one house from another in some areas because he is made to think that the houses are all wings of one block.

The history of Shama has been handed down only by word of mouth. In Eva Meyerewatz's book, "The Traditions of Akan Origin" she states, "According to the tradition of Shama, their ancestors claimed to have been Djari from Walata, a town situated a hundred miles north of Ghana on the



① A view of Fort San Sebastian showing a section of the market.

great caravan road leading to Morocco. It was founded by Ghana immigrants in 1224. After some time they were driven from Walata by a Mohammedan people and returned to Timbuktu and there rejoined some of their brethren. Under their chief Bessema and his sister, the queenmother Akua Adae, they finally left Timbuktu and went to Bono-Mansa, arriving in the reign of Ameyaw (Akumfi Ameyaw) (1328-1363). Under their chief Apagyakyese, they left again and went to Eguafu, and later to Djali, and finally to Shama. It is not remembered why they gave the name of Shama to their town but the explanation may be that Walata was situated in a region called Châma.

"When about 1520 the Eguafu people parted from the Djali and founded Sekunde (Sekondi) a prince of the Epana - Abakam clan became the first chief of a new dynasty. In 1526 the Portuguese found Shama important enough to erect there the fort San Sebastian.

Some of the tradition has been lost. As far as Egga Kwesi Mfrase, the chief linguist of Shama, can remember the founder of Shama was a farmer called Kobena Asemeku. One day a man called Tutu Iborpo, - the second name means a person who bathes in the sea, - came from the east with his followers in canoes and landed at the coast of Shama. He was warmly welcomed by the founder who gave him a piece of land on which to settle. Since Iborpo was a fisherman he and his people started fishing in Shama hence the existence of the two occupations: farming and fishing in Shama. Kobena Asemeku became the chief of Shama and Tutu Iborpo was his

chief advisor. A little later, the white people arrived and Kobena Asemeku gave them a piece of land on which to build their castle. At the death of Kobena Asemeku, he was succeeded by his son Kwaw Ewriku and ever since his time, a son has always succeeded his father in the Shama Chieftancy but the ordinary people are succeeded by their nephews.

One thing which is certain is that Shama used to be a trading post and was associated from the earliest times with the gold trade when the Europeans were seeking for gold in West Africa. W. E. F. Ward in his book "History of the Gold Coast" he states:

"In 1482 the king of Portugal made a contact with a certain Fernão Gomez, by which Gomez was to monopolize the Guinea trade for five years in return for an annual rent of 500 ducats and an undertaking to explore a 100 league of new coastline every year. In January, 1482, two of the captains employed by Fernão Gomez, named João de Santarém and Pedro de Escobar reached the Gold Coast itself. They rounded Cape Three points and came to land somewhere between the cape and the next landmark, the much smaller Carbo Corso, now Anglicised into Cape Coast. The exact place of their landfall is unknown, but the village of Shama, at the mouth of River Prah, called by the Portuguese the Rio São João became the base of Fernão Gomez' trade in this district. The whole region between Cape Three Points and Cape Coast was so rich



② Smoking Ovens in between the houses.



③ Communal Labour.

Men from a section of the village working at a gutter for the main drainage of the village as a check on mosquito breeding grounds.

in gold that the coast received the name of the Gold Coast and such a busy trade in gold dust sprang up that Gomez soon made a fortune.

The people of Shama are expert fishermen. Fishing is the chief occupation but there are also a few farmers. To supplement the food grown locally canoes bring plantain from Beposo in exchange for supply of fish. Charcoal, plantain, cassava, palm nuts and palm wine are also brought from the neighbouring villages of Nkwanta, Yabew and Komfoeku. In between the houses in Shama are the smoking ovens in which the women cure the fish.

The importance and economic position of Shama goes far beyond that for it partly supplies Sekondi as well as the mining towns of Tarkwa, Abooso, Prestea and Dunkwa with fish. Every morning big lorries unload large baskets of cured fish at the Sekondi Railway Station to be sent to the mining towns.

Most of the people in Shama are illiterates. The 1948 census gives the number of educated people as follows:

People who left school between standards 3 and 7, 224 and standard 7 or higher 84. Nowadays more and more children are being sent to school.

The people of Shama do co-operate to work for the betterment of their village. If there is any work to be done the chief orders that a gong-gong be beaten to collect the young men in the town together. When they meet, they are told of the impending project and they decide on communal labour. Men from each part of the town work on a fixed day once a week until the work is finished.

(See opposite picture).

The christians in Shama are either members of the Methodist Church or Roman Catholics. The people who live in Zongo are Moslems and they have a mosque on the western entrance of the village. Some of the people have a fetish of some kind which they worship.

With this as a background to the study of child training in Shama, a more and a better understanding may be achieved in considering the ways of life of the people.

AROUND THE WESTERN PROVINCE — 3

SHAMA: LAND OF SHAMBLES...

SHAMA, a town in the Western Province and with a population of four thousand people, is in a state of disquiet. This restlessness is due to political differences.

The people of Shama are in political swaddling clothes and by a self-imposed geographical boundary line, they have divided the town into two arbitrary units. One sees things the C.P.P. way and the other follows the N.L.M. path. Consequently, they are pulling each other's eyes out.

The Omanhene's political proclivities are towards the C.P.P. and the N.L.M. supporters naturally resent this. The Omanhene's authority is also disregarded by the other

By Bankole Timothy

faction who are demanding his destoolment while the C.P.P. group is resisting this pressure vehemently.

In addition, the old castle which houses the Local Council offices, also bears a hoisted C.P.P. flag. Another cause for political juggling. While I am not primarily concerned in this article with the rightness or wrongness of the political feud, the state of the town as I found it when I called there last week, provides an interesting background.

There are two schools in the town run by the Roman Catholics and the Methodists. The town has a Local Council which came into being in 1952. The inhabitants are mostly fishermen. There is not a single street or lane which is even moderately fair. They are all rugged and crooked.

Medical facilities? Hardly any, except a clinic which is opened once weekly in Native Court. And like everywhere else where fisherfolk are concentrated, there are many large families and an increasing growth of the population. If anyone in Shama happens to fall ill at night that person has to be conveyed all the

way to the Sekondi hospital. There are a few private cars there mainly owned by an N.L.M. member.

Drainage system is scarcely known in Shama; only now a few voluntary workers with the help of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development are laying a concrete pipe not far from the Local Council offices. Water is not easily obtainable. When I called there, there were women with their water pots and cans at the pipes which were only dripping. In conversation with a retired Seventh

signs of malnutrition; think again of the dreary surroundings and limitations in their lives. It is not right that these children should be denied a fair start in life.

In an interview with a senior official of the Local Council, I asked him what amenities his Council had provided for the people of Shama and the answer he gave was—"we are now planning." "Planning since 1952?" I asked again and there was no reply.

One repercussion of this is that a large number of the

people of Shama have indicated their refusal to pay the basic rates but the Council official assured me that action would be taken against defaulters. I dread the reaction of the people in the light of the political pulsations now taking place in Shama.

On the day I visited Shama, Cadbury and Fry representatives were there selling Bournville cocoa at penny a cup. You should have seen how the people of Shama scrambled for it.

Political situations

It is against this background that one should reflect on the political situation in Shama. The N.L.M. and the C.P.P. have held meetings in the town; there have been physical clashes quite distinct from the ideological. What the outcome will eventually be, I cannot foretell.

One thing however is irrefutable. Shama is badly in need of water, roads, medical facilities, drainage system, good houses and an overall development of the town.

It is no compliment to our national pride and prestige that the Gold Coast which is on the verge of independence should sit complacently while the four thousand inhabitants of Shama live in shambles, filth and squalor.



RAFOUR AKOTO, N.L.M. Leader, being carried through the streets of Shama when the N.L.M. held a meeting there recently.

Day Adventist minister, he told me that sometimes the women have to spend about six or eight hours at the pipes before they are able to obtain water for domestic purposes. At other times, he continued, the people have to buy water

Public health in Shama is in a shocking state. The streets are littered with all sorts of filth and the smell is unbearable. The so-called houses are a mass of rickety-rockety hovels, badly ventilated and overcrowded. People are packed like sheep in small rooms and it is therefore not surprising that bad health prevails in the town.

My heart sank when I saw the horrible conditions under which the children live and grow up. Many of them show

CHAPTER I

ATTITUDE TOWARDS HAVING CHILDREN

Children are highly valued by the people of Shama and are almost invariably wanted. For its vital aim, marriage in Shama is for reprocreation. Because of the fishing industry in Shama, a man often feels the need of a woman companion whose duty it would be to sell the fish he catches from the sea, and he is very often moved by this need into finding a wife as a helpmate for everyday economic life. Thus two aims of marriage: that of reprocreation and that for a female helpmate are visualized in Shama. Although these two objectives of marriage are of social importance, in the majority of nine cases out of ten, the first aim, that of reprocreation normally outweighs that of companionship and helpmate in value. The reason for this is obvious. More importance is attached to the former aim because by raising children, there are more hands which will automatically contribute to the income of the family, because the contribution of a wife alone makes a poor comparison. Traditionally, a high degree of companionship is not regarded as essential for marriage, and the community places much greater emphasis on the economic and procreative functions of marriage. The chief functions of marriage are the reprocreation and care of children and the lack of children is held to be sufficient cause for dissolving marriage. Divorce on this ground is the most common under Native Customary Law.

Both in the olden days as well as at the present time early marriage is readily encouraged and endorsed especially among the fishesfolk. This is very characteristic of the Shamas. A child in Shama does not belong only to his parents, but is born as a member of a clan. The child is born into the mother's clan, but nevertheless

the father also gains a great prestige and social status by having it said about him, that he is the father of many children. For this reason, a man easily takes unto himself as many wives as he can and has many children born to him, very often at a very early age. This being characteristic of the Shamas when a child in the towns and villages around Shama does anything which is considered below his age, he is sharply and sternly told that it is a shame he does it because if he were at Shama, he would have had twenty wives who must have had a hundred children born to him. This is rather exaggerated but it is a point which brings out clearly the clamour and emphasis placed on bearing children in Shama.

Besides children helping in the work of the family, the men do assign more reasons for being desirous of having children. Apart from commanding respect in increasing the size of the clan, he gains a great family prestige and admiration. It gives him so much pleasure to calculate and make a rough estimation what is going to be the size of his family in about twenty years time. During this time he expects that the children in their turn would each have children of her own who will belong to the same great ancestral stock. It is a great pride for a man to have about thirty grandchildren. At the death of the man of the family, his children contribute to the buying of a coffin for him. By the rule of simple proportion the more the people who contribute, the larger the amount realized and the more beautiful the man's coffin is going to be. This is a great pride and privilege of the lucky man because even long after his death, his people remembers, mention and rejoice at the valuable coffin they had bought for him at his death. The man's personal possessions the most valuable

of which are fishing canoes and fishing nets are used by his sons in his old age, so his efforts are very much appreciated. Thus, he is looked upon with respect by his friends. His nephews have a share of his property too.

Most Shama women bear a child every two or three years during the whole productive period. They also take a great pride in being the mothers of many children and they are considered reliable authorities on rearing children. No sooner does a person enter into a conversation with a Shama woman than he realizes that the woman has a large family one of its members is like himself. Women consider children as their God-sent gifts and something to make a great fuss about. Women with large families are thought of as being very experienced and sympathetic with children. A woman has every encouragement to have as many children as she can produce because she has a firm belief that one of them at least will be a wealthy man some day and so take great care of her during her old age. She is therefore prepared to sacrifice everything, time, money, clothes, beauty and even the love of a husband for her children.

That there is no limit to a family need not be over emphasized. Children are wanted in tens and hundreds and so contraceptive techniques, the use of herbs and a ritual which are believed to confer sterility on a woman are never applied. According to the belief of the Shamas conception results from the union of male fluid with menstrual blood or other secretion of the female. Most Shama women hold that menstrual blood is the principal basis for the foetus and so get terribly upset if their menses are delayed for a long time after the birth of a child, for to them, it is an indication that they may not be ever able to have another baby.

again or that, instead of having three children in six years they may have two and as a woman is always comparing herself with another woman who had her first baby the same time that she had hers, she may lose some respect. The use of contraceptives to limit the size of a family is not practised.

A marriage without issue collapses easily or may prompt the man into polygamy. It will hasten him into marrying a second, third and sometimes fourth wife. Married couples without issue suffer great social disadvantages. They are slighted and disrespected by old and young alike. No matter their age, they are considered by their friends as inexperienced as far as the training and understanding of children are concerned. They are also looked down upon as being cruel to children and having no sympathy for anybody. Many childless people do their best to exclude themselves from social activities because their views are always jeered at. When they reprimand a child for wrong doing, the child will abuse them with an open challenge whether they have had children before. They scarcely get any service done for them by other people's children without being abused by them when their backs are turned so they contact other people's children with caution and see that the interest of the real parents is served first before theirs. Sometimes a mother abuses a childless person who sent or reprimanded her child. Because of this people who have no children are always very calm, gentle and hardworking because they often have nobody to help them with their ^{work} and lead a very "mind your own business" life.

The situation as described above exists among the Shamas, nevertheless, it is not so in all cases. Among people of the same clan, the position is less severe.

An aunt can regard her sister's child as her own and the child also admits that his aunt is just another older or younger mother. In such homes there is scarcely any friction between a childless woman and a fruitful one or her child because, if this happens the head of the clan takes the matter up and deals with it very seriously. Such homes are few nowadays and no matter the steps taken to cover up the state of affairs, it is often mentioned and talked about when the person concerned is out of the house.

Men don't usually find much difficulty in such a situation for it is in their power to marry many more women until they happen to have children with them. If a man leaves a woman because she is barren she becomes stigmatized and no man ventures to marry her again. On the other hand, if her husband does not send her away, her rivals make fun of her all the days of her life. With a woman, everything she does is looked upon with contempt. No worth or value is put on her personal belongings such as a house or gold trinkets because people consider that since she has no children to provide for, she has every opportunity for obtaining the most valuable things for herself. The property of a childless woman is looked down upon because at her death it will pass over to children of her sister's line. The thought of her old age is what a woman in such a state bemoans. She becomes very miserable all her life and without her own children, she becomes a burden on her relatives who may neglect her care. In the olden days, it was a common practice that when a childless woman died a special kind of garden eggs called "intonko" was pushed through her anus. This was done in the belief that when she went to the next world

she would show it to all her ancestors to show that she lived a worthless life on earth and had left no descendants behind her to take their places. By the time such a woman was reincarnated as it was believed, the "intonko" was supposed to have cured her of barrenness. Nowadays this practice has died out. In the olden days sterility was believed to be a punishment from god. The Shamas have been known to be very prolific so cases of sterility had been very rare. Sometimes, it is believed that sterility is inflicted by a god or a dead relative whom the person in question has offended and so jujumen and herbalists are consulted. Often sacrifices are offered to the supernatural agency which is supposed to be the cause of sterility to appease it. The herbalist use herbs which are often found to be effective, but the jujumen often resort to magical and divine healing. Nowadays, cases of sterility are referred to the hospital. Sterility these days, is supposed to be caused by girls who do harm to their reproductive organs as a result of practising abortion. During the investigations I was made to understand that if a girl is found in the family way whilst a special ceremony for her puberty has not been performed, she brings a great shame and disrespect not on herself only, but also on her parents and the members of her wider family including her aunts, her cousins and her grandparents. As some girls find themselves in this state they secretly find means of destroying the foetus without the knowledge of their parents and the action results in their not being able to have any more children. Because such cases are said to increase the number of people who are not capable of having children in Shama, nowadays, it is difficult

to distinguish between a real case of sterility and an accidental one. It is also believed by some men in Shama that the cause of sterility in some women is due to early sexual relationship with men. However, since it has taken some parents some time to discover the heinous practice of their young girls every precaution is now taken to ensure that girls do not cause abortion and they are outdoored as soon as they reach the age of puberty.

Very often, children are born outside marriage. By marriage in this context, I mean both the traditional marriage as well as marriage under the Ordinance. Generally, the people of Shama marry according to tradition and native customs which allows divorce as well as polygamy. Even before people are married in the church some customs are observed at home. Although the majority of people are married according to custom, a recognizable number of people both literate and illiterate are married in church. It is considered just as bad as to have a baby outside marriage as marrying or having a baby before puberty rites are performed. Any girl who is found in this state is always reproached with it. This is much to be deprecated. The mother of the child suffers social degradation. Special ceremonies are performed to appease the gods of the land; to beg forgiveness for the woman, to wash her clean of ill-luck and to drive away from the house the evil caused by her having a child in an unlawful manner. However, it is maintained that having a baby by any means is better than having no baby at all. After the birth of the unlawful child, the mother will be married to the father of her child or to somebody else but in the second case, the marriage will be at

second-hand rate. This means that all the marriage ceremonies are not performed. When the father of the child in question does not marry his mother the child is nurtured by the mother until about the age of six and then he is given over to the father to be brought up in his house. It is in the power of the father to make a gift of the child to the woman's family if he so pleases. The woman's family embraces such an offer with joy and gratitude and thanks the father with a bottle of whisky. The child is therefore taken care of by either his grandfather or his uncle whom he will succeed after his death.

The man who causes a girl to depart from girlhood to womanhood without public sanction does not face public scandal as the girl does. It is suggested to him to marry the girl or to pay an amount of money to the girl's family. However, he is responsible for maintaining the woman until she delivers the baby and then he is allowed to make a choice between marrying the woman, taking care of the child in his house or making a gift of him to the girl's family. He is neither teased or disgraced by his friends and he often goes scotfree without bearing any responsibility for the upbringing of the child.

It is worthy of note, that such a child is not regarded as an illegitimate child or a bastard. There is no such a thing. Every child is a child and if there is supposed to be anything unwholesome about his birth, he is not concerned with it. He suffers no public disapproval. That is the business of his mother.

In Shama, a child who is unfortunate to be left an orphan at an early age is taken care of by the close relatives of the deceased mother. Usually he is looked after by his grandmother or aunts who are actual sisters

of the dead woman. Adoption of children in the sense that is done in England is never done in Shama. A child who is adopted is one who is a complete orphan and that is done only by relatives. When one parent of a child is living, there is no question of adoption except in a case when a mother dies at childbirth and the baby is too young to be cared for by the busy father. In this case he is taken care of as I have already mentioned temporarily by the mother's relative.

Adoption of a child is considered as a futile work and no man likes to do it. It is said that when you adopt a child you can never be sure that he will stay with you and remain loyal to you when he grows up. As soon as he grows up, people will inform the boy who his parents are and let him know that he is being cared for by foster parents. Whenever he picks up a quarrel with anybody he will be reminded of the fact and the boy eventually turns his head and endeavours to go to his parent's clan rather than stay and be abused. Thus he appears very ungrateful to his foster parents. Since there is no comfort or reward gained by the foster parents adoption of children for its own sake is totally out of place in the life of the Shamas. There is even a proverb to the effect that "an adopted son is not a son", meaning that nothing can virtually change an adopted son into a real one.

However, another type of temporal adoption is made provision for but it is not regarded as a form of adoption but a course of training especially for girls. Sending one's daughters away to live with neighbours or kinsfolk is a recognised form of training for marriage. In the Shama society it is said that in this way most girls are brought up to be industrious and are not frightened by the arduous tasks of housekeeping when

they get married. This housemaid system has existed for a long time in the society as one of the ways of conditioning a girl for adult life in the community because, in the house of anybody except the parents', the girl will be made to do all the work which she can refuse to do in her parents' home. Such a girl is not paid, but is fed, clothed and taught housekeeping in return for her services. Boys are also given away to distinguished personalities in the village in the same way as the girls. Such boys who are given away are usually school boys. Boys who do not go to school stay with their parents to help them with their work. Some children are also given away to stay with people in the big towns such as Sekondi and Takoradi. These people present a problem because after their stay in the big towns they are unwilling to go back and live in Shama. Some girls refuse to go back to be married to fishermen in Shama so they often get married in the big towns. When they are happy living in the big towns they often denounce that they are of Shama descent. Most of such temporary adoptions are carried on in the locality even though it is not recognised as proper adoption. When a parent gives some of his children away, he is sure to have them replaced by other people's children so that it does not affect his work.

Mothers know all the children in the towns who were born at close intervals either before or after their own children and so they expect that these children keep to the same rate as far as reproduction is concerned. It used to be the common practice that at a marriage, the husband is informed that if the girl is not found to be pregnant within three months, she will be taken away from him. In this way the potency of the man is challenged, so he does all in his power to see that the girl is

in the family way within that time, otherwise he would lose his wife. Thus it is very clearly shown how greatly children are cherished and admired.

CHAPTER TWO

PRE-NATAL PERIOD.

As soon as a woman discovers that she is pregnant, she assumes a special attitude. A woman who is pregnant especially for the first time feels very happy and proud. She rejoices at the thought that she will have her baby delivered after nine months, yet she thinks of the period as a very dangerous and risky one, a period which created for her many enemies especially of childless women whom she suspects, are jealous of her position. She begins to feel afraid that her life is in danger. Her main fear is derived from the fear of evil spirits, witchcraft and the charms of jujumen. This fear based on superstition and mistrust is deeply rooted in the life of the community so as soon as a woman knows she is in this state, she mentions it to her husband whose duty it is to see that the woman and the baby are well protected against all evil and harm. A man who neglects this duty to his wife is liable to be questioned by his wife's parents. This belief in superhuman influences on pregnancy is so strong that all religious teachings are thrown into the background. The pregnant woman only feels happy when she secures a jujuman who is charged with her protection until the time she delivers. The woman is very careful and never mentions her position to anyone else.

Since the jujuman is held in such a high esteem, he so displays his art to capture the belief, trust and

admiration of his patients. Different treatments are given for the protection of the womb. With a very little sharp knife he makes three small marks on the forehead, wrists, shoulders, knees and feet of the pregnant woman.

Sometimes such tiny marks are made round the expectant mother's waist. A black powder which is supposed to possess some power of driving away evil spirits is rubbed into the marks. Some of the powder is mixed with brandy and is given to the woman to drink.

This powder, I was told, is the ashes of a particular tree which is burnt with different kinds of barks of trees in special proportions for the purpose. Some of this same stuff is mixed with shea butter for embrocating the woman's skin. Sometimes, a piece of the burnt bark is tied with a piece of black thread and is worn round the woman's neck. Besides the treatment mentioned above, special leaves are picked by the Jujuman, ground and made into a small ball which is dried in the sun.

Cony shells are fixed into this ball and it is given to the woman to keep under her pillow or to wear on her person. Usually, this is tied in a piece of white cloth and worn round the woman's waist. All this is done to ensure that no evil or witch obtains an access to the woman's body to cause a miscarriage. Where herbalists are approached some herbs are given to be added to the woman's diet.

A woman who is going to have a baby is considered by all as having enough energy for work. She leads her usual life all the time. She is not expected to lie about. She is expected to keep working and moving around so that the baby may be healthy. The Shamas believe that the conduct of the parents while the baby is yet unborn has far reaching consequences for the child's birth and for his health then and in later life;

so the woman goes about her usual household tasks, cures fish and sells them in the market. The woman must not chop firewood with an axe otherwise the baby will be born with a gap in his skull from his temple to the back of its head. Whenever she sits down she must see that nobody passes either across her outstretched legs or behind her for if that happens, the birth pains that that person's mother suffered when he was being born would be added to the normal pains of childbirth at the birth of the child in the pregnant mother's womb. She must not look at a deformed person, lest the picture would be impressed on her mind and that may result in her having a child of the same deformity. Nobody must bend or kneel before the expectant mother or at birth the baby will delay in the uterus. Countless other taboos could be mentioned, although the particular taboos and the stringency with which they are observed vary considerably from individual to individual. Some of the christians also consult the juju-men but to them some of the taboos have no meaning and are not observed by them.

The chief diet of the people of Shama consists of kenkey and fish, gari, cassava, fufu and soup. The pregnant woman eats the same food which is eaten by the household. There is practically no change in her diet. Pregnant women assert that they have a fancy to special foods during pregnancy. A woman told me that she normally did not like bananas but whenever she was pregnant she longed to eat plenty of bananas. Some women also said that when they were in this state, they felt nausea from eating some foods that they were used to eating before, and very often when they prepared the usual dish for the family they didn't like to partake of it but longed

for a dish prepared by somebody else. Sometimes, some people told me during my investigations, pregnant women yearn to eat white clay. It is an accepted but unwritten law that the average pregnant woman eats more food in quantity than she does when she is not in that condition and allowance is made for this because she is to feed the unborn baby and herself. She is advised by her grandmother or any elderly woman who has had a baby before not to eat sweets, groundnuts, pawpaw and also sugary dishes. I was told that when a woman eats pawpaw when she is pregnant, the baby is born with pawpaw seeds on the navel cord and if the seeds are not removed in a special way with the greatest care, the baby's navel will take a longer time to heal and even when it is healed, the navel will stick out and show in the child's clothes. When an expectant mother is taking her meal, she should put a piece of charcoal in her plate. This need not be taken along with the food but must be put in the plate to ward off any evil and harm that could be put in the food when a witch or a juju man saw that the pregnant woman was eating. Some of the women in Shama go to see the medical doctor in the Sekondi hospital for advice and when they are told to eat special foodstuffs such as green leaves and fruits, they do comply with the advice given them. The educated women do more than the illiterate women in the question of food. They are particular about the food they eat and it is common to see them taking ovaltine drinks, Horlick's drinks, eggs and green vegetables to supplement their daily diet. Expectant mothers in Shama are very particular about their health. Nowadays they have realized the importance of the medical doctor and some of them

try to see her for examination at least once a month. I was told that the commonest complaint of pregnant women was constipation. This is usually treated at home by syringing with leaves of special herbs mixed with water. Some of the herbs for this purpose are "abra-afos", "adeseena enyigade", "afotowa" "adesekentige" and "egyinginatentse". From the seventh month of pregnancy upwards, leaves that make a shiny mixture is used for syringing, because it is believed that when for example "enimfonse" is used for syringing, the shiny substance in it spreads over the baby and makes his body slippery to touch, so, at birth, the baby slips down on his way to the world and thus saves the mother from difficult labours.

"Sopereje" is another good leaf for this purpose. The woman also uses the medicine given to her at the hospital. A woman in the family way is invariably very careful of her health and it is her husband's duty to see that she is always in good health. She has slight fevers at times and also changes of bodily temperature. Her body is always hot. Her breasts and waist are enlarged. The nipples become very black and a line which runs from her navel downwards becomes very black as well. She takes a special care of herself and takes her bath twice daily paying a greater attention to the genitals. Some women vomit often during pregnancy but others vomit only from the first to the third months.

Marital intercourse during pregnancy is a common practice. With most people it is not discontinued until a fortnight before the birth of the baby. It is believed that sexual intercourse during pregnancy helps to enlarge the birth passage and consequently makes the birth easier for the mother. Some women

said that sometimes they had no desire for sexual intercourse but they had to respond to their husband's appeal to them. It is so in monogamous homes but in polygamous homes the sexual act ceases completely at an earlier stage in pregnancy. The women confessed that they were often uncomfortable during sexual intercourse during pregnancy and so they do try out different lying positions until a more comfortable one is selected. The woman usually lies on her back with her knees bent and wide open. Her waist and hips are supported by pillows. The man kneels in between the woman's legs and penetrates the woman's vagina with his penis. The man tries not to bend over or sleep on the woman's belly. If he finds it difficult to keep erect, he supports himself on his elbow on the side of the woman. The man's penetration does not go as far as usual and he makes a minimum amount of up and down movements. Sometimes, when the woman is not well, she sleeps in her parents' home for many nights during which there is no sex relation between her and her husband. Sex relations which are discontinued during the latter part of pregnancy are not resumed until three months after the birth of a baby. The maximum length of time is three months after the birth of a child and the first meeting is named "monkotaw". It is considered criminal of a husband to approach his wife for sexual intercourse before this time because the wife might not have recovered from the wounds sustained at the birth of her baby, and so if she lets her family know about it, the husband is dealt with very seriously. An old woman told me that about twenty years ago, when women were pregnant, they stayed in their parents' homes until they

delivered their babies, and until the babies were about four years old the mothers never had any sex relations with the fathers. She had wanted to make a point that nowadays there have been changes and that with some people a new baby is born every year meaning that it is obvious they resort to marital intercourse soon after the birth of a child. An old man argued with this woman until they both agreed that even in the older days it was not common with the people of Shama to have an interval of four years between the birth of two children.

No precautions are taken by the father or other members of the family when a woman is pregnant. It is generally admitted that pregnant women are shrewd. It is believed that they are fussy about little things and are never tired of talking. For these reasons nobody takes a pregnant woman serious when they find her talking and try to resist her often very painful remarks about other people. They try as much as possible to tolerate her.

There are very few preparations for the baby's arrival. It is considered very bad luck to make garments before a baby is born. During pregnancy the woman sticks to wearing a few clothes. It is believed that heat is given off a pregnant woman's body and this weakens the clothes she wears so she sticks to about four clothes all the time of pregnancy, and saves her other cloths. The cloth she wears during pregnancy are used for swaddling clothes. The relatives of the woman also make a collection of swaddling clothes and present them to the new mother. When the baby is born and bathed, the folds of his skin are dried with powder obtained from dried

chewed sponge, so all through pregnancy the mother makes a collection of chewed sponge for use when the baby is born. Although some people claim that they can guess from experience whether the baby is a boy or a girl, no clothes are made before the birth. It is said that when clothes are made before a baby is born, he will not live to use them.

On the whole the health of the pregnant women in Shama has improved considerably in comparison with previous years. Now most of them attend the hospital and clinic in Sekondi and appreciate and trust the work of the doctors. Thus, infant mortality has decreased and this gradual change has, no doubt been brought about by education and Social Workers. Even though *nyamen* are still consulted, the time is not far distant when the *nyamen* will lose their hold because most of the people now understand the work of the maternity clinics and childwelfare centres. As soon as anybody complains of illhealth, she is advised by a friend to see the doctor before consulting the *nyaman*.

CHAPTER THREE

BIRTH

Childbirth is regarded by the Shamas as a natural function, and many women bear their children, at least after the first one, with a minimum amount of discomfort and difficulty. They make less fuss of labour pains.

Although labour pains are taken as a matter of course, the sight of a woman in labour brings much unrest to all the relatives of the woman especially her mother and her husband. The husbands usually

leave home when they see their wives in labour. They are very upset and restless until a message is sent to them after the wives had delivered safely. The birth takes place in the house of the woman. For a week before the birth, the pregnant woman's mother stays close by her so that she may help her deliver the baby at any time it may happen to be born. When the old mother notices labour pains in the expectant mother, she is called into a room. No children or men are allowed into this room. In every clan, there is always available somebody who is an expert midwife. This elderly woman is sent for. Sometimes any elderly woman in the neighbourhood is summoned to help at the birth of the baby. If the woman's grandmother is alive, she poses for the job.

Only a few people are allowed into the room where the birth is to take place. A mat is spread on the floor and a high stool is put on it. The woman in labour kneels on the mat facing and holding the chair. She is given instructions by the woman attending the birth. Such women are very competent. It is the duty of the midwife to help the woman bear the child and to attend to both of them. The woman in labour is told not to rub her thighs with her hands or she will rub the eyes of the baby and they will be covered with blood when the baby is born. Anaesthetics are not used in Shama. As the final pains approach, one of those assisting kneels behind the woman to receive the baby, and another stands on the side of the mother with her arms around the mother's abdomen. Pressure is applied to push the baby downward and to aid in expulsion. A woman who does not cry out at birth is praised. Women rarely let more than a few words escape.

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The baby's first cry is echoed with joy by the household outside the room waiting anxiously to know how the birth goes, but that is not all. They are also curious to know the placenta is out. The navel cord is not cut until the placenta has been expelled. If this does not occur within an hour, the mother is given an empty bottle to blow into as hard as she can. The blowing of air into the bottle puts pressure on the placenta and forces it out. It is only when the placenta has been expelled that there is genuine joy in the house. Death is the inevitable result if the placenta does not come out. As a last resort the midwife inserts her hand into the birth canal to bring out the placenta. When the placenta is out, the cord is cut. The competent and experienced midwife measures with her eyes some length of the cord and cuts it with a small knife. The exhausted mother lies down upon the mat to take some rest. The woman who has received the baby also has the privilege of bathing it. The bath takes place shortly after birth but is not given until the placenta has been cut. When the baby's body is cleansed of blood, the baby's body is smeared with palm oil to remove any shine on its body. I was told that if the shine is not treated in this way, the baby will wear a subsequent smell on his body for life. After this, the bath is taken. Care is taken to shape the baby's head and nose. The shaping of the head and the nose is done at bath and at odd times during the first month of the baby's life. A towel is squeezed in cold water and pressed on its head. It is put to sleep alternately from side to side and then on its back to shape his head. To shape the nose, it is held between the forefingers and the thumb and pulled out. This is

done to prevent the child from having a flat nose. The baby is then wrapped in a big piece of cloth and put to sleep.

The afterbirth is carefully disposed of in order to keep it out of the hands of witches and so save the baby's life. In the older days a coconut was planted together with the afterbirth to mark the place. The coconut belonged to the baby and whether the child was going to lead a good life or not in the future was predicted by the way the coconut grew. This practice is ignored nowadays. After the bath of the child the bath water is poured away gradually and not splashed on the ground or that will make the baby sick.

After the baby has been attended to, the mother is asked to take her bath and is given a bowl of corn dough porridge mixed with pepper and plenty of palm oil. The palm oil is supposed to cause the milk in the mother's breast to flow.

There are no government certificated midwives in Shama now. The elderly experienced women in the town are relied on in most cases; but when it happens that the birth is difficult, the woman is rushed to the hospital at Sekondi but this is rare. Every morning and evening after the birth, the mother sits on a bucket of hot boiling water to treat the wounds sustained in childbirth. Many women confess that it was a bitter experience for them the first time they had to undergo this treatment but later on they became used to it. Other women say that it is this treatment after birth and not childbirth that they dread. After sitting on the hot water in the bucket, ground ginger nuts mixed with other leaves and seeds all ground is administered

into the wounds. Sometimes a kind of lavender which is said to burn like pepper is dropped into the wound.

After birth, the baby and its mother are kept apart until the mother's milk begins to flow and the baby is held to feed for the first time. Before this time, a cup of water with a cube of sugar in it is reserved for the child. The water is taken in teaspoons and put in the baby's mouth whenever it cries. Bread is also steeped in water and the water squeezed out and given in teaspoons to the baby. In cases where the mother's milk cannot be obtained by the third day tinned milk is mixed with water and given to the child instead. In some homes the baby is purged before it is held to feed from its mother's breast. The new baby is taught gently and gradually to suck. Right from the day the baby is born, relatives call in the house to congratulate the mother and to welcome the child into the world. Such people are often a nuisance. Some of them hold the baby by one arm to see how strong the baby is.

The mother is left to rest, that is, she is freed from housework for eight days. The baby spends most of its time sleeping and training its senses. The eighth day after birth is a very important day in the life of the child. It is the day on which the baby is outdoored and named. Until now no outsider is allowed to call to see the baby. On this day, if the baby is a girl her ears are pierced for earrings. After the baby has been bathed a white dress is put on her and she is taken outside into the compound of the house to be named. Boys are named the same way. It is the custom that the father has the responsibility for giving names to his children but in no case does a

parent bestow his own name on a child. An elderly person bestows the name. This man does not necessarily give his own name to the child, the name bestowed on the child may be that of a dead relative of the father. It is considered to be of especially good omen to give the name of a person who has lived to a ripe old age and who died not of sickness, but that his time was due to die. The father may name the baby after his own father, grandfather or granduncle or even after his elder brother. Only a few members of the family of both parents are present at the naming. At this meeting, the father of the baby presents to the mother some personal effects that might be useful to her. Among them are trinkets, shoes, clothes, headties and money. Likewise many things including toilet articles: powder, hairbrush, comb, pomade, two bars of soap, towels, sponge and dresses are given to the child as gifts to solemnise a father's welcome to his child on entering the world.

The old man who does the actual naming puts the baby on his lap. He dips his fingers into a glass of water and drops a few droops of water on the baby's tongue, calls him by the new name and says, "Kwesi Amissah when you say anything is water it must be water and when you say anything is alcohol it must be alcohol." He repeats this and then says the same words again this time dropping a few droops of whiskey on the child's tongue. Translated literally it means that truth is insisted on so the child must always tell the truth. Before this ceremony libation is poured and prayers said to invoke the blessing of the dead relatives of the baby. After the naming, the old man who officiated offers drinks to the people who have assembled. The people

present give the child gifts and if the person after whom the child is named is alive, he gives his namesake a ring. The name the child inherits is only the second name. His first name is after the day on which he is born, so when a child is born on a Sunday and named after a relative called Kodwo Anissah, the child's full name will be Kwesi Anissah. The second name commands reverence because it is usually of a respectable person whose life the child must immitate therefore a child may not be called by his second name and abused because, by doing so, the insult is believed to refer to the person after whom the child is named so all through his life the child has a standard to live up to. Already, long before seven years of age two standards are put before him: that of telling the truth and the other of imitating a hero. The first baby is usually named after the father's father. Some people even name the first three children after their father so that if one of them dies, there will be others alive bearing the name. The names of children derived from the days on which they are born are as follows:

Day	Male	Female
Sunday - Kwesida	Kwesi	Esi
Monday - Dwowda	Kodwo	Adwowa
Tuesday - Benada	Kobena	Araba
Wednesday - Kwukenda	Kweku	Ekuwa
Thursday - Yawda	Ekow	Aba
Friday - Fida	Kofi	Efuwa
Saturday - Memenda	Kwamena	Ama.

Besides the long list of names that a family or a clan is privileged to give to the children, there are other names depicting stories or events in the family.

NameWhen used.

- Dadze asa } - When parents have lost at least their
Sanko } first three children the next one is
Wangara } called Dadze asa meaning there is
no ground left for his burial so he
must not die.
- Nyamekye - Meaning God given. This is given when
a woman who is believed to be sterile
gives birth to a child, often after a
long course of treatment. It is also
used when a child recovers from a
serious sickness which made every-
body think he was going to die.
- Akyere - a name given to the first girl born
after many boys had been born.
- Twents - this name is given to a girl born after
two boys had been born or a boy
who is born after two girls had been
born in succession.
- Nyimpa yie - This name is used when a person
in difficulty obtains help from
a friend.

The great thing to note here is that everybody
in Shama bears a name which has some history
behind it. Twins are identified by the name of
"Ata" which automatically becomes their second name.
Should twins, a boy and a girl be born on a
Friday, the boy is called "Kofi Ata" and the girl
"Efuwa Ata". Identical twins are distinguished by
the order in which they were born. The one who is
born first is called "Panjin" and the second one
is called "Kakra". A sheep is killed and other customs
observed at the naming of twins. They are a novelty
and everybody admires them. They are believed to be

sent by the gods of the land either to reward or to test their parents therefore the interest of the gods are served first in dealing with the twins. The first ceremony for twins lasts as long as a week. The gods of the twins are invoked to a feast of mashed yam and eggs to which all the towns in the town are invited to eat gratis. Some of the eggs and mashed yam mixed with palm oil is left on the wayside supposed to be eaten later by the gods. Parents are very careful in dealing with twins. Right from their infancy they are treated with equal warmth and affection. They wear the same dresses. It is believed that if a little more attention is paid to one of them, the other feels neglected and consequently gets sick and dies. Every year a special day is dedicated to the gods. This day is any Friday between the third week of July and the last week of August. On that day a string of five kinds of beads: black, red, white and yellow, with a gold bead in the centre is worn on the wrists of the twins. They are smeared with white clay and feast on mashed yam and eggs. This yearly celebration is done also for the third successive boy or girl, the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth born. These children are not supposed to be responsible for their own actions for they are believed to be motivated to act by the spirits of the gods who sent them to be born. During their infancy until they are six years old, their foreheads are marked with white clay every Friday.

I must mention at this juncture that some years ago the treatment of the children named above were observed with all seriousness, but nowadays, owing to the influence of Christianity, although some aspects of the customs are still retained, other parts that are thought of to be very superstitious are ignored. However

such people as mentioned already assume some godly personality from birth.

After the naming until the baby is three months old, it is the sole concern of the mother to see that both her baby and herself are healthy enough for the big outing at the end of the third month. The mother does everything to see that she is back to normal health. The baby is smeared with white clay mixed with water after each bath. This is supposed to make the baby grow fat. Two strings of small beads, one black, one white are put around the baby's neck. This is to enable the baby to hold up its head. A baby can hold its head up earlier if an uncle made a hole in a threepence piece and strung it on a piece of white thread and put it around the baby's neck. A jujuman is consulted to safeguard the well being of the new born baby both physically and spiritually. To drive away evil spirits and witches from the baby especially when it is outdoored at the end of the third month for everybody, both trusted people and witches to see, the medicine man marks the baby's forehead, wrists and feet with three small cuts as previously done to the mother during pregnancy and some of the special kind of black powder is rubbed into it by the jujuman. Nowadays some of the educated people as well as some christians don't undertake this to ensure the well being of the child.

The end of the third month is the time for the mother to come out and show off her baby and herself to the people of the town and to thank God for helping her safely through childbirth. The baby is adorned with ornaments of gold chains round its neck, wrists and waist. If it is a girl, gold earrings are put in the holes pierced in its ears. Beautiful



④ A baby of 3 months being outdoored.

and selected dresses are put on the baby. The mother dresses up in her best white attire, nearly always the present given to her on the eighth day after birth by her husband. She adorns herself with jewelry. With the baby at her back and covered with a brightly covered "kente" or velvet cover cloth, she goes round the town calling on friends and relatives, greeting and shaking hands with them. These people take the baby in their arms and say sweet words of good wishes to it. They give presents to the mother for the baby. This goes on for a week. After this there is a great joy and delight in the household of the woman because with her baby she has safely passed the second dangerous and risky period of the stages of womanhood or parenthood. Nowadays, this celebration begins with the baby being taken to church for the first time of its life to ask for God's blessings. The mother puts a special donation into the collection box. After this a photograph is taken of the baby. Copies of the photograph are sent to relatives who are living outside the town and a copy is kept to show to the baby when he grows up. Normally, the baby wears only pants to pose for this photograph. From this time onwards the baby is allowed to be carried even by small children. If this custom is not observed, at the slightest provocation, the mother is insulted that she was not outdoors after the birth of her child and this is really a very serious degradation.

Both boys and girls are equally cherished generally. Every child is considered a gift from God but mothers appreciate girls for their first born so that they may help with the housework and caring of the rest of the children born after her in the family.

When a woman meets another who is outdooring his baby on the streets and learns that the baby is a girl she says with glee "Mbo! mbo! yeda Nyame Ase" meaning "well done, thanks to God". If the baby is a boy, even though the same words are said, they are said coldly. This is the general attitude of the women towards the sex of the baby. Men rather prefer boys to girls so as to assist them in their work. Despite the partiality to the baby of the same sex as the parent, homes in which there are big differences between the proportion of boys to girls and vice versa are not very happy about it.

CHAPTER 4 FEEDING

Nursing.

The baby is not breastfed the first day it is born. It is given either plain water or water squeezed out of soaked bread to drink. The first feeding on the mother's milk depends on how soon after birth the mother's breasts begin to flow with milk. This is on the average, the second day after birth. Before the first feeding the baby is given a little water to drink. The majority of the people breastfeed their babies. Bottle feeding is known only by the educated class of people who often use it to accompany breast-feeding but most of the Shamas both educated and otherwise feed their babies solely on breastmilk. For this reason special care is taken to see that there is plenty of milk in the breast for the baby at all times. Pap mixed with palm oil, sugar cane and palm soup when eaten are said to increase the mother's milk. When the flow of the mother's milk

is unduly delayed after birth, it causes a great deal of anxiety and irritation. Special known herbs are roasted and rubbed in the palms of the hand until a green liquid comes out of it and this liquid is applied to the mother's breasts. During this interval, the baby is fed on the breastmilk of another woman. A baby is nursed whenever he cries. Only occasionally is there any delay, as when the mother is outside the house for a few minutes or is busy with a task which cannot immediately be put aside. The baby himself determines not merely when he wishes to suck but also when he is finished. The mother will not terminate feeding until he has ceased to show interest in the nipples. The willingness of a mother to feed her infant is increased by the fact that she is never more than a few yards from her baby. A well trained infant of a few months old may nurse only six times during daylight and once or twice at night. Older children nurse much more frequently. Children close to a year have been observed to be put to the breast thirty times during a 24 hour period. Sometimes a child will be fed three times within fifteen minutes. This is partly because, the mother's supply of milk decreases, and the child sucks only for a short time and does not get enough nourishment at any one attempt. Particularly if the mother is undernourished or in indifferent health, the baby will suck fiercely, struggle and, and give other evidences of lack of complete satisfaction.

When feeding, the baby is placed on the lap of the mother. This relationship of almost constant physical proximity between child and mother is unbroken until weaning. As the mother sits down



⑤ Breastfeeding A Baby.

with the baby on her lap close to her, the head of the baby is supported by the left arm of the mother. Young mothers are specially taught how to hold their babies when feeding. The mother holds the left breast with her right hand and puts the nipple in the baby's mouth. She supports the breast and squeezes out the milk for the baby to suck. The baby is fed at both breasts at each feed. Later on at about six months when the baby has been acquainted with sucking, the breast is no longer supported by the mother. The baby holds the breast and squeezes out the milk himself. For the first fortnight, the baby is fed at the mother's discretion at no fixed times. Nobody in Shama feeds her baby at any regular times. When the child is able to make his wants felt by cries, the mother responds immediately to any manifestation of want and discomfort on the part of the child. Her first response whenever the child cries is to place it to the breast. If this fails to produce quiet, the baby will be cleaned and dried, cuddled, talked to or sung to. The baby is totally helpless, it can only cry; therefore attempts are made to feed it as often as it cries. Sometimes babies refuse to suck. When this happens when the baby has done some sucking already, it is taken for granted that it has had some sucking so it has had enough; but when it is at a time when the baby is supposed to be hungry, the mother gets worried and tries to find out what the cause can be. The mother then assigns the cause to constipation because, as I was told, if the baby has not been able to digest his previous food he is not likely to feed again, so the child is given enema. If

that does not solve the problem, a very serious view is taken of it because nobody can live very long without eating so the case is referred to the medical practitioner or native herbalist.

The mother's attitude towards nursing is one of enjoyment and convenience. She takes a pride in nursing her baby. It is her duty and she does it with joy in order to live up to her position as a mother in the community. There is no suggestion that breastfeeding or nursing will spoil her figure. As a matter of fact, a mother is not figure conscious. Her pride at having a baby does not give way to personal beauty and charm. She upholds the baby more than everything else. She believes that since she has had a baby, her standards will be judged by how well and healthy her baby is and nobody will ever again pay her any personal attention to warrant her bother to keep up her figure. Brassiers are not worn. The minute day to day care of little children, with its routine, its exasperations, its wails of misery that cannot be correctly interpreted, these are very congenial to the Shama women. In recognition of this case, if one comments on a middle-aged woman to be good-looking, the people answer "Good-looking? Je-e-s, but you should have seen her before she bore all these children." This shows how the women of Shama tend to neglect their personal charm as soon as they begin to have children. A woman who makes any attempts to appear attractive when caring for children is looked upon with contempt and snubbed and may even be accused of doing that to capture the admiration of other men. As such

a mother forgets about her own appearance and wishes that it be infused into that of her children.

All along, as early as the second month, the baby is introduced to other liquid foods. Pap is the commonest one and in the first stages, it is mixed with water to make it lighter. This pap is prepared from corn dough. The baby may be given a few teaspoonfuls of garden eggs soup mixed with water to accustom it to the taste of pepper. If a mother has too little milk, she does her best to feed her baby with plenty of pap to make up for the breast milk, if all attempts to increase the breastmilk have failed. Educated parents give their children such tinned food as milk, custard and cornflour to supplement the breastmilk but the child of the fisher folk feeds solely on the breast and pap until it is weaned. From about the age of a year onwards breastmilk becomes only secondary to the child, but it is indispensable.

Marital intercourse during lactation was very much restricted in the olden days in Shama. It was believed that it made the breastmilk impure and the child who is fed on it can never be healthy and will eventually die; and so some people used to ban it for as long as three years after the birth of a child. Nowadays the taboo on marital intercourse is lifted after the baby is three months old and sometimes a child is only forcibly weaned because another is soon to follow. If the mother does not get pregnant, the baby is suckled for a longer time. This is a special privilege of last born children.

Weaning.

Weaning a child in Shama begins when the mother knows she is pregnant again and it is sometimes not completed until the next baby is born. This varies from individual to individual. Some women wean their children at one year old, others complete weaning their children by the time they are one and a half years old, but it is almost always related to the birth of the next baby. With regards an only child or a last born it is weaned late and in some cases allowed to suckle until it stops on its own. Such a thing is socially disapproved. The ideal is for the baby to learn to eat more and more solid food until the child deserts its mother's breast. This is done gradually but if a mother becomes pregnant the child may have to be weaned by force. However, it has been observed that if a child is weaned within a very short space of time, it is emotionally upset. Weaning has no relation to the child's teething or biting. Weaning is done by the mother disgusting the child with the breast. Children are known to be afraid of feathers, so a mother ties a collection of feathers to the nipple and invites the child to suckle, which of course he doesn't because he is frightened away by the feathers. Sometimes the nipple is smeared with quinine or a bitter medicine called "ekukuama" and the child is frightened away by facial expression of bitterness and pantomimed expression of disgust. Sometimes the mother feels guilty over having precipitated a situation unfavourable to the child, and, left to herself alone, she would continue to breastfeed the child. Some mothers on the other

hand deliberately refuse to give the child any milk and tell it that it has had enough of the milk and that the mother is getting all worn out with feeding him. The parent who has by her strict self control, assured the child of its full share of the mother's milk feels virtuous and easy. The child's attention is thus diverted to solid food each time it cries for the mother's milk. Many children often refuse the substitute but after a long time they have no alternative except to accept it for they are forced by hunger. However mothers try and reward the children with the food they like most. They soon learn what they are and give them to the children, but some children don't accept anything unless they are frightened by punishments.

Children are not pacified with comforters when they are weaned. It is clear from the age the children are weaned that they are not interested in sucking themselves because they are old enough to stand the strain. A child is not given anything to teethe on but he is allowed to try anything within his reach with his teeth. When a mother is chewing sugarcane for example, she may give a piece to the child who will readily put it into his mouth, but it is not the intention of the mother to let the child teethe on the sugarcane.

Thumb sucking is regarded as a bad habit but nothing seriously is attached to it. The only fear is that if a child is not checked from the beginning, the child may form the habit of sucking its thumb and continue to suck it even when he grows old and it will be more difficult to get him

to stop. Also, it has been observed that if a child sucks his thumb or any finger, it wears away and gets thinner and thinner. Moreover, the child will resort to sucking his fingers when hungry or idle. To remedy thumb sucking, the thumb is tied with a small piece of cloth. This makes the thumb clumsy in its mouth and as the baby cannot untie the cloth, it stops sucking the thumb. In cases where children persist in sucking the thumb, a deep cut is made with a blade on the thumb of the child so that besides feeling pains in its fingers when it sucks, blood comes out of the cut, and as children are greatly disturbed by the sight of blood, and more so by their own blood, they stop sucking the thumb.

Solid food.

Solid food is introduced very early in the life of a baby before weaning. At six months a child is fed by his mother with mashed yam mixed with palm oil. Bread may be dipped in water until it is soft and is given to the baby by hand. The mother tries as much as possible to introduce many kinds of food to the baby before he grows up. Mothers are not allowed to have babies of a month old on their laps while they eat from a bowl on the floor but at six months a mother may carry the baby on her lap and eat and even offer some of the adult food to the baby. The baby is in no way persuaded to accept it but if he does accept it, he is given it each time the mother eats except, of course, when the baby is asleep. The food is never prechewed by the mother, but when it is hard the mother presses it with her hand to soften it before she gives it to

the baby. Rice is boiled and pressed into a smooth paste with a spoon and given to the baby by hand. Because plenty of pepper is used in soups, a spoon of soup which is given to the baby is always mixed with water. By the time a child is a year old, he is able to hold things in his hand so a mother may give her child a piece of kenkey to eat by himself. He is still often fed by the mother. The mother always encourages the baby to feed himself and the child is able to do so without any assistance between 18 months and two years. The children don't eat with spoons. Spoons are not used for eating in Shama. Generally a baby Shama will want to feed himself because his

mother is always busy curing fish and once they know the baby can feed itself they will not have the time to stay by it and beg it to eat. It must be noted that even though solid food is started early, at about six months of age, that is only supplementary to breast feeding. All that time breast feeding is indispensable until weaning.

At this age the child is not allowed to eat with other young children for fear that the older children might be able to eat faster and so the child may not get enough of the food to satisfy him; so he usually eats with his mother. Seldom will he eat with his father. In some homes where all the members of the family gather round a big dish and eat together, the small child is given food on a small plate to eat by himself. Until he is about six years, he feeds by himself but afterwards he feeds either with the rest of the family or with the children round

a big bowl of food.

The child is fed whenever he is hungry. Eating round a big bowl is done thrice a day but during the intervals the small children, at least the last two ask for food and they are given some. When a child eats much, it is believed that it is going to grow well and fat so mothers take a delight in giving their children food. For this purpose a mother will always reserve some of the food at meals purposely for the small children. In case no food is reserved, a mother may buy a readily prepared food from the market or the street and give it to the child when it is hungry. Some of such food are boiled rice, roasted plantain, "kakro" and "boodoo". Mothers give no thought to the food value of food they give their children. All that they know is that a child grows well when it is fed so they prefer children who eat much to those who eat little. Mothers feel there is a danger if a child refuses to eat or does not have enough food because they are afraid that the child will grow lean and other people will think that the parents are not able to feed the child well. With a girl who is naturally slim the parents often abuse her that from her physique she is ungrateful to them and looks as if she never eats.

Children are taught not to go to the extreme in anything so over-feeding is discouraged. It incurs the displeasure of a parent to see a child over-feeding itself although they make it a point to see that the child does not eat too little. When a child eats too little food, he may be persuaded or convinced to eat more. On the other

hand, if a child overfeeds care is taken that the quantity of his subsequent meals are reduced.

Children are given all kinds of food eaten by adults. No food eaten by adults is considered bad for children except a special food that has been learnt to produce some effect on a particular child. The chief food on which children are brought up are palm nut soup and fufu, gari and kenkey. All the old men and women in Shama say they were themselves brought up on palm nut soup. Palm nut soup is the favourite soup of the Shamans and they have a reputation for it. It is usually called "Esema abenkwan". It is especially typical of large families. It can be preserved and it lasts longer than other kinds of soups. After some of the palm nut soup has been served with fufu, what is left over is stewed and is served with kenkey the next morning for breakfast. Besides, palm nut soup can sustain a child and let him feel hungry less frequently. Rice is also considered good for children but it is not the staple food of the people of Shama. Sweets and toffees are not considered good for children. In fact any sweet tasting food is considered bad for them. Children are not allowed to eat fried ripe plantain and pawpaw. With some children the food mentioned give diarrhoea. Orange is also suspected of giving children dysentery, so they are taken only occasionally. Fufu, kenkey, fish and palm soup form the greatest part of a child's diet.

Children have no right whatsoever to discriminate between palatable and unpalatable food. They dare not do that. They are children and therefore

should take whatever their parents can provide or afford and think good for them. A child who refuses to take his meal because he thinks it is unpalatable is likely to go hungry because no parent is prepared to undertake to please the child's appetite. However, in very rare cases, one comes upon a child who always gets sick after eating a particular native dish. For instance, I was fortunate to see a child whose parents told me that she could not eat kenkey. This sounded a little odd because kenkey is the staple food of the Shamas. This small girl was given a piece of kenkey which she was flattered upon reward to try and eat. She did try her best to swallow three morsels, but what happened? Even before she could eat another morsel she felt nausea and vomited all that she had tried to take. With such people who involuntarily cannot take a particular dish, their parents make allowances for them and do provide them with something else whenever the family meal is what they cannot naturally take. As I have already mentioned such cases are not common. As a child lies on its mother's lap even before weaning, she builds up in it a receptive and welcoming attitude towards food. She holds a piece of kenkey or any of the local food stuffs in her hand and tactfully recommends it to the child saying, for example, "Delicious good tasting kenkey. This kenkey belongs to Kwesi (the child) alone. I always reserve the best things for Kwesi and will not let anybody else take some of Kwesi's kenkey. Kwesi, would you like to try it? Do!" In this way she induces the child to eat the kenkey and gradually, the

child accustoms himself to all the local food stuffs.

Although children have no choice in the food they eat, by their special attitude towards special food, parents know that the children are fonder of a particular food than others. It is a virtue for a mother to learn this of her child because she will find it a great weapon for discipline.

These foods that the child likes best are going to be used to either reward or punish the child. Children usually find it a novelty to be given any food that is not commonly used in the daily diet or those that are European, for as such they realize that they have been specially honoured by their parents. Such things as cakes, biscuits and confectionary are highly esteemed in the eyes of the children and they are what they crave for whenever they are given a favour by their parents to choose what they like. Shama, being a fishing village, the children are given fish always and scarcely do they eat meat, therefore a child can be brought to order or rewarded with a piece of meat. They also appreciate some foods that are only available at the big towns. Such things as pancakes, "atwems" and bread can only be obtained at the nearest big town, Sekondi, therefore, if a parent intends visiting Sekondi at a weekend, all through the week he may demand special services from his child on condition that on his visit to Sekondi, he buys for the child any of the foodstuffs mentioned above. When a mother is tired of carrying her baby at her back, she usually leaves the child in the care of an older child when she goes out of the house either to

the beach or to the market and she promises them that she will bring them something nice on her return if the small child does not cry in her absence and if the bigger child looks after the small child well.

Food is used as punishment in other connections.

A child may be denied food as a punishment for bad behaviour. This is an extreme case of punishment. Generally, when a mother has something nice to give to her children at an odd time, the naughty child is not given any so that this lesson will always make him want to do what is expected of him to merit such a recognition at such times when food is used as a reward and a punishment.

Children normally eat the same diet as adults. At meal time all the children sit down round a big bowl and partake the food. When a child is sick he is paid a special attention. Sick children often lose their appetite and here and only here, they are allowed the privilege of choosing what they like to eat. Upon the advice of a doctor, a special dish may be prepared for a sick child. Sick children are often made a soup with a herb which is called "mpatsewa-nsoee". This herb promotes the children's appetite.

The only table manners that is made apparent to the child at the age of two is that it should always sit down on the floor while he eats and he must always eat with his right hand. Children who attempt to eat with their left hand are checked immediately. At four a child may be served food in a big dish to eat with other children. He is taught how to sit by the dish with his right hand towards it and his legs bent so as to make room for other children round the dish. The

children may either sit on the floor or on stools but whatever the case they take the same position round the basin of food. A child is taught not to stand and eat otherwise the food might go into his legs instead of his stomach. The left hand which is not used for eating should not be put on the floor or against a wall while eating otherwise the food the child eats will pass through the left hand to the floor or wall and leave the child hungry. He is taught to chew food properly before swallowing it. All food must be swallowed before drinking any water. Small morsels are encouraged. Talking at meals is discouraged for fear that food may go into the child's nose. At four, the meat in the food given to children to eat together is divided up and everybody takes his share, but later on, at the age of six upwards, the child is taught more social habits at meals. He is taught to masticate quietly. The meat or fish is not divided among the children and the child learns to take his turn in taking his share of it. He must not grab the meat when a friend has it or when he thinks a friend has bitten a bigger piece than he has. He learns from experience, patiently without any complaint how to put up with the children who are not trained in eating habits. He develops a spirit of friendship and tolerance. It is considered a very bad habit for a child to stare at somebody who is eating, so the children are told not to do so. They are taught to invite a friend to a meal according to African custom. By this custom, whenever a person calls on a friend while he is at meal, he is invited to partake of the meal, whether there is enough food or not. This manner of taking part with other people inculcate in children how to make sacrifices for other people. It encourages

the spirit of give and take.

In Shama a child is not taught to use cutlery because it is not part of the social culture of the people.

CHAPTER 5

ELIMINATION

Toilet training in Shama begins at about the end of the first year. From birth until this time no real attempt is made to train him in the matter of elimination and in homes where the trouble is taken any earlier, no special demands are made from the child. Many mothers don't begin to train their children in this until they are about two years old. It is generally taken for granted that bed wetting and bed-soiling go side by side with a child's early life so mothers feel it is a disgrace to grumble about these things. Mothers show no embarrassment in disposing off a child's excreta as well as washing the baby's napkins. Even though babies are not expected to control themselves in these matters, mothers see that they dirty as few dresses as possible. They make it a point of ensuring that the baby does evacuate his system daily. From birth a baby is handled in a special way before his bath every morning and evening so as to make him feel that he is expected to empty his bowels. The baby is sat on the lap of a woman in such a way that his buttocks are between the thighs of the woman. In this position, his faeces is allowed to droop in between the woman's thighs only to be collected in a chamber pot below. The baby wears about four strings of beads around his waist. In this a piece of cloth about 18" by 9"

is fastened at the back and drawn between the baby's legs and often fastened in front as well. This napkin is used to collect the faeces whenever the child evacuates his system. The rag is changed for a new one. These rags are numerous. They are made out of the clothes the mother used during pregnancy. This system goes on until the baby is about eight months old. During the first three months the mother studies any signs that immediately precedes the child's toilet. When that is known, whenever a mother sees any of the signs such as grunting or showing a slight tension in the legs, she puts the baby on a chamber pot. At this time the baby is supported on the chamber pot. Where there is no chamber pot, a mother sits down with the soles of her feet facing closely opposite each other and the child is sat on the feet for the purpose. The floor is afterwards cleaned with rags. When a child is about a year he can squat without support so he is made to squat whenever he feels anything for that matter. Failing to squat, a child may sit on the floor and mess himself with his faeces only to be cleaned and bathed by the mother. There is not the least expression over the child's dirtiness. Sometimes, when the mother is not in the house the duty is taken up by an older sister of the child or an aunt who although takes over, does not clean the child as wholeheartedly as his real mother would do it. At the age of two years, a child is taught to go outside the house but not very far away, and the mother goes to clean the place later. At four years of age, the child is told to go to the beach whenever he feels the call of nature and from this time onwards, a child is expected to control himself until he goes to the beach. Lapses

at this age receives resentment from the mother and a child is punished with beating but before this time a mother shows no annoyance when she removes the child's bed clothes or dresses to wash. The napkin which a child wears is discarded by the time he is nine months old and toilet training is completed at varying time by individual children, but with most children it is perfectly completed by the age of three or even two.

Children who are able to control themselves are praised by their mothers and what they praise most is a child who keeps dry during the night. Mothers are more worried at keeping the child clean and dry at night than during the day and so they always praise good performance at night. Some children respond quickly to bladder training at two years while others continue to wet their beds even at seven or eight. There is a great difference between bowel and bladder training. Bowel training is completely achieved even before the second year but not so with bladder training. Nevertheless, a child who wets his bed meets with disapproval from everybody, parents, sisters and brothers alike, because since all the children share the same bed, they are all often affected when one child wets the bed; so all kinds of unpleasant techniques are applied to check the child from wetting his bed at night. A mother may go into the trouble of waking the child up and putting him on a chamber pot twice or more during the night. Such children are not allowed any liquid food or water in the evening before they go to bed. Sometimes, a mother may be so irritated that she grinds pepper and ginger, makes it into a ball and pushes it through the child's anus before he goes to bed.

Children so despise this treatment that threats of it is enough to stop a child from wetting his bed, but when all treatment have failed the child is thoroughly disgraced in the streets in this way. He is stripped naked and smeared all over from head to toe with red clay mixed with water. His wet mat is then wrapped round him and tied with a piece of string. Many children, both boys and girls of his age are collected from the streets and they clap and sing "Sonkye kurobon anwen nwee" behind him through the town until he is finally thrown into the sea. This as it sounds is very degrading and so children go to all lengths to avoid it being done to them.

Parents do examine and criticise the quantity and quality of a child's faeces. Since a small child is not able to speak mothers observe various signs which are interpreted by them to mean that the child is sick, and one of the means is by examining the faeces of the child. If a child's faeces is scanty, it is a sure sign of constipation. When it is slimy, it is diagnosed as an indication for diarrhoea. From the observation on the faeces, mothers are able to tell when a child is very well or sick and steps are taken to put things right immediately. The few mothers who train their children in the use of chamber pots often demand promptness in elimination from them as soon as they wake up from bed in the morning, for they are put straight onto the pot. This may continue until the child is able to carry out eliminatory functions by himself. There is no difference between the ease with which boys and girls are trained in elimination. Mothers worry about constipation as well as diarrhoea or dysentery.

At the present, cases of diarrhoea and dysentery are taken to the hospital in Sekondi, but a short while ago, and even in some cases at the present time, the parents resort to syringing the child with local herbs used for children's ailments. Some of the herbs are "mpatsewa nsoce", "abo wo nba egi w'ekyie", "aba-afor" and "abokomyindem". These herbs are used for preventives as well as remedies.

As early as the second month, when a mother expects her child to pass water, she holds him in her arms, lowers him down, draws up his clothes and then makes a 'ssss' sound which is enough to induce the child to pass water. The child does not understand the mother's language yet, but when a mother chooses a sound or word and by gestures associate it with the child's eliminatory functions, the child acts upon the indication. The mother learns when the child is likely to void its bladder and the child gradually learns the sound the mother makes, and when he is able to speak, he uses the same words in connection with toilet elimination. This language is not a proper toilet one. It is made up so it varies as there are as many different ideas as different people. When a child is able to speak he picks up the adult toilet words but he is not taught any other decent word so he speaks about it in plain words. Children are able to perform eliminatory functions by themselves by the third year but they are not efficient in using the toilet paper or rag; so very often, an older child who accompanies a child to the beach cleans him up. Very often too, he goes back home to be cleaned by the mother. A child is able to use the toilet paper by the time he is five. As far as eliminatory functions are concerned, no privacy is observed.

Only a few people have latrines in their houses. Besides these people, everybody else, young and old alike go to the beach for the purpose of evacuating their system, as it makes it impossible to observe any privacy. At the beach, adults do not refrain from performing eliminatory functions in front of children. They regard it as common place and no steps are taken to divide up the shore between the children and the adults. However, the women and the girls have a special part of the beach for this purpose.

Windbreaking is made a remark of by adults and children alike. The child may be abused and the case ends there. In some cases a child is told to leave the room, and when in a company to leave it when he thinks he is going to

When a child has hiccoughs he is given plenty of water to drink. With infants, after they have been given some water, a piece of rag torn away from their napkin is placed on their heads. This, I was told, stops the hiccoughs. Belching is a sign that a child has had enough and is very pleased with a meal. It is taken by some people to be an appreciation of the competence of the mother in cooking as well as gratitude to parents for being able to feed a child until it belches. It is usually ignored, but for a few homes, it is not taken as an offence.

CHAPTER 6

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

In Shama, clothes are never used to restrict the movement of the baby. A dress for a baby is never made to fit very closely for the economic

reason that if the clothes are made to fit, the baby will soon outgrow it. Clothes are therefore made very loose so as to be of use to the baby for a longer time. Round the waist of a baby, whether a boy or a girl, a few rows of beads are put and on this from the back, the swaddling clothes are fastened to save the baby's dress from getting dirty whenever the baby performs any eliminatory function. The swaddling cloth is no hinderance at all to the baby's movement because it lies on it when it is lying on its back on its little mat. When the baby is at the back of its mother, the swaddling cloth forms a soft cushion for it to sit on. On cold nights the baby is covered with a big piece of cloth but this is done in such a way as to prevent the child from covering its head with the cloth by its unconscious movements.

From the day of its birth, a baby automatically moves its hands and legs frantically in the air whenever it cries; even in sleep there are occasional jerks of the hands and legs. Mothers don't bother about these movements. What they look forward to during the baby's early life, is the day on which it will show signs of sight when a hand is moved across its face. It causes a great deal of thrill when a mother realizes this change in the baby. She tells everybody about it and whenever any relative calls to welcome the baby, she moves her hand across its face to show this development in the baby. Between the first and the third months, when a baby is put to sleep, it attempts to turn onto its sides. Sometimes it slips off from its pillow and often turns completely face downwards. During the third month of its life, the baby begins deliberately to hold objects in its fist and shows much activity in gripping things

and moving them at random. He waves his arms and legs about.

No movable or stationary furniture of any kind is specially provided for the baby. It is carried at the back of either its mother, grandmother or aunt by a thick cloth round the baby and by tying the ends of the cloth on the carrier's chest. There are three ways of carrying a baby at the back and each method is used at a different stage of the baby's life. A grandmother takes delight in carrying a grandchild on her back for a walk every morning after the baby is a week old. At this time three separate pieces of cloth are used: two for tying the baby to the old woman and the third for covering the baby's head so as to save it from catching cold in the head in the early hours of the morning. When the baby is about a month old the third cloth is discarded and babies are tied to the back with both hands inside the cloth. The sole reason for this is that the baby's neck is not steady yet, and it has been realised that if the hands are removed from under the cloth, the baby's neck will hang loosely downward. A mother told me that some babies' necks get steadier more quickly than others. If a mother was anxious to get her baby's neck steady an uncle of the baby, whether maternal or paternal must bore a hole through a threepence, thread it and then put it round the baby's neck. This is termed "K'on tsen", literally "neck straightening." This duty is the sole business of an uncle and is done with pride. Two strings of black and white small beads are also worn around the baby's neck to strengthen it. After the third month, the baby is carried with its arms out of the "cover cloth." When a baby is carried

in this way it has free mobility of its arms. The legs are kept always one on each side of the carrier and are left loose for free movement in the third month.

Healthy babies are helped to sit down when they are four months old. In the early stages, the baby is sat on the floor supported on the sides and from behind by pillows and swaddling clothes to let it gain confidence in that position. The immediate elder sister or brother is asked to sit behind him so as to support it is about to fall down. Later on, no supporters are used and the baby sits on the bare hard cement or mud floor with an older child behind him. The immediate older brothers and sisters take a great delight when they are entrusted with the care of the baby. I was fortunate to see at one of my visits to Shama, a small girl whose mother had charged her with this duty. For the greater part of thirty minutes she sat behind her baby brother embracing him firmly to her chest. When her interest and attention could not be sustained any longer she started to fidget. The mother who was keeping an eye on them lifted up the baby and sat down to feed it. The older girl had gone to play outside the house so after the feeding of the baby, the mother entrusted him to another girl. When the first girl returned from play and found her brother entrusted to somebody else, she became jealous and started pushing the second girl away saying, "Go away from my brother. Is he your brother?" My own mother bore it. Did your mother bring him forth?" The other girl did not want to leave the boy but his sister persisted so much and cried so hard that she yielded at last.

After exercising the baby in this sitting position for some two weeks, it is able to sit by itself.



- ⑥ A baby of eight months crawling on the floor.
Notice the threaded coin worn round his neck.
It is for "neck straightening" See page 33.

At this stage the child is sat down on the floor with a toy bell in its hand so that it rings whenever the baby lifts its hand or hits the toy against the floor.

Crawling begins during the sixth month. The child is encouraged to crawl. An empty powder tin is put a few inches away from the baby so that to reach the article it needs must stretch its body on the floor. These movements gradually develop into crawling. He moves about the floor by crawling or creeping and plays with the simple things he finds in its way.

Before the first year, the baby tries to pull himself up to the standing position, holding on to chairs, tables, persons and doors and attempts to maintain its balance, which may be a bit wobbly at first but gradually it learns to stand alone on a firm surface. When the child is steady on its feet, it is encouraged to totter. Again an older boy facing it holds it by its two hands and encourages it to take a few steps forward singing repeatedly "Taa taa begye kyirefuwa" meaning that the child should take a few steps and earn an egg. When a child is able to walk by itself it is duly awarded with an egg. Because when a child is able to crawl it crawls on the floor and often picks up dirty things and puts them in its mouth, it is the custom of the Fantis that when a child is able to walk, it is rewarded with an egg to satisfy his mouth. Walking is one of the most important motor activities that brings thrill to the household. Walking is learnt by children within ten to fifteen months. Some children walk at an earlier age than others. Healthy and strong children, a mother told me, go through the motor processes easily but sickly children take a longer time to acquire control of their leg.

muscles. She stated that if a sickly child at twelve months was able to stand up and totter but suddenly fell sick, its progress would be retarded when even it recovered its health; instead of standing up with confidence and tottering it will have to sit down for a while again and repeat the processes again. She said that her little son had gone through this experience for the third time. By the age of fifteen months a child should be able to walk steadily in an upright posture. Walking is the one accomplishment which affords the greatest joy. The power to walk is very important since the child now becomes physically independent of the mother and desires to move about for its own purposes and by its own free will.

Every parent rests assured that their baby will walk by all means at the age of two at most and this normally happens. In rare cases where a child does not show any effort to walk, it is put up against a wooden locally made wheel which encourages it to walk. An old woman present among the people with whom I was conversing at Shama told a story of a woman who is dead but who was a specialist in making children walk. Any child of two who was unable to walk, could be made to walk when it had been rubbed on the knees with herbs and had been given enema by that woman for a fortnight. She said there was no hope of any child who resisted the woman's treatment.

After a child has become steady on his feet, he begins to find new uses for his accomplishments and widens the scope of his play activities. A child of nine months is able to crawl rapidly along the floor, pull himself up to a standing position

and may take a few tottering steps. By endless practice he acquires the muscular development and co-ordination necessary for all these feats of movement and balance. If this stage of a child's development falls anytime during the fish season, it may be too bad for it because its mother may be busy counting and selling fish at the beach, transporting some to nearby places for sale and also curing fish at the ovens. The child will not have all the freedom of movement it needs as it may be tightly tied to the back of the mother. Very often too, children of this age are left in the care of older sisters who take them out to play with other children at the back of the house. However, as far as possible the child is given the chance of moving freely on the compound and in the rooms of the house. Great care is taken to see that the child does not do things that will lead to mishap. He is warned away from fire, boiling water and knife. These things are always removed from the child's way but when it is too late to remove them, the child is shouted at in order to cause fear in him and then, later, he is removed from the object. If the child persists in handling any harmful object, it is taken out of his view and a substitute is provided. No time is wasted trying to explain to the child how dangerous the object is. When a child cries, it may be pacified with a more desirable object or left to cry until it falls asleep. Children of two years are allowed to play outside the house. An older member of the family is present and is specially asked by the mother to look after the small child; otherwise, mothers search for their babies a few minutes after they have left the compound of the house. In some houses in which there are no compounds, as soon as a child is out of sight, they are looked for, for fear they might wander off and lose their bearings. Within

half a mile from Shama is a small village inhabited by Ewe speaking fishermen. It has been the tradition that before any Ewe man asked for a girl's hand in marriage, according to their tribal custom, the man had to produce the heart of a human being to show his bravery. Because of this old story, mothers fear that when their babies wander off, they would be caught by Ewe men for the purpose described above so they keep on frightening children with the story. This story seem to must have had some truth in it in the olden days but there is no evidence that it is the general practice of the Ewe fishermen now. No children have been missing in the town nowadays, yet the story is still told to children.

The traffic in Shama is negligible. The municipal bus from Sekondi and a few privately owned lorries that go to and from Sekondi turn round just at the entrance of the town so mothers don't worry about lorry accidents. When a child of five is sent somewhere in the direction of the lorry park, he is told to watch the traffic. Sometimes, he is put in the charge of an older person going that way to guide him across the lorry park.

A child is expected to play and converse freely with his friends. Even though other people fight with him, his mother admits that children everywhere play and fight at times. A child who sits still is a bore and is bullied by children of his own age and teased by adults. Parents encourage all kinds of children's plays, but running is restricted because mothers are afraid that the children might fall down and bruise themselves when they run about. Children are allowed to play as much as possible. An experienced mother of seven children told me that if a child falls down at play and the mother or anybody

nearly takes no notice of him, it gets up quickly and quietly and continues to play, but if the people around show any alarm, the child is embarrassed and will cry.

Being able to walk itself opens a new road for adventure for the child. It is now that parents are all attentive so that the baby does not hurt itself during its restless activities which engage him throughout the day. Just as he learns to play with other children, so does his attention wander from one object to another. His senses and muscles as well as his mind are all applied to the object which has attracted his attention and curiosity. He wants to know what everything feels like, looks like, sounds like when it is hit against the ground; and he wants to pull everything into pieces and see its constituent parts. The mothers find it difficult to care for their children at this stage and always find themselves in trouble. A child would walk to a table and drag the table cloth and consequently, if there are any objects on the table, these have to fall on his head. He is considered very troublesome indeed for he keeps on banging plates and cooking pots within his reach and often breaks them into pieces. He wants to know how every new object works so he occupies himself with playing with it. Through imagination and actual trying he copies adult life as much as possible. I saw a small girl trying to use a very long broom which she could not hold well to sweep the courtyard around her mother's stove for curing fish and you could imagine how often she kept turning over stools, sweeping small articles as knives while some of the sticks of the broom came out of the bundle. I saw a little active girl who would not leave her

mother to do the laundry alone so she took off her dress and started washing it in a bucket of water by her mother. There is no end to children dropping articles they have collected during their play in kerosene tins of drinking water.

Boys are never tired of climbing high things. A boy will climb onto the top of a chair and pretend to drive it as a lorry for some time. He loves to participate in the activities of those around him. On as many occasions as possible he is allowed to help and he derives a great pleasure both from doing what he wants to do and from the feeling of responsibility and importance which it gives him. When he is not allowed or told quite frankly that he cannot do what he wishes because he is too young, he gets into a fit of anger and cries, but he is often satisfied when he is given something else to do.

Parents, it appears, do not always understand the child's cries for a toy which provides him with the opportunity and material for play. All the same they are interested in what the child does and it is their great concern to keep an eye on the child closely and check him from damaging himself or household property.

CHAPTER 7

SLEEP

In the first four weeks of life a healthy baby sleeps most part of the day. The mother plans her housework in such a way as to enable the child to sleep undisturbed for long hours. The mothers of Shama, as they told me during my investigation, believe that a

sufficient amount of sleep enables a child to grow fat. Needless to say, the mothers are very proud of fat babies and so they try to do all in their power to fatten the baby in the first few weeks of life so that she will be admired by all relatives and friends at the out-dooring of the baby. I heard a mother of four say, "Kodwo, go outside and play with your friends now because Ekua is asleep and I don't want you to wake her up". In such ways mothers avoid noise in the house and encourage their babies to sleep soundly. Upon investigation, a mother told me that babies usually fall asleep when they feel cool but when babies are hot, even if they feel asleep, they will rather cry out the sleep, so in order to have babies sleep well, especially in the first few weeks, it is bathed the first thing in the morning and fed so that it will have ample time to rest before the next feed. At midday, except on rainy days, the child is bathed again with cold water without any soap or sponge. Water is put in a big round basin and the baby is lowered into it and the water splashed on its body. After this, it is wiped dry with a towel. The baby is then smeared all over with "hyrow", a kind of white clay mixed with water. It keeps the baby's body cool against the heat of the day and at the same time enables it to grow fat. "Krobow" is also used on babies after bath. When the "krobow" or "hyrow" is fairly dry on the child's body, talcum powder is also applied on the baby paying particular attention to the folds of the skin as I was made to understand, if care is not taken, the folds of the skin may not be properly dried and as a consequence, the child's armpits, waist and neck where the folds are will be red and covered with sores caused by the dampness.



⑦ A baby sleeping in the enclosed compound
of a house.

In the evening a mother will wipe the baby again with a towel wrung out of cold water. All this is done with the sole purpose of getting the child to sleep. Mothers in Shama say that their children's sleep differs both in length and soundness. Mothers want their children to sleep so that they may have time to attend to their household duties.

During the daytime a baby is put to sleep on a mat on which swaddling clothes are put to protect the baby's skin from the hard floor and to keep the mat from being soiled in case eliminatory functions take place. They are put to sleep where their mothers will see them, sometimes in the kitchen, in the enclosed compound of the house or in a room. A mother pointed out to one of her children, a boy almost four years old and said that that child would never sleep on a bed when he was a baby. Somehow or other he knew, through his senses of course, that he was detached from human contact and so will wake up and cry two minutes after it had been put to sleep on its bed. He only slept when he was either lying on his mother's lap or at her back. Another mother admitted that one of her babies punctuated her sleep with cries too because he was not very healthy and well when he was born. Mothers sing lullabies to lull their children to sleep.

One of the commonest ones are:

Whose baby is this?

He is Mr. Kwesi's baby.

Take him to the big tree

There are thorns under the tree.

Take him to the palm tree

A branch will fall on the baby.

Fall on the baby, fall on the baby.

As a child grows older the amount of his sleep

decreases and mothers only care to see that the baby sleeps somehow. The way a baby is put to sleep has an effect on the shape of its head so mothers take a great deal of trouble to have the head of a baby the desirable round shape.

At night, a baby sleeps by the side of its mother. For this reason a mother deserts her iron bedstead and sleeps on a mat on the floor with the baby beside her. When asked why a mother does not sleep with her baby on the iron bedstead, a mother told me that the baby will wet the bed which will affect the mattress which is too big and heavy to be taken out daily to dry in the sun. Because of this a mother sleeps on a mat on the floor for most part of her productive period. Some babies will not sleep either during the day or at night until they have their mothers' nipples in their mouths. Mothers sleep with their babies so that feeding the baby at night will be reasonably convenient for the mother. Mothers told me that from the very first day they delivered a baby, they developed instinctively, the presence of a baby sleeping by them at night and that is why, even in sleep, they don't sleep on their babies. Some mothers are very annoyed when their babies cry at night. They say that a baby crying at night frightens them in the first place and secondly disturbs their sleep but an old woman among the group with whom I was conversing pointed out to the others that a baby's cry at night announced that witches are flying in the vicinity for human prey and the witches are assured by its cry that the people in the house are awake and are tending the crying baby. This so woods off the witches from snatching the soul of the baby for fear that they may be seen by those awake in the house.

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When a baby who is anything between four months and a year will not sleep at night many efforts are made to put him to sleep. The mother will sit it on the bent left hand in such a way that the baby's head rests on the mother's shoulder. She will then support the child at the back and pat her with her right hand while she sings a lullaby. She also rocks it. If all fails a father may carry the child in the same position as described above and sit to chat with his friends in front of his house, so that, as it is believed, the night dew might fall on the child and keep his body cool to let him sleep. Sometimes the mother will tie him to her back with his hands inside the covers cloth and go for a walk in the night dew. During the hot seasons, a baby who will not sleep at night is bathed with cold water. All these efforts failing, stomach ache will be taken for the cause and the child will be given enema. If no change for the better is noticed in the child the next day, a native herbalist is approached for help. The herbalist, as a woman told me, gives the mother some green bitter leaves called "bawen" which is rubbed in the palms of the hand of the mother until a green liquid comes out of it. This liquid is squeezed out of the leaves and smeared on the child from head to toe. This keeps his temperature low if he has a fever, or otherwise keeps its body cool when it is warm. Persistent crying at one night denotes that the child is sick and he is taken to a herbalist or a medical doctor in the hospital the next day.

Long before children can understand and use language, they are threatened to sleep or stop crying by stones backed by facial expression that something

terrifying, a man or a ghost was coming to catch them if they did not sleep or stop crying. One of the members of the family may hide and imitate a cow's moo or anything which appears strange to the child. At two years of age, a child is frightened in this way. One of the members of the house goes outside and knocks at a closed window to notify the house that somebody was coming to catch the child. Because the baby can now understand language the mother pretends to hold a conversation with the bogey man asking him in one breath to go and catch the child because he would not sleep or stop crying, and in a different breath when the bogey man enquires of the mother where the gate of the house is, the mother would pretend to beg him not to come in and promises on behalf of the child that he would not cry again.

When a baby is being weaned, a mother goes to bed with a small loaf of bread under her pillow so that at any time the child wakes up, wanting to suck, he is given the bread which would direct his attention from the breast.

It is considered bad for a pregnant woman to continue to sleep with a baby in that state. It is believed that heat from the mother's womb will affect the baby and he will be attacked by a special disease called "ason". "Ason" is said to be very dangerous and often proves fatal to the first child, so if his grandmother is alive, she will take him to her house to care for; otherwise the first child is given some medicine from boiled roots of certain trees. Some of this water is also used for his bath. At the birth of the second baby the first child still sleeps with the mother. While the new baby sleeps on the right side of the mother the older one sleeps on the left. When the older child has achieved complete dimination

of the bladder a father may sleep with him on his own bedstead while the mother occupies herself with the new baby.

Later on, if the house is a big one, when the child is about eight, he will sleep with friends and relatives of his own age in another room. Each of the children spreads his mat besides his friend's across the room, and after much story telling, they fall asleep. Brothers and sisters often share a mat.

Many adults and adolescent boys do not sleep in rooms at all except in the rainy seasons. They sleep on mats under the open sky in front of their houses. A great many of them sleep on the terrace in front of the local castle San Sebastian. It is not uncommon to see boys of eight and ten sleeping between the hardy fishermen under the open sky. It appears that from this informal training, a child prepares for his subsequent life as a fisherman who will invariably go to sea many nights of his life, because in this way, he accustoms himself to the cold winds of the early morning.

CHAPTER 8

HEALTH

On the whole, the people of Shama can be said to be healthy. It is a common sight to see children of good stature playing happily in the sun along the beach and lanes of the village. Mothers are particularly worried about the health of their children and do all in their power to ensure that the children are well. Cold and scratching are considered the chief dangers to the health of the child. Because a small baby cannot talk, the mother often gives it special and diverse

treatment when it is sick. From the time a baby is a month old until it is about a year old, a mother often rubs her baby down with a towel squeezed out of warm water. After that she rubs it all over with metholatum or thermogene mixed with shea butter. A mother told me that thermogene is too strong for the baby's tender skin and that is why it is mixed with shea butter. The baby is almost always covered with one of its mother's covercloths to prevent the baby from catching cold.

Syringing is a common practice and children are syringed by their parents as often as possible. A girl of eight is taught how to use the syringe by herself so that at anytime she feels cold or has pains in her stomach, the mother only has to tell her to go and syringe. A native gourd is also used for enema. When a person is sick of any disease whatsoever, the first step to combat it is to have an enema. In fact, some of the women told me that they had formed the habit of constipating until they used the syringe to help them evacuate their systems. It is also used constantly to ensure good health and children are given enema as often as their parents find it necessary.

Children of eight years and above are often seen scratching their bodies and the mothers know that it is a sure indication that the baby is going to get craw-craw. This is so because at this age, the mothers don't take any particular care of the children and, consequently, they do not take their baths well. Most of the children in this category go swimming in the sea and never bother to rinse their skins with pure water. When a mother discovers that it is so with her child, she sends him out to take his bath properly.

Owing to the fear of thieves and witches, all the windows of a house are shut at night exposing

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the children to dangers of ill health. Some families have only one room to live and sleep in. Had it not been for the fact that some men and boys sleep at night in front of the castle San Sebastian and in the compound of their houses infectious diseases would have been more prevalent than they are because it would mean that too many people would have to sleep in a single room.

More and more people use purgatives like castor oil and mist alla. Parents of school boys and girls attribute their ill health to feeding on prepared meals which are sold in the streets. There is some truth in the situation. Many school children go to school in the morning without any breakfast. Some of them are given from a penny to three pence to spend on breakfast but the children usually go in for sweets and unbalanced meals such as "gari" mixed with sugar and eaten raw. The common cause of stomach aches and vomiting in children is due to eating bad food, often food which had been prepared the day before. School children have access to eating green mangoes wild fruits and some of their causes of ill health can be traced back to these.

The precautions that are taken to safeguard health is a daily bath with soap and clean water. Some people swim in the sea before taking their baths. Springing is constant with some people and others take occasional doses of castor oil to purge them. As a matter of fact, some of the people are not convinced of the existence of germs even though they often turn up at the Sekondi hospital and dispensaries for scientifically prepared medicines. Superstitious beliefs have still a great hold on some people and the cause of a disease can be traced to a very isolated case of a quarrel which has resulted in an enemy bearing a grudge and therefore finding a way

of inflicting a punishment on his opponent. I was in a house when a young mother was having her lunch with her baby on her lap. Suddenly, the baby eliminated his bowels and as it was liquid some dropped into the mother's food. The mother stopped eating and was going to throw the food away but she was persuaded by her mother and grandmothers to eat the food together with the child's excreta in it because, they said, if she did not, the child would feel that the mother did not care for it; so its temperature would rise and consequently die. The young mother reluctantly ate some of the "fufu" and drank some soup. That same evening the child had a high temperature and almost everybody in the house knew the cause: the mother's readiness to throw her lunch away, and her reluctance in eating it with the child's excreta.

Because of superstition, the Shama christians and pagans alike often consult the fetish priest to ask him to foretell future mishaps and sacrifices are often offered to save the person from ill health and death. Some native herbalists are also consulted when people are sick and they are treated by them.

A sick child usually has an advantage of parental care over the rest of the children in the family. The parents give him a special attention and this is the only time he can discriminate between the food he is given. Parents are very upset when a sick child does not eat so they sometimes do it mind going to the trouble of providing the special soups and dishes that the child has fancy for. Sometimes soups are made with herbs which are known to be medicinal and the child is begged, persuaded and sometimes coerced to take the soups. One of these herbs

is "mpatsewa noore". A sick child is given an immediate attention so that he may not have the chance of crying. Some babies, when they are sick, don't want to play or stay in bed at all but must be carried at the mothers' backs. Every member of the family treats the weak sick child with kindness. The child is kept indoors and is not out of doors until he has completely recovered from his sickness. He is either washed or rubbed down twice a day and then native ground seeds called "wusa" or an European medicinal ointment is rubbed hard on his skin to generate heat into his body. He is given much rest by way of long afternoon sleep. He is given some medicines to drink. Sick time is with some children the only time of having their wishes gratified by their parents because during this time, the parents are ready to do everything to make the child happy. An only child tries to make the most of his sickness.

CHAPTER 9

PHYSICAL CONTACT, MASTURBATION SEX PLAY.

Caressing is the natural way a mother expresses her love for her child. It may take the form of kissing, stroking, embracing, sitting on the lap, tickling and rocking. These acts of love virtually cease at the coming of a new baby to whom all the love is transferred. When a new baby is not born, these acts of love and caressing cease all the same before the child is four years old.

Such physical contacts usually go on when the mother is feeding the baby. The father also shows the same amount of interest and love to the baby and it is not rare to see a father carrying a baby on his neck and patting it gently. Other members of the family as well as

Friends also show some love for the child. Contact with the child depends on the relationship between the person and the child's family. In cases where there is a really intimate friendship between the mother and another woman, the friend takes delight in taking the baby to spend a day with her in her own house. There, the baby is treated with the utmost care and is carried at the table more than its real mother would do. The natural disposition of the child makes him liked by people. If a child has good looks and is healthy many people especially women and grown up girls want to carry him on their backs. On the other hand if a child is sickly, unattractive or nonchalant, people do not feel warm about him. Grandmothers everywhere are known to show such a great affection to their grandchildren that they even spoil them. With some children, physical contact with their grand-parents are great and they prefer to be nursed and taken care of by them rather than by their real mothers because a child can get a great deal of fun out of a grandmother as compared with his mother. There is no variation of such contacts with regards to sex. Children of both sexes are treated equally.

When a child is young it is the mother that he knows and trusts most. He dislikes everyone who looks strange to him. The child is able to distinguish between the mother and other people when about three months of age. A baby can be handled quite easily from the third month. At this time he can respond to a smile. There are no restrictions whatsoever about a child's physical contact with people. All friends and family relations are allowed to touch and handle him. It is really a matter of pride for a mother when other people show interest in her child.

In cases where the parents suspect a friend or relative of witchcraft, they see to it that that person has no access to handle the child or he or she may kill the child with their witchcraft.

Kissing is not part of the culture of the people of Shama as also other people in West Africa. A mother or a father may often kiss a baby but the child is not required to kiss others. If for instance a grandmother goes away from the town for sometime, on her return her little grandchild will be very pleased to see her back but the only way he can express his pleasure is by running to embrace her. Embracing somebody is nothing that is either taught or encouraged. It is solely left to the child to decide for himself and it is usually the outcome of a special contact, connection or affection that a child has towards the person.

The genitals are given special attention when the child is bathed. Mothers claim that they could detect when a child is sick from the genitals and so a constant examination of them is made by mothers. Girls go through this routine more than boys. After, girls are douched with hot water and afterwards water from ground ginger is squeezed into the vagina as either a preventive or cure for whites which is said to be a common disease with the small girls. Mothers are very strict to see that girls wear "amonse" - a piece of cloth worn between the thighs and fastened to beads strung round the waist. This toilet cloth covers the genitals so that dirt may not enter the body through that passage. In some homes a word like "kakaee" is used for the genitals but in most homes the adult word is used by the children.

Masturbation is not common among the children of Shama. Some mothers told me that with some children when they are about eighteen months they could be seen stroking themselves in the region of the genitals. Mothers take this indication that dirt has entered the child's genitals to cause irritation and some others assign it to the cause of whites, and so they try to treat the disease, as they say, by applying hot water, metholatum, ginger, ground pepper or thermogene. The few children who are found to masturbate do it without being aware of it and do resort to it whenever they feel lonesome. Because of the pleasurable sensation these regions give, some children have the tendency of handling their genitals. Boys are said to have the tendency of handling their penis more than girls do with their vulva.

Because mothers attribute masturbation to symptoms of illness, they always seek to treat the disease but a mother told me that sometimes despite all the treatment with hot red pepper and other hot medicines some children continue to masturbate even at the age of six. Owing to people's attitude towards morals in general, parents feel ashamed and disgraced when their child masturbates. They do not consider masturbation as anything physically and mentally injurious. They look at it as being morally bad and begin to think that it is the manifestation of lust in the child so they try to repress it by threats and corporal punishments. The children are also abused and disgraced.

Thumbsucking is also noticed in Shama but it is not considered as having anything to do with masturbation. Children play sex games. They

are played by boys and girls and also by children of the same sex. They begin by examining each other's bodies to find out the differences. Such games are played in secret places at a time when there are no adults about. Children who participate in such games are made to feel ashamed of themselves. They are often beaten and ginger or pepper is applied to their genitals, this time not as a cure of a disease but as a punishment.

CHAPTER 10

CLOTHING AND SELF EXPOSURE

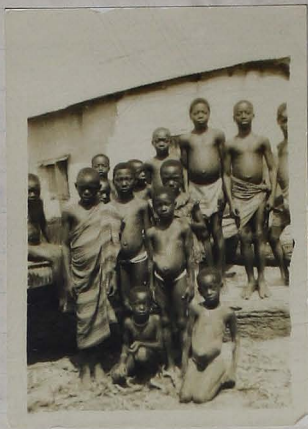
It is considered very bad luck to prepare clothes before a child is born because it may not survive to use them; but after the eighth day after the birth, at the naming ceremony, the baby's layette is presented to the mother by the father. Before then, the baby is only wrapped in swaddling clothes and a loin cloth of the mother. This custom bows to the saying that a child is born without any property and therefore must experience some hardship from infancy. On the eighth day after birth, an initiative white dress is put on the child before it is named. From this time on, dresses are put on the baby. Nowadays, this system of clothing the baby only when it is eight days old is losing ground. Even though clothes are not still made for the child beforehand, a mother who has had a baby before may have an old baby dress which she puts on the baby as soon as the navel cord dries and falls off, and with some educated mothers, as soon as the baby is born. Mothers who have no old dresses for their babies have some made for them as soon as the babies are

born.

The extent to which children are covered vary from home to home and whether the child is attending school or not. It must be remarked that the school and the churches are doing much to teach some parents to clothe their children but the educated mothers in Shama generally see that their children are clothed. After the third year of a child's life, with some mothers earlier, the mothers care less about the child's exposure. It is not considered bad or indecent for children who have not come to the age of reason to be naked. Many mothers, especially among the fisher folk do not mind when they see their children going about naked. Christian parents also see that their children are well clothed. It is a common sight to see children, boys beyond eight and ten and girls above six and eight going about the village stripped naked. Some of these unclothed children are dressed up for church on Sundays only. It is not until a child is conscious of nakedness when he presses his parents for cloth that he feels ashamed to appear naked before visitors; but he never feels ashamed before the inmates of the house.

On the beach some boys can be seen wearing pitch knickers. Of course it is what the adult fishermen themselves wear when at work. The body from the waist upwards is bare and this way of dressing up is considered to be complete at the beach in the hot sunshine. Lapses from modesty are not considered serious for some children are already twelve by the time they cover themselves; so the lapses are rare.

Attitude towards nakedness differs according



⑧

Clothing.

- Notice (a) The two boys wearing cloth.
(b) The two boys wearing knickers.
(c) Girls wearing beads round their
waists and fixed with toilet cloth.

to the child's sex. Exposure on the part of a boy is excusable, but nakedness in girls hits people harder in the face. Girls usually wear gaily coloured beads round the waist. A special piece of toilet cloth of sufficient length is folded twice on the width, passed through the thighs of the girl and fastened at both ends into the beads she wears around her waist. Thus clad, a girl is not considered naked even if she wears no cloth or dress on the rest of her body. This training for girls is started when a girl is a year old.

Things are different with children who go to school. School children wear school uniforms when they are at school. At home a small boy in class one will ask for a cloth to wear only he may hang it on his shoulder while the rest of his body is exposed; but older school boys of seven and eight at least wear their pants when they go home from school. The school girls are rather scrupulous about nakedness. They do well at home once they accustom themselves to wearing dresses at school.

Five is the normal age when children dress up without help. Though the procedure is simple, some school children, the few boys who clothe themselves have no encouragement to tie their cloths round their necks properly when most of their playmates are naked. However, they are able to put on their pith knickerbockers by themselves at this age.

Parents do not undress before their children but there are many chances for a child to see other adults naked. The beach is a place for such a common display. Some men and women excrete their systems on the beach and also bathe where children are also allowed. The women take their

bath on one side of the beach while the men take theirs on the other.

Babies' first clothes are made according to their sex. A girl wears a small gathered dress while a boy wears a gown of the magyar right-gown type. On hot days both boys and girls may be clad in a loose gown which is gathered on the neck very loosely by a cord; otherwise their dresses are different right from infancy. Rompers do not form part of a baby's clothes in Shama; neither are shoes. A baby may wear the types of dresses described above until after three years of age when generally, boys turn to knickers and jumpers while girls wear European dresses in some homes and in others wear a cloth from the waist to the feet and on top wear short covershoulders. A girl wears this two piece costume until she marries. When she marries or after the puberty rites have been performed a girl wears round the waist on top of the covershoulder and the first wrapper, an additional cloth called cover cloth. This third piece of the costume is there to be used to tie any babies the girl may have to carry on her back. This rule of a third piece of cloth added to a girl's costume only after marriage was kept very strictly in the olden days but nowadays girls who completed their primary school education are not married at the age of sixteen; but they use the covercloth in order not to feel out of place in the society among their contemporaries who did not attend school and who are mothers at this age.

All babies' clothes are made of light cotton material. Later on, when children are between two and six and are invariably active, their clothes are

made of very strong cotton material as that will stand the strain and last longer. School boys and girls have more articles of clothing than those who do not go to school and of the boys and girls, the mothers admit that the girls have more clothes than the boys.

An old woman in Shama said that when she was fifteen years old she walked about the town with only a small piece of cloth around her waist yet she found nothing wrong with it but nowadays children especially school children begin to show shyness when they are naked at an earlier age. The Social Welfare Department in Sekondi is doing all in its power to see that the ordinary street boy in Shama is well clothed. As a first attempt, the department recently made a large number of patch knickers of all sizes and distributed them freely to the children to draw the attention of mothers and children to the fact that it is not pleasant walking naked in the streets. It is greatly hoped that this will effect a change in the very near future.

CHAPTER II

SEX DISTINCTION

Babies' first clothes are made according to their sex. Even though boys are treated the same way as girls, the mother still expects boys to be hard and daring. For example if a baby boy cries too frequently, the mother may remark that she has never in her life, seen a baby boy crying as often as that. When a baby girl cries as much as the boy, the mother does not mind because she believes that when the baby

grows up and has a baby of her own, her baby will revenge her by crying as she did. In this way she tries to draw a line of demarcation between what she expects from a boy and what she expects from a girl.

Difference in sex is not actually realized by children until about two years old. At this age boys and girls begin to have different interests. In creative play a girl usually wants to be a mother of a family. She tries to imitate the activities of her mother. Her greatest interest is in playing with a doll, nursing it, undressing it, bathing it, dressing it up again and carrying it on her back. I came upon a few children playing at a family during my investigations. They ranged from the ages of two to eight. The girl who played at a mother was about six and it was very interesting for me to watch how she conducted herself in the game. She was at the time pretending to put a wooden doll to sleep. She had actually prepared a bed with the few clothes at her disposal, laid the doll on it and was lying by its side pretending to breastfeed it until it slept. She kept telling the other children who played at sons, aunts and a father to speak softly because "Esi" as she called her baby was going to sleep. After a while, when the doll was supposed to be asleep, the girl got up from the bed very quietly. She started stirring water in some empty cigarette tins pretending to cook for her family.

In this game a boy was quite happy to play at being a father. Generally, boys of this age group two to six are more interested in moving vehicles. They make for themselves toy cars from empty tins. Boys of seven to eleven are also interested in these toy cars. They play at being drivers driving big lorries full of

passengers. A most interesting sight I saw one day was a group of boys whose ages ranged from six to eleven. They had arranged themselves in two rows with sticks in their hands pretending to paddle a canoe to the rhythm of a song they were singing. A boy who was about seven was standing alone behind the two rows of boys who were sitting. He had a very long and heavy pole in his hand and he was playing the steersman, turning the pole - a bamboo stick here and there to direct the canoe. Boys of this age are very proud of being boys and don't want to be treated as girls. I saw two girls playing at cooking. They had prepared something they called a soup but they were wondering if there was sufficient salt in the soup. The elder girl said that there was too little salt in it but the other, who comes immediately after the first girl thought that the salt in the soup was sufficient. The brother who was younger than the second girl happened to pass that way so they thought he could judge the case for them, so they called him and asked him to taste the soup but he said rather indignantly, "Mame kwan, kodwen de neye basia a." meaning "leave me alone. Do you think I am a girl?" From this it is clear to see that the boy was not interested at all in what the girls were doing.

However, boys and girls up to about nine years of age do not care to mix up freely and play together at times. Boys have been known to prefer games which involve a great deal of running and jumping. Girls like singing and dancing while boys engage themselves in bowling a hoop with a stick.

Besides the way in which children are dressed and the games they like to play, difference in sex is clearly shown by the way they fight. At eight a Shama

boy has already formed his opinion that girls are weaker than boys and so considers a girl of his own age as a weakling, but this idea is not wholly true because some girls can fight as good as boys. However, boys are made to feel ashamed when they fight with girls because it is considered that the boy in this case bullies the girl. Boys fight by clenching their fists together and punching hard while girls slap and scratch their opponents' face. When boys are provoked they openly challenge their opponents to meet them at the beach where I understand, they perform a special kind of fight in which the person who takes the upper hand rubs the other's body with sand. Girls never resort to this kind of fight. They rather tend to use abusive words rather than fight and their fights are a poor show as compared with those of boys.

Girls are known to cry when they feel uncomfortable or hurt in the slightest way. Boys who behave in this way are called "Mbanyin mbasia" meaning "sisi". They are teased by the members of their household as well as their friends in the village. This makes life hard for the boy and so he tries to pluck up courage whenever he finds himself in a difficult position. When a boy is particularly attached to his mother or his sisters, he is nicknamed "mbaa akowa" meaning the slave of girls or women. Once a boy is so labelled nobody takes his views seriously because everybody thinks that he is playing a part in life which was not designed for his sex. On the other hand girls who behave boyishly are called "mbasia mbanyin" meaning "tomboy". Such girls tend to dislike housework, run about playing and fighting with boys, climb mango trees and prove themselves fit for any venture a boy can

accomplish. Such a girl is a problem to her mother because whereas a boy who behaves girlishly can be ridiculed to the right behaviours befitting his sex, the girl, does not mind when she is ridiculed and usually becomes a bully to her other sisters and friends. When I asked what were the effective means of getting such a girl around, I was told that she grew out of this habit herself when she realized that she was having a hard time behaving as a boy.

In the house boys and girls are not separated from each other at any age but they often want to play with people of their own sex. However a kind of sex distinction is made at night when a boy may sleep on his mat with people of his own sex and a girl may sleep with her mother or other children of her sex. In big households one bedroom is allotted to all the male members of the family and the girls also have a room to themselves.

With some children, sex distinction becomes more apparent to them when they enter school for the first time. Even though they find themselves wearing European clothes, they notice the difference between the boys' and the girls' school uniforms. Sex grouping is made for marching, physical exercise, and even with school compound work. For instance when a school needed brooms, the boys would be asked to go to the bush, climb and cut down the palm branches for the girls to carry to the school. Even this makes the boys feel that they are superior to the girls in strength. Boys and girls have separate urinals and latrines. Even though they mix up for most of the school work this distinction prevails. There is a distinction made in certain churches where all the men and boys sit on

one side of the church while the women and girls sit at the other. I must remark that these are children who go through all this course of distinction between the sexes without knowing what it implies until they are adolescents.

Parents generally don't give the impression that they prefer children of their own sex to those of the opposite sex but deep down in their hearts they do. They however, want a balance in the sex of their children for in spite of a father preferring boys to girls, he is hurt when he has no daughters at all and vice versa. Mothers advance the reason that girls help them in the discharge of their household duties. Besides cooking, marketing, washing and cleaning the house, the girls relieve them of their being burdened and tied down by their babies because when a mother leaves her baby with an older daughter, she is assured the baby will be well looked after. For economic reasons, a mother may be able to trade with her daughter who might go about and sell some things for her mother. When it comes to curing fish, some girls are experts therefore the mothers told me they couldn't overlook all these things to prefer a boy to a girl. The fathers also say that because of their work, they are bound to prefer boys to girls. In their old age, the boy will have to take possession of the father's canoe, fishing nets and everything he uses as a fisherman and will have to see that his father's work is continued. As such, a father is proud to have an heir otherwise he considers his life long occupation as futile for it ends whenever he is no longer able to go to sea. Although parents like children of their own sex, they

also appreciate those of the opposite sex. On the whole the answer is not cut and dried. At least each parent wants to make sure that he has a child of his own sex before he considers those of the opposite sex. In spite of mothers claiming that girls look after their mothers well at their old age, they still look up to their sons for financial support, so children of both sexes are admired and cherished. A father is honoured when somebody has an occasion to approach him in order to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage. Parents are not supposed to prefer children of one sex to another.

Because of their fathers' work as fishermen, children spend most of the day with their mothers in the house. This fact may convince everybody that the children are employed at home more to the mothers' than to the fathers' advantage. I had occasion to come upon a small girl who although had more physical contacts with her mother rather preferred her father to her mother. When anybody annoyed or ill-treated her, she said, "you wait, my father will come." To him she shows small favours. In his ears, she will whisper her secrets and it is from him that she wants the last word of comfort when she is crying. She would run and meet him at the gate whenever he returned from work and it did not take any time before they entered into conversation. This special attachment to the father has a cause. Continuance of love or attachment between a child and either of his parents depends to a great extent on how sympathetic that parent is to the child. In the case of "Ekena Mboova", the girl referred to above, her mother fell very sick when she was

about a year old. From the treatment she received from her father then, she began to wonder if a father could do that since her father had not been so demonstrative of his affections to her before, so she clung to him from that time. Things being so, it was not a strain on her when the next baby arrived because she was sure of her father's affection. A child may have a cause to withdraw his love from one parent and give it to the other.

Very often, on my rounds in Shama, I entered into conversation with boys and girls and I began to realize from what I gathered from them that boys who used to be very attached to their mothers gradually broke off from them as they grew older. Some of them advanced the reason that they gradually lost interest in their mothers as soon as they realized that they are not of the same sex as they. Some boys told me that when they were very fond of their mothers, the mothers often treated them as they would treat girls. Consequently even though some children tended to like their parent of the opposite sex, there was a change with their ages. At adolescent or even before it boys give up their mothers and find confidence in their fathers. Girls almost always distinguish themselves with their mothers.

On the whole, parents treat their children well and feel sympathetic towards them. They advise them and wish them well, and it is their ardent wish that they should succeed in life. The place of the grand parents must not be lost sight of in this issue. Some children in Shama told me that since they had been brought up in their grandparents' houses, they are more inclined to attach themselves to their grandparents.

of their sex. Of course they get more favours from them than they can expect from their parents and so they told me openly that they could not attach themselves to their parents of even the same sex.

Sex distinction is impressed on the children by the work that the parents assign to them at home and a child is totally out of place to occupy himself with the work of the opposite sex. It is the daily morning duty of a girl to sweep the kitchen and apply "Kokwadze" on the sink ovens and stoves of her mother to clean them of soot. "Kokwadze" is red clay mixed with water into a paste and applied with a rag. She is in a position of caring for a younger child in her mother's absence. She is expected to cook as well as prepare and cure fish when the need arises. A boy, who even though voluntarily takes upon himself any of these tasks is laughed at to scorn by his friend. On the other hand, it is a boy's prescribed duty to carry the "gyampa", "kiofi" and other articles used for fishing from the beach to the house whenever his father landed his canoe but a girl is never asked to perform this task.

CHAPTER 12

RELATIONS WITH BROTHERS AND SISTERS

In Shama, a child is not told when a new one was expected. An experienced mother told me that even though the child is not told about it, in nine cases out of ten, the first child got sick of a disease called "ason" and she believes it is so because the heat from the mother's womb affected the child's soul which felt its being supplanted in the family and caused it to be sick in order to demand more attention.

from the mother. A child actually felt suddenly misplaced by the arrival of a new baby. It is a really great surprise to him to see the baby. Mothers say that children face the situation differently. Some children do not seem to be affected by it. They are rather delighted and very curious about where the baby had come from. They conclude from the colour of the baby's skin that he is a white baby or an European baby. Such babies spend much time looking at the baby in wonder, observing it very closely and asking their mothers numerous questions about the baby. Questions of the nature of where the baby had come from is always answered by the mother that the baby is the child's brother and that she had given birth to it. Some mothers would explain that the baby grew up in her belly and she bore it. Nevertheless, some mothers think the child is too small to know of this and so when this question is asked they laugh over it and ignore it. Some children show a great resentment as soon as they see their mother with a new baby. This class of children who show no love but hostility to their newly born brothers and sisters present a problem which their mothers are hard put to it to solve. Sometimes, very unfortunately, the child has no words with which to express his jealousy and chagrin nor does he always know the cause of his uneasiness; yet, he shows his jealousy in a great number of ways. A mother said that one of her children was like this. He made the greatest fuss of his meals and would not eat it unless he was spoonfed by the mother. Very often, the child kicked and spilt the food on the floor saying he did not like the food or that it was too small, and always found new faults with whatever food he was given.

This baby cried instantly without cause. When crying, he would hit his head hard against the cement floor of the house and would throw his body about the floor kicking his legs in the air. He would become destructive and would throw things about. He became aggressive with people, kicking and slapping them at the slightest provocation.

I came upon a child whose resentment took a different form. He was two years three months old. He would not let the mother handle the new baby. He cried and asked the mother to put the baby away whenever the mother nursed the baby. He was always ready to take his revenge on the baby by pinching, slapping or kicking it even when the mother was there with them. When the mother and the new baby were sleeping on a mat, this boy insisted that he should sleep in the baby's place. The mother wisely made another bed for the older child. This bed was joined to hers so that she was sleeping between the two children. To the mother's surprise the child told her to sleep on her side facing him and not the new baby. It took several days before this boy could adjust himself to the situation. However, the grandmother came to the mother's rescue and the child found a great companion in her. This time, the child openly defied his mother because he had lost confidence in her. When he asked for water to drink, the mother offered him a cup of water but he refused to accept it. He rather welcomed services from his grandmother than his mother.

The child is not present at the birth of another baby. Even if he is not of necessity sent away to stay with somebody of his mother's family, he does not see his mother in labour. As a matter of fact, this is kept

as secret as possible and even the young girls in the household are forbidden to attend the birth. It is the baby's cry that arouses the child's curiosity. He sees his mother with the new baby and that is the beginning of the struggle. Mothers who usually relieve themselves of the burden of the elder child by sending them to relatives to stay with do not see much of this jealousy of the child.

Another factor that help to arouse the child's hatred for the baby is that most mothers, immediately after having another baby transfer their whole affection and care to the small one so the older baby is bound to feel the neglect. In cases where the grandmother is not these any near female relative of the woman sees to caring for the older baby for about a fortnight in which time the child is expected to get over the blow and adjust himself to the situation.

Any expression of jealousy on the part of older children because new ones are born are not permitted. Some people take pleasure in teasing the elder child when they go to the house to greet and congratulate the mother. Some of the things a person says to the older child is, "Today mother is not going to carry you on her back again because you have grown up. Mother is now going to carry the new baby." Mothers are not usually pleased with such a provocation of their older children because it irritates them and affords them an excuse for crying.

Mothers always try to please the old child. They find time everyday to give extra care and attention to him. They carry the older child at their backs when the younger ones do not need their attention. They are not annoyed when the older child shows any relapses from his former good behaviours. They

show affection, patience and attention. The children are made to feel that they are wanted. They are given sweets and other treats. Some sensible mothers try to enlist the older children's services towards the younger one. At the baby's bath time, the mothers would ask the older one to hand them such articles as a comb, powder, a napkin or a dress for the baby's toilet and dressing up. This attitude creates interest in the older children towards the new babies and so cause them to be friendly with them. They take a pride in rendering such services to the new baby. The new baby is at times put on the older one's lap for a few moments. The mother supports the baby on the child's lap. Even though this is done only for brief moments, it aims at fostering interest and brotherly love between the two children. The father also plays an active part here to ensure the older child that his affection for him is not lessened by the arrival of the new baby.

Some parents claim that they feel it is not fair on their part as parents to have any favourites so they treat all their children equally; but on investigation with other parents they admitted that they somehow discovered that they liked a particular child even though they tried to treat all their children equally. The basic fact of the issue, that mothers like daughters and fathers sons for various reasons cannot be overemphasised. A group of children stand in another perspective in this case. They are the only child of a family, the only son among a number of daughters, the only daughter among a number of sons, the first born and the last child. When a Shama child finds himself in anyone of these categories, he is sure that both parents have a special affection for him. Other

parents gave me a different picture for they told me that their favourite children were those who readily conformed to their instructions and also showed a special ability and aptitude in their general behaviour. The parents further explained that although they had these favourites at heart, they tried to conceal it as much as they could and treated all the children equally to avoid rivalry and jealousy among them. Where a man practised polygamy and tended to like the children of one of his wives any more than the others, the rivalry and hatred between the half sisters and brothers were very obvious and it quite often disintegrated the family altogether.

Besides whichever child a mother may call her favourite, she always gives priority to the baby of the family. This is common in all homes. Every other child is never treated as the baby. When mothers go to the market, they buy treats for the baby of the family and no other child normally expects to be treated like that. Whenever there was a quarrel or a fight between the baby and anybody else, the mother quickly blamed the older child for beating the younger one and the mother often avenged on the older child. Very often, after examining the case between the two children, the mother discovered that it was rather the younger child that had caused the trouble and yet, the older child is convinced and coaxed to give up his right and make allowances for the younger child. The baby of the family is always in trouble for snatching something belonging to another child. When the older child reports to the mother, she tries to employ various ways to pacify him. She first asks him to give up the toy or whatever it may be for a while so that the baby may play with it giving the reason that as the

baby's interest is short lived, she would let the older child have it as soon as the younger child lost interest in the toy. This failing, the child is offered a substitute but if he is persistent on having the actual article, the substitute is tried on the baby who is coaxed into believing that the substitute was better than the article he had snatched. If the baby was not convinced and the older child was pressing hard for the toy, he is given it and the baby is pacified by promises of a treat by the mother to keep him quiet. Nevertheless, if the older child offended the baby, he was shouted at, called a bully and often beaten by the mother.

Some children I talked to made me to understand that they did not find anything advantageous in being the eldest children of their families. They confessed that they were overworked in the house. This is very typical of girls for besides the housework they are expected to do, they are also expected to assist in taking care of all the children who are born after them. For this reason, they said they felt they were robbed of their freedom to play with other girls of their age. Younger children are allowed more freedom.

From the parents' observation, they realize that children of the same sex are known to be closer to each other at adolescence. Before then they have no regard for sex so far as their relations with their brothers and sisters are concerned. Children of the same sex became closer later because of the economic and social conditions in which they work. All the boys of this age who went to sea spent their time together and the girls who either sold fish or stayed at home also spent their time together. It has

also been noticed that schoolboys are also closer to their colleagues than children of other classes. Quarrels are frequent between siblings of the same sex and they are more frequent between sisters than brothers. Before adolescence a boy might quarrel with his brother or with his sister but this ceases after adolescence. The people of Shama are known everywhere by the way they quarrel. Before a woman said anything injurious to her opponent, she would first describe and lower her own prestige before her opponent so as to let the latter be aware that she did not matter and that whatever the opponent said after her own description of herself would not hurt her because she had admitted her own limitations and faults. This being the situation, a girl is very much hurt when she is abused by her brother but takes her sister's abuse very lightly because, the brother, being of a different sex is in a better position to see her shortcomings as compared with other girls and will be able to abuse her with faults which her sister is so used to that she will not think of saying them. Quarrels always take the nature of exchange of hot, angry words between the children.

Little children like to be in the company of their brothers and sisters, but there are frequent clashes between them and the mother is always called upon to intervene. A mother told me that she never tried to settle the case when her children brought their quarrel before her. She said that her children were at logger-heads several times a day and she had grown to realize that whether she intervened or not, she found them together the next moment; so she just asked them what the matter was and never passed

any remark except in cases where she had to urge one of them to restore what he had taken from the other child. She went on to say that sometimes they seemed to be totally against each other, but even in this rather emotional state of affairs, she knew that when one of the children left the house to play with other children, his brother would begin to miss him. He would go out to look for him and play with him again without waiting for any serious arbitration.

It is when the children are about nine years old that their quarrels are taken seriously by their parents because they fear that if they don't intercede here, the children may develop hostile attitudes towards each other when they grow up. Whenever there is a quarrel, the mother asks each of them to state the case and then she passes her judgement on it and also advises them not to quarrel and fight. Mothers admitted that if this was not done tactfully, the child who was at fault began to think that the mother had favoured the elder child or the younger child as the case might be. Fathers take a different attitude. When a father hears the children quarrelling, he tries to persuade them to stop. He threatens to beat the more vehement if he does not discontinue. Some fathers do afford the patience to look into both sides of the question and settle it. Contacts between siblings often lasts a lifetime. There are cases however, where brothers and sisters are so much against each other that they denounce on an oath any relationship between themselves and their brothers and sisters. This can be caused by ill-feelings when, for example, they feel they have been cheated by some others in the division of an

inherited property. When a brother suspects a brother or a sister for dabbling in witchcraft, the relations between them are gradually cut off.

There was a case in which a woman went to visit her sister in her house one morning. On her return, the smallest child of her sister who was about eighteen months old held her aunt's cloth and wished to go with her. This aunt was very fond of the girl so the mother made her take the baby with her to her house. The baby spent a long time in the aunt's house playing. There was a dog in the aunt's house. That dog used to be very friendly with the little girl but that day it did not seem to be in a cheerful mood so when the girl touched it, it barked so fiercely that the girl was terrified and cried hard until the aunt went to her rescue. The girl caught a cold before she was returned to the mother's house that evening. She was given some liquid quinine by the mother but very unfortunately, the girl died that same night. The mother with sorrow and anger went to her sister's house and abused her accusing her of killing her daughter. Immediately, a solemn oath was taken by her sister that the mother should never again look upon her as her sister. The family of the two women tried in vain to settle the case.

This is rather a dramatic, emotional, an extreme and may be, an accidental case but there are comparatively rare cases of cutting off relations between siblings.

On the other hand, when brothers and sisters are agreeable with one another, this relationship goes on throughout life. Because the system of inheritance is matrilineal, siblings always resort to each other

for help and advice. They love each other dearly, even when they grow up they still keep their relationships and so cause their children to have close relations with their cousins and so weld them well into the one ancestral family which has always had great ties between the individuals in it.

CHAPTER 13

RELATION TO PARENTS.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO THOSE INDICATED BY THE FOREGOING TOPICS

A mother is solely responsible for the care of her child. Where a mother goes to deliver in the house of her family, she may stay there for three months within which time all aspects of the care of the child except its feeding is undertaken by the woman's mother or an elderly member of her family; but after this time she takes care of her baby herself. When a mother is not capable of moving her baby herself because of illhealth, the baby is taken care of by a very close relative of the mother. In cases where the mother unfortunately dies through childbirth, the baby is taken care of by its mother's family until it is old enough to go to stay with his father.

The baby's contacts with mother is looked upon as the most pleasurable time for the mother. A mother told me that the joys of motherhood cancel and efface the burdens of pregnancy that goes before it. Even the memory of relentless and inescorable morning sickness is blotted out by the sight of the new born child. The mother is very happy when the baby is presented to her after birth and especially



⑨ Under a shed near the smoking ovens, a mother has just finished bathing her baby.

when the baby can and does smile at her. All mothers enjoy that as the price for their toil. The baby grows up at the mother's knees and from her it first learns whatever will benefit him in later life. The mother and the baby are found together for most part of the day when the mother goes through her daily chores. She protects the baby from all dangers such as fire, a sharp knife as well as from mosquitoes. She looks after his well being and all her efforts are directed to seeing that the child lives to grow up into a healthy boy. She is terribly upset when the baby is taken ill and is prepared to offer her most valuable property for one thing: that of restoring health to the baby. It is a general saying in Shama that "it is better to eat even faeces and have a child than to accumulate wealth without an heir". All through babyhood and childhood the mother is the chief person the child places confidence therefore, hope for security.

The mother is the person the child runs to whenever it is frightened or in difficulty and even in cases where grown up children have proved very ungrateful to a mother, unlike a father, she is more patient, sympathetic and loving. This runs parallel with a proverb in Fante which says, "Se wo ba nye wo nan do a, epepa na nntwa nkyen." This means literally that when a child deposits faeces on a parent's lap, she wipes it off but never cuts off the flesh off her lap. A child is more ready to say his secret to a mother than his father. I was told in Shama that mothers really have a special natural feeling which fathers do not have towards their children; and they claim that when they hear their children crying,

this feeling causes them to be very emotional and it is this that makes some mothers defend their children even when the children are in the wrong and deserve to be punished, for such mothers are unable to control their feelings. The feeling is called "abadae" and it is supposed to dictate to mothers how they should treat their children. Mothers also assert that every child from birth knows the mother better than the father. A mother told me that during the first few weeks of a baby's life, it tries to get accustomed to the personal scent which is worn by the mother so even when a baby cannot see well enough to recognise from sight its mother from other people, as soon as it is placed on the mother's lap to feed, it feels quite at home and is sure that it is with its real mother.

Father and Baby.

Fathers are very happy when babies are born to them. They provide for the baby and give it a name. Some fathers are very fond of their babies and so they carry and play with them whenever they have time but others avoid all contact with the baby unless it is imposed on them by an impatient mother who is hurt to think that the father is not taking sufficient interest in her child. Some men I spoke to during the course of my investigation confessed that they are very nervous when carrying a very small baby. Some of them said that they were afraid to touch the baby before it is at least a week old. There is a class of fathers who cannot stand the cries of a baby, and for this reason, do not have anything to do with it. This is rather depressing to the anxious mother who is always ready to hear her child praised and admired.

by other people. Some fathers are really fond of their children.

The father plays a part in the day to day life of the child. It is mostly through play that the fathers have contact with their children. The father and the child learns to enjoy each other's company during brief moments of play. A proud father will lift up the baby from its bed, speak to it sweetly and make facial expressions to it and derives a great pleasure from it. A man gains a prestige for being the father of a child and is considered a man of responsibility. In the older days it was the custom in Shama that whenever a group of men called on a friend, he who had no child was served half a glass of rum instead of being served a full glass.

The father has very little to do with the disciplining of the child until it is about three years of age. The mother is the sole authority before this time because she sees more of the child than the father does and so the baby gets used to her and he usually does, during his father's absence, what he will not dream of doing in his presence; but some mothers are very strict with their children. Claiming that her feelings or "abadae" dictates to her how tenderly she should treat her baby, she more than often tells the baby off with a nasty slap on his thighs to stop him from doing anything forbidden by her instructions. Mothers in Shama know that the best places or parts of the body for administering corporal punishments are on the thighs and buttocks because no damage can be caused to them.

After a child is three years of age he experiences mixed authority from the mother and the father. When

the baby misbehaves at anytime the parent present takes it upon himself to punish him. When one of the parents shows any inclination to pamper the child, he does not escape the blame of spoiling the child from the other parent. In Shama it is very striking the way the mothers delegate their authority over the child to their husbands as the child grows older.

This is done either consciously or unconsciously and an observer is always curious to find out why. Being an observer, I was led to ask why a mother told her son one day "Wait, your father will come. You know him very well. You know he will beat you so get prepared for his arrival". This boy of ten had been sent to buy a reel of thread from a Kogolian woman's shop nearby. The mother was sitting and waiting to get this thread to plait her hair with. She waited for a long time in vain. After about an hour she sent another child to investigate. The second child came to report that the first was playing football with his friend in the street. Of course his brother was sent to call him. I have met mothers who would howl at such a behaviour, get hold of the boy and thrash him soundly for wasting their time. This mother, though very angry, deferred the actual beating which is the usual and commonest way of punishing children, to the father. To my question she answered that the father could spank the child better. To defend herself she said that she had no time to wrestle with a boy of such tough muscles. Not very long after that, the father who is a clerk working at Takosadi came home very worn out by the day's work. The mother lodged the complaint but the father overlooked the complaint without even making a remark. This attitude of the father helped to destroy the authority of the mother over the child.

This is not an exceptional case. Most of the Mothers in Shama do the same and as a result when they tell their children to wait until their fathers come home from work to punish them, they retort, "Tell him. He will not punish me." Thus their mothers undermine their own authority and the children get the impression that, they, the mothers cannot punish them and the only person really worth being afraid of is the father. Some of the fathers do not often listen to the mothers and punish their children, and in such cases, the mother's threat in referring to the father as a means of enforcing discipline and authority means practically nothing to the child.

It so often happens that the mother, after handing over all her authority to the father often interferes and pleads for the child. This interference by the mother is sometimes done in such a manner that it results in a quarrel between the two parents. In such cases, the mother feels that the father is punishing the child brutally and as a woman expressed it to me in one instance, her "avadae" parental feelings, turned round within her and could not resist from defending her child. In such a situation, a mother always referred a father to take notice of the pains she suffered when she was delivering the child. When such a situation occurs some fathers openly swear that they will have nothing to do with the child again, for, after all, when the child grows up, whether he misbehaves or behaves well, he will always be counted as a member of his wife's family. They would leave the child and the mother to please themselves. In such a case, when a mother knows that she had a good reason for interfering, probably, the father was going to the extreme.

she would summon him before an old, respectable neighbour who would look into the matter and blame where blame is due to settle the case. Sometimes a father is so hurt by the mother's behaviour that he leaves even the responsibility of providing clothes for the child to the mother.

In some homes, the mother decides that the child should be punished while the father carries out the whipping. Husbands and wives in this category co-operate in disciplining their children. They inform each other about the child's bad behaviour and decide how to correct or deal with him. No one parent acts as the child's ally in concealing his behaviour from the other; rather, they tend to exaggerate it to make the child feel really repulsive. Both parents realize it is their duty to co-operate in the training of their children's character and so no one connives at the faults of their children, for if a child misbehaves, it reflects on both of them and as a saying goes the shame of the alligator is that of the crocodile also. In such homes, even if there are quarrels between the parents, every care is taken that the children should not hear about it.

In other homes, things are different. Parents not only dispute about discipline before their children, but they also dispute their own private disagreements often leading to exchange of abusive words and hot blows. When such a thing happens the children find they have to choose which parent to side with. When the children see that their father has beaten their mother, they tend to side with the mother, and if they are grown ups, they often pass rash judgments and even go to the extent of abusing the father. This is witnessed by all their neighbours, adults as well as children.

Frequent quarrels between parents lead eventually to separation or divorce which affects the training of the children. However, I was told by an old man in the village that things have changed for the better so the difficult cases of child discipline between parents have decreased.

Parents always feel it is their full responsibility to provide for their children. They provide food, clothes and shelter for them. It is their greatest concern to care for him when a child gets sick. In many broken homes the child is completely provided for by his mother. Parents realize that their children are going to grow up to be their representatives to the next generation so they see to it that they impart to them some knowledge of how to earn a living. If according to the parents' decision a boy is to grow up in his father's occupation, he is introduced to it as soon as he is old enough to go to sea. If the child is a girl and the mother wants her to help in the household, she is kept in the house to do all the work her mother assigns her as well as caring for the successive babies. As she grows older, the mother introduces her to the work in which she engages herself. Common among these are fish curing and selling, baking bread and selling some imported prints.

The women who sell fish have a very interesting way of communication; and this intricate business is also handed down to their children. A fishmonger in Shama does not always have to take her fish to sell in Sekondi market herself. She arranges with another fishmonger in Sekondi to do the selling so after the Shama woman has cured her fish either by smoking or grilling it, she packs them in big



(10) Women and girls packing their baskets of fish in a lorry for transport to Sekondi. Notice the two-piece costume of the two pre-adolescent girls in the foreground.

baskets and covers them with a piece of cloth. A special lorry takes the baskets of fish to Sekondi and as there are as many baskets as they have different owners, each woman marks her baskets to distinguish them from others. The women do not know how to write so before the business is started the two traders at Sekondi and Shama agree on a special piece of cloth as a symbol. Having agreed on that, the woman at Shama will then tie a piece of this cloth to her baskets. Before she leaves her baskets in the lorry, she indicates to the other seller the cost of the fish. She collects small stones of equal size and counts them out as shillings. Any other size of stone used in her calculation is valued by its relation in size to the standard shilling stones. The right number of stones corresponding to the cost of the fish is tied in another piece of cloth and attached to the edge of the basket. When the basket reaches the Sekondi market, the other trader knows through these media indicated, the baskets of fish which have been sent to her and the cost of each basket so as to enable her to sell the fish at a profit. This is but one of the many things that the girls learn in the house.

The children who are decreed by their parents to attend school are sent to school when they are six and are provided for until they leave school. Until recently, only a few favoured children had the chance of attending the schools. After parents have satisfied themselves that their children have got the right implements and education necessary for life, they pray that the children should get on well in life. In the older days parents did not part with their child until they had married for him because

that marked a stage showing the end of the parents' responsibility for the child. This practice summed up the fact that the parents had helped the growth of the boy through sacrifices, they had given him the best they could so that he was now ready to go into the world to make the best of it himself.

Children are expected to be content with what they are provided, to be grateful and also appreciate the sacrifices and efforts of their parents in bringing them up. When a child is gainfully employed, he is asked to help in the education of younger sisters and brothers. A child is not made to refund the money spent on him by his parents but is expected to give financial assistance to them when they need it. A child may build a house for the family and yet all his services are not looked upon as refunding the money spent on him but is considered as doing his duty as a responsible member of a family.

Quarrels between parents and their children are common in Shama. The commonest ones are caused by children giving cheek to their parents and also disobeying them, but there are extreme cases in which parents have been known to have disinherited their children. Others have denounced their children and disowned them publicly. The quarrels usually take the form of exchange of words between the child and the parent. Mothers quarrel with their children about the ordinary routine of the house. They may quarrel with a boy for not washing his plate after a meal and will also quarrel with a girl, who, although is supposed to look after her little sister, leaves her to play with a friend. Quarrels with mothers are usually

about trifles. It is very rare to see a child who has been disowned by his mother. Boys do not often take notice of their mothers when they start to nag at them; but girls are always too ready to answer back.

A quarrel between a father and a child is taken more serious. Serious as it is taken it never ends in blows. It is a breach of a taboo to exchange blows with a father or mother. Disobedience to a father is the commonest cause of misunderstanding between a father and his son. In a case I heard, a father had a son of eighteen years old. This boy worked with a group of fishermen. The father was a fisherman himself but for reasons best known to themselves, the boy was not working with his father's team. The father bought an oar for the boy and instructed him that he should bring him part of his share of fish everyday. The boy always went to his father's house with the apology that his team had no catch. This was repeated on several occasions. This was deliberate on the son's part because he did not want to give the father any fish since he was a fisherman and had fish of his own everyday. He felt the demand was unfair. After a long time the father could not cope with his son's deliberate refusal to obey his orders so he reclaimed the oar from the boy. The boy bought a new oar for himself but before he did so, he sent an elderly man to his father announcing the severance of all contacts between them. The father was fully awake to the fact that if he did not return the oar, the boy's family would blame him when the case came to be settled. He sent the oar back to the boy but he refused it saying that the father had nothing to do with him again so he.

usually lodges a complaint against his father to an elderly person in the clan. When, as in some cases, the boy is too proud to care about the settlement, the mother will ask a distinguished person in the village to see into the case because it pains her to see her husband and son at enmity with each other. If the boy's mother is dead, any person in his maternal family can take it upon himself and demand that the case is settled. It is considered really cruel for a father to disown his son for any reasons whatsoever.

The person to whom the complaint has been lodged takes it upon himself to ask a few other people to help him to settle the case. In many cases people who are not related to the father and the child are not asked to help in settling the case because there is the fear and suspicion that one day these people might quote and refer to this quarrel whenever they happen to be on bad terms with the people concerned. Arbitrations are kept secret and so held behind closed doors.

The child is almost always found guilty. The child is not given much opportunity to explain his case because the people at the trial consider it rude for a child to speak as much as his father. Nevertheless, in serious cases when the father is found to be at fault he is told very tactfully, but not before the child.

In the presence of the child, the case is judged in such a way that a small offence on the child's part is so much exaggerated that he does not leave the room without feeling he is at fault. Even if his father was really at fault, only a mention of a point is done in the presence of the boy. The father is then spoken to later when the boy has left the room, but the boy always shares the blame. The expression "wobukw ahataw gugw do" is used

to describe how a case between a father and a son was settled. The expression literally means that the people at the court "cover the case up with leaves," meaning that they did not care to say which of the people concerned was at fault but they only saw to it that they established peace and proper relations between them. When a child is found guilty he is asked to beg his father for forgiveness. In serious cases he is asked to pacify him with a few bottles of rum. In cases where the child has been known to abuse the father with a secret sin or disgrace openly, he is asked to slaughter a sheep to pacify the father. When the sheep is slaughtered the boy pours the blood on his father's feet and the meat is distributed among those who settled the case as well as the relatives of the people concerned especially members of the father's family because if a child falls out with his father, he is supposed to be out with all the people who are related to the father as well. The boy bears all the expense.

Parents do not often admit that they are in the wrong especially in the presence of their children, but in the absence of the children when the varied opinions of the different people are expressed against him, he is forced to succumb to their judgment. When the child is found guilty, the father forgives him because he is told that it were better for the child to offend his own father rather than offend somebody else's father. Because of this saying, the father usually refuses to accept any fine or drinks the child is asked to give him; and except in very serious cases does he agree that a sheep be slaughtered.

Until a son or a daughter gets married, parents feel they have a responsibility and a right to control



⑪ A baby on his grandmother's back.

their affairs no matter their age. So far as financial matters are concerned, once a man starts to earn a living parents withdraw their responsibility to provide for him. He becomes independent in financial matters only and not in parental control until he marries.

CHAPTER 14

RELATION TO ADULTS OTHER THAN PARENTS

A grandmother plays an important role in the life of the child. More than often the baby is born in the grandmother's house and she acts as the midwife. She takes the greatest care of both the mother and the child for about three months after which time the mother leaves to settle down again in her husband's home. During the mother's stay with the grandmother, it is the grandmother who usually sits up to care for the baby when it cries at night. The mother is left alone to sleep and rest. This is the reason why grandmothers make sure that their grandchildren are born in their homes. Because of her enthusiasm to have grandchildren, a grandmother feels it a pleasurable duty to participate in the nursing of her grandchildren. She is the earliest and best known relative of the child. Grandmothers are more indulgent than parents and children who live with their grandmothers are usually spoiled by them. Quite often the grandmother's ideas on the care and upbringing of the child are often at variance with those of the parents who think that the baby should be nursed in a special way and will disagree with the parents and boast that she brought up all their children including the baby's mother.

without so much fuss.

Next to the grandmother come the aunts of the child. An aunt is esteemed as the child's second mother and therefore aunts look after their nieces and nephews as their own children. An aunt is also more indulgent than the actual mother. A child finds it easier to wheedle out from an aunt what he does not ask from his mother. The aunts' children are considered to be sisters and brothers of the child. An aunt starts to play a part in the child's life when he is in the grand-mother's house and she needs not be introduced to the child because he grows to know her. A boy calls her aunt according to whether she is older or younger than the real mother, if she is younger she is called "Mena Kuma" meaning "my younger mother, and if she is older, "Mena Panyin" my older mother. It is considered rude to call an aunt by her name in some houses but in others even the mother is called by her maiden name by her children and so the aunts are no exception.

When it is not possible for a grandmother to attend her daughter's childbirth, an older sister of the woman is sent to stay in the house of her sister and attend her at birth and also care for the baby. This aunt of the child may be retained for about three months or longer according to her responsibilities elsewhere.

A fortnight after the baby's birth, friends become a real problem to the mother. They want to show that they are interested in the new baby and they come in every now and then to see how well the baby is doing. They often disturb the baby's sleep and the mother's rest by their long conversation. However, the Shama mothers make light of such disturbances and

and welcome their friends' visits. If a friend delivers a baby and you don't call to see her, it is taken that you have a grudge against her so you may be called before an older member of the community to explain why you did not turn up to congratulate your friend on her delivery of the child.

Intimate friends of the family can call during the first week after birth. A friend who is not very familiar with the family may not call at this time because the first week after birth is considered to be very dangerous, for during that time a witch can kill a baby by merely glancing at him, and so only trusted friends are allowed to call. If an unfamiliar person calls and the baby becomes sick at any time soon after that, the person is suspected of having affected the baby with her witchcraft. This is why friends hesitate and call only after the eighth day when the baby has been brought out for everybody to see. The child gets to know the friends of the family as it grows.

Children are shown very great affection by their relations and family friends. The latter like to appear nice, courteous and kind to the children and their parents. They are less severe with the treatment of the children because they would not like to incur the displeasure of the parents of the child. Immediate relatives and intimate friends have the authority to punish the child when they think fit.

Courtesy is what parents try to impress on their children. The child is taught to be polite to his elders and more especially to the relatives and friends of the family. Any misconduct on the child's part is reflected immediately on his parents because it is a society in which children gain prestige or status through his

parents. A child may not be called by his own name. When reference is being made to him he is called his mother's son or his father's son as Papa Kwesi's son. Mothers keep on reminding children about what to do and what not to do. Mothers will have children misbehave to them in the house rather than misbehave to people outside the home.

A child is taught to be grateful to people for every service they give to him. When a child is given a present by a friend of the family, the child thanks him immediately. But it does not end there. He has to go home with the gift and show it to his parents. On the following day, very early in the morning, the child's mother and a few relatives as well as the child will go to the house of the donor to render their thanks again. A child who shows respect to older people is praised and becomes the pride of his family. He is referred to whenever any other child in the house is disrespectful. Going to thank a person a second time for some service he has rendered is a part of the social standards of behaviour the child has to imbibe as he grows up in the community.

Friends and relatives who call always ask about the children of the house. It is part of the social culture to ask about one's health, that of one's husband, wife if he is married, that of the children and even that of the grandmother as part of greetings. When the visitor asks for the child, he is called away from his play to greet the visitor. Visitors show interest in the child and say a few nice things to him. Sometimes, visits from friends and relatives are made to the family to report to the child's parents any misconduct of the child that they have seen outside the home so that the parents may know, punish and correct him.

A child is always happy when his parents take him to visit relatives and friends. He is happier when they go to visit his grandparents because in their home he is perfectly at ease and is free to do whatever he likes. As far as other relatives are concerned, he is free in their house too; but before visiting friends, a parent always reminds the child to put on his best behaviour in the friend's house. If he is used to crying unnecessarily, he is warned beforehand that if he cried in the friend's house, he would never be taken out there again. In the friend's house, he is expected not only to put on his best manners but also to avoid making himself the centre of attraction. He is expected to be at ease with the children of the house and play with them. He is not expected to answer any question which has not been directed to him nor express his views on the subject the adults are discussing unless he has been asked to.

CHAPTER 15

POSSESSIONS

No matter where you go you always find that children always get into trouble by taking things belonging to others. There are children who always want to take other people's things whether they have need for them or not and this habit is a great source of worry to their mothers. Mothers often quarrel with each other because of one child grabbing a toy which belongs to another child. Although parents often make allowances and consider it a childish behaviour, there comes a time when they need to impress it upon their children not to

tamper with other people's property. This is done firstly through instructions and corrections. If a child takes another's toy and there is a fight over it, the mother of the child restores the toy to the owner and if she can, gives his child a substitute. If the child refuses it, he is left to cry until he is fed up with crying; but sometimes force is used to keep him quiet. Quite often persuasion is used and in other cases punishment is used to let children return what does not lawfully belong to them. A mother always insists that her children must be satisfied with what they have and so she keeps on reminding them that they cannot have everything. Should a child be in the habit of longing for things belonging to others, he is scolded and punished. In order that a child may not always be crying for things belonging to other people, some parents try to buy for the child nearly everything which he wishes but they soon realize that that is not the answer to the problem and oftentimes they find they cannot afford them. A child is treated with more severity when he grabs something from somebody else but when he happens to pick them up, it is explained to him that he must not take other people's things like that without permission. They make him restore it quietly. Parents take it a matter of course when children take things belonging to their playmates but they use force on them if they are not willing to replace what they have taken.

When a child is in the habit of grabbing things, he is branded a thief. Nobody in Shama wants to be called a thief because that name has social disadvantages. A family in which some

people have been known to be thieves is disrespected and its members find it difficult to find partners to marry. Because this disgrace is reflected on the parents every parent tries to check this habit in a child right from the beginning. I saw a boy who had left his house to play on the beach. His mother sent for him and told him that she knew very well that he always took things which did not belong to him; so if he was going to play with his friends, then he must not take their toys otherwise when they fought with him or beat him, she would not go to help him even if she heard him crying. In similar ways, parents caution their children from taking other people's possessions.

Mothers have quite a job with small children especially with guarding them against dangerous things. Their most active bodies coupled with their endless curiosity often put them face to face with harmful things such as bottles and knives. They easily forget all the warnings they must have had from their mothers and plunge themselves into danger when there is nobody on the spot to prevent them. Mothers try to remove all fragile and injurious things out of children's way and reach. Sometimes after a mother has finished peeling cassava with a knife, she may forget it on the floor and attend to something else. The next moment she hears cries of her baby who has cut his finger with the knife. Because of such cases when mothers see that a child is interested in a sharp knife, the latter is taken away from his sight before he reaches it and if there is not enough time to do so, as in the example given above, the baby is suddenly shouted

at before he reaches the harmful object. When there is time, the baby is removed from the object and his attention is directed to something else.

Sometimes mothers use their discretion as to whether to shout, run for the object or stop the child - all decisions depending on the distance between the child and the object. A case is known in which a mother shouted at a small boy and made him so frightened that instead of the boy merely dipping his hand in a basin of hot water as he wanted to do, he tumbled into the basin and spilt the hot water all over himself. In Shama, if a child gets brunt or harmed in any way his mother's friends and relatives, especially those of the father tell the mother quite frankly that she did not pay due attention to the child. They abuse her saying she is careless, lazy and good for nothing.

A child has his own possessions and he feels as serious about them as adults do of theirs. A child's possessions usually consist of odds and ends. He finds use for things that adults find useless. The collective instinct is very strong in some children and they try to amass more things than others. Of course this varies from age to age. Children of one to five years of age are content to play with empty powder tins, milk tins, leaves, sand, stones and pieces of stick. They also appreciate toys that their parents buy for them. Between the ages of about seven to twelve, children see to it that they not only have things at their disposal to play with, but also make some themselves. Girls in this group are ever busy making cooking utensils out of empty tins. They rub the



- ⑫ Girls Playing at Cooking.
The girl on the left is pounding fufu and
the one facing her is preparing a soup.



- ⑬ A boy bowling a hoop.
Notice how boys wear their cloth (Sex Distinction)

top of a milk tin hard against a stone until the top falls off and that serves as a cooking pot. They possess small mud stoves on which they play at cooking and they are always making clothes for wooden or cloth dolls. In Shama some girls are introduced to smoking fish earlier than others and some girls of ten years old own small swish ovens on which they practice how to smoke fish under their mothers' directions.

Boys within this range have different interests and therefore have possessions to suit their interests. Because they are interested in moving vehicles, they make some out of empty tins and boxes. The pods of the sand pod tree are used for wheels to the cars and lorries of their invention. They also use the wooden spools of reels of thread to serve the same purpose. The boys' pockets are filled with nails, penknives, old pairs of scissors, short pieces of strings and pieces of rubber tyres. They make catapults with which they chase the birds on the trees. They keep on making things and pulling them to pieces to discover new ways of making them work and they experiment changes on their former models. They make and own traps for catching fish in the River Po. A special kind of box is made of pieces of wood and a piece of tyre, is used to trap crabs among the weeds along the river's banks. Some of these boys spend their leisure making fishing hooks and fishing nets. Every fisherman has a small canoe in which he dyes his fishing net. It is called "odokenwa". After the nets are dyed the fathers give the small canoes to their children to play with and it forms an important part of the possessions of the boys of this age group. They play



⑭ An Adolescent girl after Church on Sunday.

at going to sea in their small canoes.

Between the ages of twelve and sixteen boys and girls feel they are grown up so they begin to lose interest in the things they have been fond of before. Their possessions at this age are more lasting things. The girls start to save money to buy things like powder and lavender which will be useful during the puberty rite ceremony, and sancepans which will be useful to them when they marry. The boy engages himself with thinking out how he will settle down and live a fisherman's life though he has many more years diving which to serve as an apprentice. The boys who attend school take interest themselves in their school work.

Besides the possessions mentioned above children have their own toilet articles. All the children in one household own a common sponge and a common towel so no individual can claim them as his own property. They share mats and pillows too.

Nevertheless, each child has his own clothes. Generally, girls have more clothing than boys, because school girls especially have to keep up their appearances; they look more and more westernised; they own both European clothes as well as native ones so they have more clothing than any other class of children. A small fisherboy I came across aged about ten told me he had two pants and one cloth which he used only when he was going to bed. A schoolboy of the same age had his school uniforms: a pair of khaki shorts and shirt, a pair of knickers for undies, a singlet, a covercloth for going to bed and probably a new cloth for going to church. A schoolgirl had a chemise, drawers,

a school uniform, a native costume for use at home and for going to bed, an European housedress and new native and European clothes for church. An illiterate girl had two sets of native costumes. Adolescent boys and girls have more clothes. Only a few children own shoes in the village.

Children have complete freedom over their possessions except clothing. The parents see that the children do not wear out their clothes by using them carelessly so they have to give their consent before a child wears a new cloth or dress and more especially shoes. A child often cries and harasses his mother for not being allowed to wear his shoes. A child who is deliberately naughty, rebellious or mischievous is often deprived of his possessions to make him amenable to discipline.

Children are allowed to handle household articles as soon as they are able to hold things well in their hands. For instance a child of six can be sent to bring out utensils for cooking and a child of eight may do the washing up after meals. All these utensils are enameled so there is no danger of breaking them. When they are handling breakable articles like tumblers and cooking pots, they are warned to hold them carefully.

In Shama, children are regarded generally as destructive because in their urge to make and possess things they often fall on the reserves of their parents' property unknown to them. A father told me his sons are always cutting his strong cord which he uses for his fishing lines, into pieces in order to serve their own purposes. Children are taught not to destroy things by explaining to them the harm that is done when they destroy

things. Sometimes punishments are the only measures taken to let children refrain from destroying things.

In some homes, an only child is pampered too much. He is given practically everything and he is more than often spoilt.

CHAPTER 16

SPEECH

In Shama, when a baby is born, everybody is anxious to hear the baby's first cry of surprise. In the first few weeks, the parents say that they do not seem to notice any difference in the babies' cries. Mothers are very particular about the way their children cry. They look into the mouth, inspect and make sure that the tongue is well raised when the baby cries. It causes a great deal of anxiety when a mother begins to wonder there is something wrong with the sounds that the baby makes because she fears the baby may be unable to speak when it grows up. A mother told me that when she had her first baby, it cried so softly that everybody in her house began to be suspicious that the child was dumb or had a defect of some sort. This caused the mother to cry for three days. The baby's grandmother thought it was time she did something about it so she dipped her first finger in whisky and forced the finger down the baby's throat with the view to widening the "voice box" as she said. After this had been repeated several times, the cries of the child were audible and everybody was relieved.

Gradually, as a baby grows the mother is able to distinguish between sounds of pleasure and those of pain, hunger and anger. A mother in Shama explained

to me that when a baby is hungry his cries are fiercer and he usually accompanies them with kicking the legs, moving his hands and making facial expressions which tell the mother that the baby is hungry. Sometimes it scratches its face with its nails. When a baby cries for pleasure, he cries softly and is less active with his legs and arms. In this case, the child babbles, that is he plays with sounds. The Shama mother admit that babbling is common with all children and also stress that the child talks when he is old enough to talk but she does not associate babbling with speaking. An infant is born with the power to make sounds which are part of his general reaction to feelings of hunger, pain or pleasure and these sounds are given meaning to by the response of the mother. The baby soon learns that whenever it cries, it receives his mother's attention. The mother in turn learns to understand that special sounds mean special needs and when she satisfies those needs, the baby gradually learns that those sounds get it what it wants so he makes them again and again.

When a baby cries, the mother tries to find out what the matter is with it. She sees if it has wet its napkin. She offers him the breast to suck. If that does not stop him from crying the mother knows the baby is having either stomach ache or constipation and so may give it some medicine to drink. The mother tries by trial and error until the baby stops crying. When a baby is notorious for crying, it is often ignored by a young mother but she is not left to her peace because the older people in her house do persuade her to attend to the baby.

Some children cry more often than others but deliberate attempts are not made to stop a child from

crying until it is two years old. Sometimes a mother promises a child his favourite food or what he asks for e.g. a toy to make him stop crying. No mother wants her baby to cry unnecessarily but when a child is bathed with cold water in the morning and it cries, a mother does not bother about his crying.

Another legitimate occasion for crying is when a child needs help. When a child falls down and bruises himself he cries to appeal for help from his mother.

The baby's earliest vocalisation is encouraged. Long before the child reaches this stage of his development his mother has been talking to him. Mothers delight in responding to the child's vocalisation and they usually interpret the sound a child makes to the nearest word in their language, think out sentences which they think the child wants to say and repeat it to him. Sometimes, they pretend to communicate with the child by answering what they think the child is saying. They then imitate the child's vocalisation.

Baby-talk is regarded as a stage in the process of learning to speak but parents often use the child's language when they are speaking with it. The child begins to express himself for the first time by saying a word and then by pointing at what he means. Later on, he learns to speak in baby talk. The baby may leave out some words in a sentence and also mispronounce some words. Instead of saying "Mama please give me some kenkey", he will say "Mama kenkey." Some mothers take pains to correct at least the child's pronunciation by saying the sentence or word correctly to them. Children always repeat the right thing when they are corrected without understanding the difference. Some mothers are amused by the way their children start to talk but they

don't tease the child with it. When a baby is about eight months old, although he does not understand language, yet, he is able to tell from people's voices whether they are happy, friendly or angry. When a child starts vocalising the mother tells him to do such things as stand up, bring a cup, go and sleep. The child is shouted at, scolded and petted as the occasion demands. When children are playing together, they talk to each other and often learn much from their friends.

Children speak as much as they hear. No conscious effort is made to teach them to speak. Provided they are not deaf or have a speech defect of any kind, they are able to speak by the time they are two years old. Parents are really very happy when their children are able to speak well because only by acquiring speech can a child take its proper place in the society as a social being. On the other hand, parents are very worried when their children are handicapped in speech.

In Shama, children are not taught to modulate their voices. They are allowed to speak as they would. Among the fisherfolk, the men and the women speak in very deep tones yet it does not seem to affect their little children's way of talking until they are old enough to go to sea. Children are not held to grammatical correctness. Parents say that a child improves upon the baby talk as it grows. Adults listen to children and converse with them. Small children are not expected to be factually precise when they speak. If the child speaks about things which are unreal, the parents just laugh over it, but care is taken that this is not carried on for a long time. Parents don't put up with lying at all and so

truthfulness is encouraged in a child as soon as possible. Very stringent measures are used right from the beginning to check lying. Children who tell lies are beaten and at times denied food. Parents tell moral stories to children to encourage truthfulness. All efforts are made to get children to speak the truth because parents realise that if children get into the habit of telling lies, they will make life difficult for themselves as well as for other people with whom they live. A person who is a notorious liar suffers many social disadvantages in Shama. Nobody really takes him seriously when he speaks.

CHAPTER 17

SCHOOLING.

It is only recently that the school has come to play any vital part in the social life of the people of Shama. As far back as 1906, there were two schools in Shama. The Methodist School was the first to be established and later on the Catholic School was also opened. The efforts of these two missions need to be recognised as two strongest instruments which have struggled to bring literacy to the people of Shama. Schooling in Shama had small beginnings as great things often have. According to the log book of the Catholic Primary School in Shama, there were 56 children on roll up to the 26th March 1906. The school was held in a warehouse which was used during the early trade with the Europeans. In 1911 there were 34 children on roll. Between 1910 and 1917, the classes were held in one large mission hall. There were 70 children on roll in 1916. It was surprising to note that the

enrolment for 1940 was 69 consisting of 50 boys and 19 girls. Upon inquiry and further reference, the headmaster and I discovered that between the 1930-1940s, the people dragged their children from school to help them with their fishing industry and the schools almost lost grounds. To appreciate the efforts of the two schools mentioned above more fully, we have to reflect on what Mr. W. R. Allen who was a Provincial Inspector of Schools in the Western Province of the Gold Coast had to say about the situation after inspecting the Catholic Primary School on 23rd May 1939. In his report he stated "Throughout the latter part of 1937 the enrolment was on the decline, and has fallen down to a figure 33 below its maximum in March last year. The impression formed is that the townspeople being almost entirely fishermen with a supreme contempt for schools and scholars, are completely indifferent as to whether the town possesses a school or not. This impression was supported by the comparison of a small number of children in the enrolment with the teeming hundreds in the streets. Shama is indeed a most fertile place so far as propagation of the human species is concerned. One consoling aspect of the situation is the relative strength of Class One as compared with all the classes. It is to be hoped that the enrolment of 20 new pupils this year is an indication of more whole-hearted support in the future."

He went on to review the work done by the school and concluded in these words:

"Generally, on the grounds of efficiency, the school has maintained a satisfactory standard but



(15) The Methodist Middle School - Shama.

with a falling enrolment, the future is not bright."

The fate of the schools at the time was very shaky indeed. The children were not sent to school notwithstanding all the means the missionaries employed. However, the Catholic Mission, I refer to this one in particular because it is the one from which I got most of my information, managed to complete the school building for a ten year elementary school in 1943. Children were admitted and the enrolment rose gradually. According to the inspection records of 1951, the entire elementary school had 355 pupils consisting of 61 girls and 294 boys. Note that this was a year before the Government Accelerated Plan came into force. This may be an indication that the Shama people were then taking interest in the schools and formal education of the youth as a whole. It is interesting to note also the number of girls in the school then, even if it meant there were only a few of them in every class. From the figures obtained from the Education Department Head Office at Sekondi, in October 1955, the total number of enrolment in the two schools in Shama was 964 which is composed of

	Boys	Girls
Primary Schools	430	196
Middle Schools	282	56
Totals	712	252
Grand Total	964	

Parents now attach great importance to learning. The schools which were started with only a few children of unwilling Christian parents are now filled with boys and girls even from the villages surrounding Shama. Some of them travel more than three miles to reach the school everyday. The

villages which feed the schools are Komfoeku, Aboadze, Jabwe, Aboesi, Kusi Nkwanta, Asorko Essiaman and Awoma Krom. The advantages of being able to read and write are being realized and many parents are sacrificing their personal comforts and other things to get their children well educated. Now quite a number of children have gone through the primary and middle schools and a comparatively few of them are now training in teacher training, secondary and vocational institutions. The majority of the children who leave school leave the village for employment in the big towns. A large number of them settle in Sekondi-Takoradi and Tarkwa.

There are no nursery schools in Shama and since the majority of the parents are unable to read and write, their children go to school without any preparation. It has been observed that the children from Shama are taken to school at the age of six but the children from the outstations are taken to school when they are a little more older. Their parents usually are unable to calculate the ages of their children and so some children are brought to school earlier while others are brought late, but on the average they are admitted to school at the age of six. Parents are anxious to get their children to school but it appears that they leave the rest of the work to the teachers as soon as the children's names are written in the registers. Of a truth, the parents do not bother again about how their children learn because they have no standard or means of judgment since they are themselves illiterates. However, the appreciation of the need for schools by the people of Shama is commendable.

There are no Girl Schools in Shama. At the

ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOL.



- ①⑥ Handwork period: Every child, both boys and girls, is making a hat for himself. Those who have finished theirs are wearing them.



- ①⑦ Mending Fishing Nets in School.

moment both the boys and the girls mix up and have the same education. They do practically everything together but the girls are segregated during sports. They are also separated during handwork periods and they are given training in needlework under the supervision of a female teacher. In the Middle school the girls are grouped together for physical education under a female teacher. The teachers in the school used to be men; but gradually female teachers have been given places on the staff of the schools. In the Catholic Primary School there are three female teachers on the staff. The Methodist Primary School has three female teachers too. The two Middle Schools are taught by male teachers, but the girls' needlework classes are supervised by the female teachers of the Primary Schools. All except one of the teachers in the Middle Schools are trained. There are three pupil teachers in the Catholic Primary School. The rest of the teachers in the two Primary Schools hold a teacher's certificate each, either Certificate A or B.

A teacher is very much respected by the townspeople and so this admiration of the teachers are shown by the children as well. The teacher takes an active part in every festival of the town especially those in connection with the churches' activities such as the harvest festival, a church turnout and preaching in the church on Sundays. Everybody looks up to the teacher for guidance. He is really a leader of thought and he is consulted as often as possible. Some years ago school children used to be afraid of their teachers because they were caned at school. Today, corporal punishment has no place in school and teachers are more friendly so the children are happy at school and friendly with their teachers.

A teacher told me that children from the outstations were rather shy and timid when they first come to school but later on they settled down and got accustomed to the teachers. Because of the general friendly attitude of the teachers they are liked by their pupils. It cannot be denied that children play tricks on their teachers. As school children are the same everywhere there is no doubt that they have nicknames for the teachers.

School discipline is more severe than home discipline. Children are afraid of school punishment. At home, some children are not scared by threats of punishment if they do not do what they are told. They take the least notice of them, but the mere mention that if they continued to have their own way they would be reported to their teacher would make them submissive. A child refuses to do any work which is given to him at home as a punishment but he dare not do that in school. Small boys and girls yell and scream when they are at home but they don't do that at school. The children have two attitudes to discipline - a respectful one at school and a carefree one at home. This often worries parents and makes them come to school with complaints about their children's bad conduct at home. Very often, the children are spoken to in school by their teachers, and this carries more effect on the children than any talk from their parents. Despite all this the teachers are trying to impress it on the parents that the school is no place for punishments and so they should not shirk their responsibility at home by bringing children to school to be punished. Children are not punished at home for bad performance at school. The fact is that the parents

are neither able to read nor write so they do not do anything about it because they cannot themselves supervise the children's studies. All that the parents think is that the school is the best place for learning so once their children are attending school, they don't care to see how he is getting on. In cases where the teachers take the initiative and go to the parents to explain to them how badly the children are doing at school, they abuse the children because they are wasting their money and threaten them that if they don't learn, they will be taken away from school. The parents are pleased to hear that their children are doing well in school. They are very anxious to hear at the end of the year that their children have been promoted to the next class without considering the work involved. In some cases when children fail in the test and have to repeat their classes, parents act the opinion that the teacher hates their children and therefore the children's failure to go to the next class. The house discipline is so lax that some people deny there is any home discipline at all.

Some parents do not dispute school decisions. They say that since they have given the children to the teachers to train at school, they have given them every authority to do whatever they would with them. On the other hand, there are parents who are ready to drag their boys out of school when the boys are punished by their teachers. Cases have been known when parents have gone to school, have abused the teachers and have dragged their children out of school; but such cases are uncommon nowadays.

Dutiful and conforming behaviour in school is always admired by parents and those outside school. The school children, when they realize that a dutiful

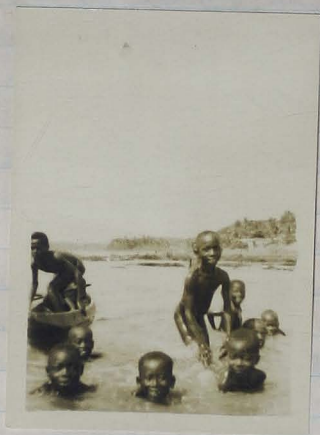
child who conforms to good behaviour at school is admired, get into his company and try to imitate him.

Schoolmates are friendly. They always organise themselves into groups, work and play together. These groups vary in size and children do not stick to any one of them for a long time. They change from one group to another at random. In the top classes of the primary school children make friends which often last a lifetime. The groups they form at this time are stronger than those they have ever formed before. Usually members in these groups engage in works of mischief when they are approaching adolescence.

Besides the works of mischief in which they often indulge, the group spirit serves as a useful ground for competition among the different groups. At school the children compete in keeping different sections of the school compound clean. The children are divided into groups called sections - Red, Blue, Green and Yellow. Each section has some work to do to earn some marks for the week. Children always do their best to go to school early so as to have time to sweep the compound before the final bell goes for commencing lessons. Marks are given by the teacher on duty for the work done. Every child does his best so as to put his section in the best position at the end of the week. Sports competitions are also held on the same lines. Personal cleanliness is also encouraged. The marks awarded for cleanliness go to their sections. Competition in the day to day work of the children is also encouraged. In the Primary School, the children are hostile at first but after some time they realize that a particular section cannot be first or last all the time so

the children gradually learn to cope with the situations even if their sections are lost. By the time the children reach the Middle School, they must have already acquired the right spirit for competition.

Intense friendship arises among children of the same sex at about the age of eight. The children do not care for friendship with the opposite sex. Up to the end of the Primary school there is a marked antagonism between the two sexes but the antagonism is more or less transient. Some friendships begun at this age often lasts long. At the age of thirteen sex differences begin to affect friendships. In the Middle School, though it appears boys disdain girls, they like to show off before them in order to attract their attention. They usually use their athletic prowess, intellectual ability and other devices at their command to accomplish their ends. Girls on the other hand, show tenderness towards the boys in the display of personal charm and coquetry. At this age, the class teacher always comes across love letters being passed round the class or having been dropped unnoticed. Boy-girl relations in the Middle Schools are taken more serious. In their letters they use lovewords they come across in their reading and those words make the letters artificial. They use the sweetest words they can think of and they often go to the extent of promising marriage to each other. Clandestine dealings among boys and girls are not uncommon. When children get to know each other's boy or girl friend, they tease each other with their names. Friendship among children of the same sex are more stable than those between boys and girls at this stage.



Children Swimming In the Sea.
Notice the small canoe "Odokewa", in which
children learn to paddle a canoe.

CHAPTER 18

GAMES, SONGS AND STORIES

Games and stories are always accompanied with songs. Singing is very popular. Women sing when they sell things in the market and men at work at sea also sing to the rhythm of paddling the canoes. On moonlight nights children collect themselves together to play games. There are group games for both boys and girls and special ones for boys alone, and different games for girls too.

The commonest sport in Shama is swimming. The children of Shama learn to bathe in the sea at a very early age and acquire the art of swimming. They often compete to see who can swim far into the sea. Small children learn to swim by lying on small rafts and going to meet the waves which carry them to the shore again. When they go out to sea in their small canoes called "odokuwa", they would leave it at anchor while they swim around it. They know how to dive and they play such games as throwing balls to their friends in the sea. Any other athletic activities are emphasised only at school. In school, the children run, jump and skip. The school children do their best in them. At sports meetings the children compete in sections. Below are some of the games played by the children in Shama.

WODZI O! WODZI!

In this game the children stand in any place. One person shouts "wodzi O wodzi!" and the group responds

Wodzi.

Wodzi ahohor utwer a?

Response

Wodzi

Wonan bubu a nkasa

Response

Wodzi.

What the person says is that he is going to pull down the legs of any person who stands when he passes by him and that if anybody falls down, he must not be offended and quarrel. The rest of the children shout back that they agree. The person then goes round repeating the words and all the children themselves fall down as he passes them. Sometimes they would run and let the person chase them for a while before they let themselves fall. He pulls down the leg of anybody who forgets to fall down as he passes. In a variation of this game, although one person shouts and the group responds, everybody has a right to pull the legs of any person who stands near him.

EBAN NO HO ABON for boys.

This is another group game. Every player holds a cloth folded lengthwise in his hands. The cloth is used to beat anybody who makes a mistake in responding to the words used in the game. The words are

- Eban no ho abon? response, abon
- Kokotai no ho abon? " abon
- Ibuei no ho abon? " abon
- Mpatsewa no ho abon? " abon
- Nkanfona no ho abon? abon
- Wuwonyan no ho abon? no response.

One boy says the first part of the verse while the others respond. He names many fishes in turns and asks whether it has scales or not. The rest of the children answer accordingly. If the particular fish named has scales the group answers "abon" meaning the fish has scales or simply "yes scales". When he mentions a fish which has no scales such as the eel, the group should not respond. They are free to jump, skip and run anywhere while,

they say the verse. If a person makes a mistake and shouts "scales" to the name of a fish without scales, his friends beat him with the cloth they have in their hands. The boy then takes his turn in shouting the names of the fish and asking whether they have scales or not. It is through this game that the children in Shama learn the different names of the fishes in the sea and whether they have scales or not.

3. JDO E HANKE TSE O! for boys and girls.

The children stand in two rows facing each other. The distance between the two rows is about eight yards. A child from one row dances with a handkerchief across to the opposite row while the rest of the children sing:

" Jdo E, hanketse O,
Jdo begye wo hanketse O!"

It means that the dancer is going to give a handkerchief to his lover. When he reaches the next row of girls, he dances along and picks out the person he likes. He puts his arm on the girl's neck and the two of them dance for a while. The boy gives the handkerchief to his so called lover and stands in her place while she dances across to select a lover from the opposite row of people. Every child dances his best when he is covering the distance between the two rows of people.

4. KWAA KWAA.

This game is hide and seek. The seeker asks six questions while the rest of the children go to hide but they respond to the seeker's questions. After the questioning he goes to look for the people who are hiding. The person he catches replaces him. Everybody runs to a selected spot where the seeker must not catch,

him. The words used are :

"Kwaa kwaa	response	yoo yee
Alata npuwa	"	yenyim dzi
Manimanningo	"	maningo
Mereba o don	"	yoo don
Meba a membekeye ahen?	"	Bekeye du
Ebusow na nkatse	"	yenyim dzi."

From the response that he gets, the catcher knows the direction in which his friends are hiding.

5. KYEIKYEI KULE

The children stand anywhere or in a circle with one person in the centre. This person says "kyeikyei kule" response "kyeikyei kule"
 "kyeikyei Kofi noa" "kyeikyei Kofi noa"
 "Kofi Salanga" "Kofi Salanga."
 "Kakahyi langa" "Kakahyi langa"
 "Kun naaye dei" "Kun naaye dei."

After each verse, the leader takes a position which all the children imitate. The positions range from turning the body, bending the arms, head and trunk until finally it comes to lying down flat on the back. The person in the centre counts ten and all the children jump up on ten. The last person to get up is surrounded by the rest of the children and it is his turn to stand in the middle and lead in the game. The verse accompanying the game is a foolish nonsense rhyme.

6. ASOW

This is a game for girls. They stand in a semi-circle. One of them falls on the rest in the semicircle according to rhythm. She is held and thrown into the air several times while they clap and sing. One of the songs used is :-
 "Keteke edze ne dwole ko o, edze ne dwole ko o"



(19) Boys Playing Marbles.

Anoma keteke edze no dwole ko o,

Dama awerehow aka me nde.

E akwadaa bo nwaa,

E akwadaa bo nwaa,

E akwadaa bo nwaa na ommba akyekyere

Obi ammba a muruwu o, dwole,

Dwole beba na maaye ketseketsa - ee

Aware siem, aware siem, aware siem, siem, siem, siem."

Translated literally it runs:

The train, like a bird has carried away my darling

It makes me very sad today.

I need a comforter otherwise I shall die.

A person must attempt to do what she can but not otherwise.

I shall be very thin by the time my darling returns.

Each girl has a chance of being thrown in the air.

"Ampe", "asosow mba", "ahyehye mba" "prem - prae premprae" and "ware" are typical games for girls. Boys also play "ware" and "ahyehyemba".

They also sit round to play marbles. Nowadays boys are getting more and more interested in football matches. They play more strenuous games than girls.

SONGS

Popular songs come and go from day to day.

They are made up of real life incidents. A fisherman got up early one morning to go to sea.

When he went to the beach, he saw a hedgehog fast asleep in his canoe. Some people like the meat of a hedgehog but this fisherman did not so he did not kill it but aroused it and allowed it to go away. When the story was known in the town it was made into a song because it amused people.

"Kotoko e - yei. kotoko e - yei.

Kotoko soer na monko edwuma.

Two eyes na adje abje O soer na monko edwuma (c)
wo name ewu e, e, e, wo papa ewu e,
Kotoko soer na monko edwuma.

It means "Hedgehog leave my canoe and let me go to work."

You will let me be late for work.

Get up and let me go

Your father is dead and your mother is dead
Hedgehog, get up and let me go."

All the activities in the village are accompanied with songs. Fishermen sing at sea as well as when they are mending their nets. One of their songs is:

Afofa ketseketae a ketsoa gyampa e!
Soekeye reba o! Paa do ma yenko."

It means A small boy holding a rudder!
A wave is coming so see that we escape it.

Besides the work and play songs there are folk songs which are accompanied by native dances. The Afofo songs are songs sung by the different companies of the town which had long ago, been originally divided into five or seven companies for the purposes of war. Their songs are war songs, songs of mockery and of historical meanings. They are sung in two parts: a captain sings a solo and the rest of the company sing the chorus which is usually accompanied with drumming and dancing. There are ballades, war songs, dancing songs, conventional songs, funeral songs and also traditional songs which are only heard at big festivals in honour of the gods and dead ancestors.

When a baby cries, his mother sings to him to

stop him from crying. Below are some lullabies.

1. "Nana Adwoowa e, yefo o
yefo ma yenke
Su na yesu

Nana Adwoowa bonom mpampa - yeboe."

In the above song, the mother is asking the girl called Nana Adwoowa to stop crying so that the mother may give her porridge.

2. "Nsu e, mannto o,

Se niegya ko po a mebama wo nam."

This is a song used when it is raining to beckon the rain to go away so that the rain might be awarded some fish when the child's father returned from fishing. It is also a lullaby.

3. "Anoma fefew, den ntsi na irusu yi?
Mannsu, mannsu."

Why are you crying a beautiful bird?
Don't cry, don't cry.

4. "Esi e, yefo o, Mena reketsew ekutu aba
Kese a owo mu, woasa wo dze a
Ketsebetse, wo na dza.

Esu, esu, dze aka wo ho o!"

It means that Esi should stop crying because her mother is going to pick oranges. The big orange is for Esi and the small orange is for her mother but because she has been crying for a long time the mother will give both oranges to her.

As the child grows up, he picks up the songs for entertainment at night. These songs are accompanied with dancing. Here are two conventional

songs for dancing:

5

That is Araba Mansa coming. She went to work in Oboasi. Instead of bringing wealth, she brought sickness.

6

We dislike quarrelling.

We people from Bentsi don't like quarrelling, yet, if you play the fool, we shall teach you, How to paddle a canoe.

Children are taught how to play drums and some of them play them at festivals.

STORIES

Children like stories and they gather themselves together at night to tell stories. All the children tell a story in turns. Adults also sit with children to tell stories. Children love to listen to stories about the fishes in the sea and some incidents in the sea from the fishermen. The grown up men and women in this way hand down their traditions to the children of the village. Children are also told moral stories. After each story there is always a short interlude of a song. An example is:

"Kweku Ananse, woewu na sda ho,

ɔsensen n'abow ano ho

Chorus - Kweku Ananse, Kweku Ananse woewu na sda ho."

Literally it runs Mr. Kweku Ananse that is Mr. Spider is dead.

He is hanging on his door

Chorus Mr. Spider, Mr. Spider is dead.

It is always accompanied by clapping hands to the rhythm of the song.

The adults in Shama cannot read so it makes

it impossible for them to read to their children. Everything is handed down by word of mouth. Instead of reading to their children, they tell stories of strange lands and seas where their work has taken them. They tell stories of strange gods who do mysterious things. Sometimes, after the children have listened to a story of ghosts, they become afraid of going into the dark alone. They imagine that the ghosts they heard about in the story are hiding in the dark. Here are two stories an old woman told some children one night:

Why the Spider lives in the Ceiling.

Once upon a time, Kweku Ananse, Mr. Spider visited his mother-in-law. The old lady had prepared bean stew so he offered some to Mr. Spider who refused it. As a matter of fact, he liked bean stew very much but he thought it was modest to refuse an offer from his mother in law.

However, when the mother in law left the kitchen for a few minutes Mr. Spider slipped quietly into the kitchen and filled his hat with some of the hot bean stew. He put the hat on his head and sat down quietly waiting for the old lady. On her return, Mr. Spider asked her permission to leave but the old woman accompanied him to the gate. As it is the habit of old women, she kept on chatting with Mr. Spider who in the meantime was being scalded by the hot beans on his head and so started shaking his head. The old lady there upon asked what the matter was, and Mr. Spider started singing.

"Masew gya ne ha ara, gya ne ha ara,
Sesei wonkehwe me burow me worowosow kyew,

wosowoso. Klorowosow kyew wosowosow."

It means: -

Leave me here, my dear mother in law.

Leave me here, my dear mother in law.

At this time, I believe,

Everybody in my town is shaking his head.

This was really an excuse for his shaking his head. The mother in law did not take any notice of the song and continued the chat.

The pain became worse and worse until Mr. Spider could stand it no longer, so he threw away the hat in the presence of his mother in law, revealing the deed he had done. He was so ashamed of himself and felt disgraced by his action that he jumped up to hide in the ceiling of the house. This is why a spider lives in the ceiling and at the corners of a room.

Kofi Babone and the Dwarf.

There once lived a woman who had three sons. The first was a woodcutter, the second was a farmer and third was a carefree boy who did no work. While his brothers went out to work he would roam about the village playing. He often made his way to the beach where he played in the sand. His two brothers often abused him, but he did not pay any heed to them.

One day, while the sons had left home and the woman was cooking quietly in her kitchen, a very dirty dwarf appeared before her. She, being a kind hearted woman, took a pair of scissors and cut off the hair of the dwarf. She took off the dwarf's dress, washed it and dried it in the sun. She bathed the dwarf, and put

the clean dress on him. She gave him some good food to eat and then told him to go to his mother.

The dwarf looked up at the woman and told her that he would not go unless the woman has replaced the hair which she had cut from his head. The woman thought the dwarf was joking but he really was serious. The woman tried to put the hair back with starch but all her efforts were in vain. The dwarf told her that if she failed to put the hair back on his head, he would take her to his country. The woman wept and wept but the dwarf was not moved. The woman therefore asked the dwarf's permission to see her sons before she went with him to his country.

They went to the first son who tried to stick on the hairs with glue but it was impossible. He tried and tried until he gave it up. He accompanied the dwarf and his mother to his brother. The second son knew it was not likely for the hairs to stick on by any means so he offered to any amount of money the dwarf would claim for his hair but the dwarf refused every offer. The woman lost hope because even the two brothers in whom she believed could not save her, but all the same, she wanted to see and say goodbye to the third son. Kofi Babone, the third son begged the dwarf to forgive his mother but the dwarf would not listen. The dwarf was bent on taking the woman to his country. The third son took a stick, left the people where they were, went to the beach and started levelling the surface of the sand. He finished doing a large stretch of the

beach in no time and he sat under a coconut tree to see his mother off with the dwarf.

It happened that there was no other way to the dwarf's country but to pass along the beach. When they walked in the sand they left their foot-prints in the sand. Kofi told the dwarf to obliterate his foot prints before he went away, so that, after every step the dwarf had to turn round to smoothen the surface of the sand behind him. He did it for a very long time but he grew very tired of doing this impossible task and so he freed the woman; so after all it was the third son, Kofi, who did save his mother.

The lesson in this story is that everybody, no matter his age, colour, wealth or rank, is useful in a way.

Sometimes, when the children in Shama meet at night, they sing and dance and they also entertain themselves with riddles. Here are a few of them with their translations :-

1. Adge bi wo ho, onnyi nsa naaso dabaa opra nabow ano. Mbuce - Epo.

I have neither legs nor arms, yet I am able to sweep before my house everyday. Who am I?

Answer - the sea.

2. Adge bi wo ho, onnyi nsa, ebo no a ommbos wo bi. Se edge sekan npo tiritwa no mu a, onnye wo bi, naaso, edge ko w'enyiwa ho ara a nna vonsu. Mbuce - anweu.

I don't hit back when a person hits me, neither do I revenge when somebody cuts me up with a knife, but the person cries whenever he brings me near



Obombofo a okum pete nosasee n'etudur.

A! Masee
matudur
Psiande ma
kupete.

"Obombofo a okum pete nosasee n'etudur."

Because fish is cheap in Shama, there is a proverb that anybody who takes the trouble to go hunting only to kill a vulture has wasted his gun powder for he is not rewarded justifiably for his labour.

his eyes. What am I? Answer - onions.

3. Adze bi wo ho, niabow kor na no utokusa pii. Ino nye ebehadze? Mbuwe - eboa.

I have one door but many windows. What am I? - a fishing net.

4. Adze bi wo ho. Se wosoma wo de kefa bra a nna woedzi w'enyim kan. Ino nye ebehadze? - kuba

When a person is sent to bring me, I arrive before the persons. What am I? - a coconut. When a person goes up a coconut tree to pluck a coconut, the coconut falls down before the person descends from the tree. He does not carry it along with him while he descends from the tree.

Sometimes children compete in proverbs in pairs. Here are a few wise sayings about children.

1. "Ba nyansafo woku no be na wonka no asem!"
A word to the wise is enough.

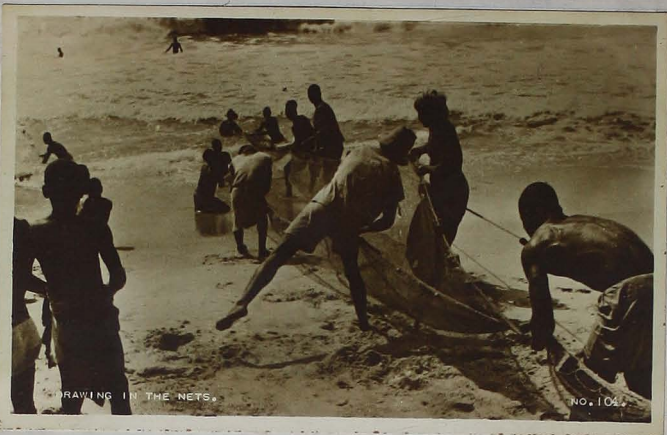
2. "Abofra a nye somako no odzi abodwee dse."
A child who is serviceable is always given lovable presents.

3. "Abofra kijimankijimanyi nnto ne na no fun."
A child who does not stay at home never sees his mother's corpse. The child is not at home to see his mother die and the mother is buried long before he calls at the house.

4. "Nyimpa annyee adze, unkeye de idua."
A useless child is better than a piece of wood or any inorganic thing because, he will be found useful at least one day in his lifetime.

5. "Aponkeye se osee no wuru ne dan ho, tun wile ase na ne kitsii ho apopar."

When a goat rubs its body against his master's house, it is convinced it is breaking it down but in the end it finds it has bruised his own body.



Typical Scenes at the Beach.

CHAPTER 19

WORK

It is remarkable that the children in Shama are introduced to work at a very early age. They begin to work as helpers of their parents and end in training to earn a living. When children are small they very much desire to work and they often interfere with their parents' work. As they grow up, they are not looked upon as voluntary workers but work is demanded of them. By the age of seven, children have already begun to render services to their mothers at home and they also go to fetch water from the water-pump. The work which is assigned to children differs according to their sex. Girls are always confined to domestic tasks. A girl of seven is sent to buy some things in the market. She helps the mother in cooking the meals and whenever the mother goes out she cares for the baby. In the domestic affairs, boys are mostly concerned with fetching firewood, chopping firewood for fire, fetching water and cleaning their fathers' rooms. If a child does any work which is generally done by children of the opposite sex he is teased with it.

A child's work becomes more and more difficult as he grows up. Parents are very anxious to inculcate in their children habits of industry and so both rewards and punishments are used to that effect. Since the work a child does is designed on the occupation of the parents and other social factors, I have managed to collect from children the work they do. Below are some of the children's occupation.

Kwaw Esiboa.

Kwaw is nine years old, and the fifth child of a fisherman. When he gets up in the morning, he goes to

fetch water twice from the water pump. The first bucket of water is kept for his father's bath. The father usually takes his bath in the afternoon or evening after he has finished the day's work. The second pail of water is either used by his mother for cooking or kept for drinking. He does not go to sea with his father so while his father is at sea, he plays with other boys at the beach. His elder brother who is fourteen does not always go to sea with their father, and in his freetime, he has taught Kwaw how to make a fishing net. He has also taught him how to make different traps for fishing as well as for trapping crabs, so after he has played for some time he goes home and makes some traps. He has a small fishing net of his own and he often goes out fishing in the River Prah with his friends. When he has a good catch, he sells some of the fish and keeps the money for himself; but he always takes the rest of the fish to his mother. He always goes to the beach in the afternoon to meet his father's band. He carries the "gyampa", a long pole for steering the canoe, the "bivifi" or grass bag in which some fish are collected, sometimes the father keeps his clothes in it at sea, and some cords used for fishing, to the house. He then spreads out in the sun to dry, his father's clothes he has been using at sea. He goes to play for a while and then goes back to collect his father's clothes from the sun. He then goes to the beach where members of his father's team are dragging the dried fishing nets from the poles on which they are spread out to dry. He sits down in the sand and winds the net round as the people draw the net to him. He does not help to carry the net into the house because he is not big enough for that.



(23) Girls returning from the water pump.

After that he goes home and collects food from his mother's kitchen and takes it to a room in another house where the members of his father's fishing team live. He is then sent to go and buy charcoal which will be taken to sea the next morning. The charcoal is used for making a fire at sea. On his return his father sometimes asks him to wind thread round a piece of wood ready for him to mend his fishing net.

Kobena Eyi aged 14.

He is the elder brother of Kwaw Esiboa. He goes to sea with his father when a member of his team is sick. He knows how to paddle a canoe and he paddles at sea. When he does not go to sea, he draws water for his mother to use for cooking and he spends the rest of the morning making a fishing net or any other trap that interests him. He also goes to fish in the river.

After going to sea he helps to dry the fishing nets on some erected poles. He helps to draw the canoe from the sea on to the sand because if the canoe is left in the sea, it will rot quickly. He then carries the "adwo", a very long and strong wood which is used for fishing, into the house. He helps with mending the fishing nets every afternoon and it is his full time occupation on Tuesday when there is no fishing in Shama. Like his little brother, he sometimes winds thread round a special piece of stick ready to be used for mending fishing nets. Every morning, he carries some things which are used for fishing, from the house to his father's canoe, ready for going out to sea.

He pounds the fufu every evening. This boy told me he liked very much to go to school but his father rejected



②4 A boy selling gridirons he has made.

to his going because he needed his services. He washes his father's clothes whenever they are dirty.

Esi Mansa.

She is a girl of twelve. In the morning, she sweeps her mother's kitchen and cleans the swish stoves with a mixture of red clay and water. She goes to fetch water for cooking and for washing up plates after meals. She goes to clean the mother's fish smoking ovens which are a few yards from the house. After this she goes to the beach with a big basin and waits for the fishermen to land. When her father brings plenty of fish, she helps her mother in either selling the fresh fish or smoking them. She has a small oven in which she smokes fish. She knows how to smoke fish very well. She often goes to sell fish in Sekondi. Sometimes she takes care of the baby when her mother is busy and she often cooks the family's supper.

Kweku Abaka.

He is a schoolboy aged ten. Kweku fetches water for his mother's domestic work and for his father's bath. He sweeps his father's room. After this he washes up after meals and goes to school. His father is a driver and he goes to work with his elder son who packs the passenger's luggage in the lorry. In the evenings Kweku pounds the fufu. He washes his father's clothes at the weekend and traps coals for leisure. He sometimes makes gridiron to sell.

Aba Ewusiwa.

She is aged twelve. She goes for water every morning. Every morning, she sweeps the house, cleans stoves and washes up plates. Sometimes she cooks the family's meal in the evenings when her mother is busy. She sells bread in the street at night. She helps



(25) A boy standing on the rocks and casting a net into the sea.

her mother in making the bread, cleans and prepares the baking tins every evening. Every evening she bathes her younger sisters and brothers.

The few examples I have given above indicate that the children are not employed by anybody outside the family. Their work is a contribution to the family so they are not paid for their services. The boys have many opportunities for practising fishing and trapping coals as well as getting things ready for those who do the actual fishing. All this is preparation for adult life. It is only by taking part and doing the work of the adults that children learn about the fishing industry. Fathers pass on their knowledge to their children through direct contact with them. When I was watching some children at the beach one day, one child looked at the sea and said that herrings were crossing the sea from the west. Only a few minutes later, I saw a group of boats quickly hurried onto the sea and rowing towards the direction the boy said he saw the herrings. The fishermen caught many herrings that afternoon. The knowledge of detecting fish in the sea is acquired unconsciously. The small boy of Shama knows much about the winds and the stars because they are what guide his father when he goes to sea. The children are not formally taught such things. They grow to know them through direct observation of nature as well as from their personal experiences. Besides others, they are not taught how to make fishing nets and traps by specially qualified teachers, yet they acquire the skill of doing them very efficiently. The knowledge that children master both through play and work is very great.

The boys are allowed to fish and the girls often sell fish on their own. This is the foundation of their future occupations. There are no working hours for children. They do the work they can as long as they are interested in it. Some of the boys who attend school often spend their leisure weaving baskets which they sell to the women who sell fish. They also make coal pots and trunks from kerosene tins, and weave mats. They make round racks for grilling fish. They make a lot of money for themselves.

Through the work the children do for their parents, they gradually and unconsciously familiarise themselves with the work of their parents. Children are not taken to sea at an early age, a father told me. He told me that if a child is taken to sea, say, at about the age of seven, he becomes sick and vomits unnecessarily, so they are left to get themselves accustomed to swimming and diving in the water before they are taken to the deep sea. He said that the best time when children can be safely taken to sea is the "Maawore" season. It is a season when fish is caught in abundance, so the fishermen do not usually work very hard to catch them. They go to sea, leave their nets in the water, anchor and rest for a time and then draw out the nets. He also said that if a child is taken to sea when there is plenty of work to be done by the fishermen, he may fall into the sea unnoticed. Children in Shama are very willing to do any work their parents assign to them.

How the children get a knowledge of number is very remarkable. Fish is counted in multiples of five. Fish are sold in hundreds at the beach and the children are very smart at counting out fish for sale while their mothers supervise.

CHAPTER 20.

ADOLESCENCE

Parents can distinguish between pre-puberty and puberty. They could tell from the look of a child especially a girl, how far she is from puberty. If she does anything which the parents think is silly, they make her ashamed of herself by telling a girl of twelve that she has only two years more to enter puberty and so she should do better. In the Shama community, adolescence is considered the most important stage after birth since it is the beginning of womanhood or manhood. The parents in Shama have noticed that this stage starts earlier in girls than in boys and even in the girls, the changes are rapid in some and gradual in others. It is marked by physical change as well as a change in the state of mind. Parents say that the first indication is the growth of hair in the armpit of the children. Girls follow this up with getting fatter and with the gradual development of the breasts which starts from about twelve years of age and culminates in the first menstrual period. Mothers said that they did not know how boys reached that stage. All that they noticed was the deepening of the voice besides the growing of hairs in the armpit and in the private parts.

Some boys told me that when they were in this state, they were always confused because they found they were too big to be called children and yet not big enough to be adults. This state of affairs made them rather selfconscious and they always wondered what was happening to them. A boy told me that on his part, he wished he could speak about his situation to people who would sympathise with him

but for fear of being laughed at or thought of as being childish and foolish, he managed to hide his feelings and got through that period of stress and strain quietly by himself. He went on to narrate his experience of what he called "drawing maps" on his bed, referring to the emission of semen at night which is normally called "wet dreams".

Since parents do not seem to know much of the onset of adolescence in boys, they do not have any rites de passage for them as they do for their female contemporaries. Mothers say that one of their happiest days is that on which a daughter menstruates for the first time. It gives them the satisfaction that they have been able to bring forth a baby and taken care of her until she has reached puberty or womanhood at last and that is why they make so much fuss about it. Girls on the other hand are very shy of menstruation and some of them try to hide it from their parents for a very long time until they are found out. Often parents think their daughters are old enough to have reached this stage so they keep on asking them about it. A woman telling me about her first menses said that it was at a time when she was about to take her bath. When she took off her toilet cloth she wore, she noticed some staining in it. She wondered what they could be so she started examining herself and to her surprise she saw that more and more blood was oozing out of her vagina. She rushed from the bathroom shouting that she had been wounded. She had never seen or heard of any such thing before and she was very terrified indeed. Her mother appeared on the scene and cooled her down, explaining to her that it was normal so she need



26a



26b

Girls turned out after the puberty rites have been performed
Notice the amount of gold trinkets used.

not be afraid.

She said her mother tore out one of her covers into two pieces and showed the girl how to use them so that the blood might not stain her clothes. The mother also taught her how to wash the cloth after it had been used. She told me she was very upset when she had her period the next month so she went to her mother with cries and told her that all her blood was coming out of her body and that she was afraid she was going to die. By explanation, the mother allayed her fears.

In the older days, the rites de passage was performed as distinct from the "turning out" or "Whyehye", in which the girl is turned out in very superior and expensive clothes to show people that she has entered womanhood. As a matter of fact, the "Whyehye" is a way of advertising young girls for husbands. Nowadays, because of the high prices of things, the two celebrations are joined together and performed just once. That is at the time the girl is about to be married although it may be many months and some - times years after the first menses. However, even though the two rites are performed on the same day, one is kept distinct of the other.

The rites de passage is always done first. The girl's friends are invited to the house where they help in preparing large bowlsful of "Sto", a dish made of washed yam mixed with palm oil and salt and served with boiled eggs. The parents make a gift of a few clothes and toilet articles to the girl. While her friends are busy helping with the cooking, she is sat on a white stool resting her legs on a new mat spread on the floor. A bowl of water is put in front of the girl. Special leaves called "nyanya" and other

medicinal herbs are put in the water. Seven three-pences are also put into the water. A grandmother or an elderly woman who officiates pours libation asking the girl's ancestors to bless her and help and protect her especially in her new phase of life. Then the woman, taking her stand in front of the girl washes her face with the water and leaves. After that the old lady gives a signal at which the girl and she try to gather as many of the seven three-pences as they can get from the water. It is taken to be a bad sign if the girl gets less so the old woman always gives the girl the chance of collecting more than she does.

After this ceremony she is taken to the bathroom where new things have been provided for her bath. The old lady bathes the girl and explains to her that she should pay more attention to her armpits and the private parts whenever she takes her bath. The girl is dressed up in a new cloth. She is once more sat on the white stool and the old lady puts three morsels of the mashed yam into her mouth one at a time with incantations. The girl does not swallow these morsels of mashed yam but spits them out. After this a boy is sat on her lap thrice and withdrawn and the same thing is repeated with a girl. This means that she should have many children: both girls and boys. The girl is given a bowl of mashed yam and eggs to eat.

The rest of the mashed yam is put in a rather large bowl and left in the middle of the yard of the house for the consumption of those who have gathered there. After this, the crowd departs from the house. The girl is specially cared for by her parents for a week. Nowadays, people who choose to have it

separate from the "nyehyee" or "turn out" do not make such a fuss about it. No friends are invited and the girl is only given the morsels of the marshed yam.

Very soon after this the girl begins to plait her hair and wears a cover cloth in addition to her two piece costume she has been wearing before. This cover cloth is not of the same material as her cloth. Only married women wear a cover cloth of the same pattern as their cloth. A girl is given "Kente" or any other beautiful cloth to use as "akataado" meaning cover cloth. From now the girl is called "akatesia" meaning somebody in waiting for marriage. At this stage, girls become very self conscious of their appearance. They begin using eyebrow pencils to darken their eye lashes and they use all kinds of cosmetics. They take to ornaments and bluffing to attract attention, and they show increased interest in the opposite sex. A girl's demands for finery and cloth to change into are responded to by the parents very readily. Boys are not treated in the same way as the girls, yet, they say with the girls that the onset of puberty is a very enjoyable time.

Some girls from the few homes where everything about sex is very strictly under a taboo grow up in complete ignorance of menstruation. Despite the parent's attitude that their children will grow up to know about puberty and so no instructions are necessary, the majority of girls in Shama happen to know something about menstruation even before they experience it for the first time. This knowledge is learnt from older girls who talk about their experiences to their friends. As some girls take their baths at the beach, smaller girls have chances of

seeing much of menstruation. It is one of the favourite topics which school girls in the Middle School discuss and it is not surprising that some boys know much more about it even than girls. Boys also collect their information from older friends but never from parents. Boys sit together in groups at night to discuss such matters but they take precaution against being overheard by adults.

Some school boys and school girls get some of their information from some sex books they chance to come across. During adolescence boys have entire freedom to move about. It is only when a parent suspects his son of playing about with a girl that he cautions the boy and explains to him that he must wait until the parents have saved enough money to marry a wife for him. Other than such occasional warnings, his freedom is not restricted.

Girls tend to be very irritable when they enter puberty but their freedom is very restricted by their ever watchful parents. In some homes she is not allowed to go out of the house often and does not stay out late. As may be interpreted from the strong sentiments attached to the celebration of the puberty rites, a heavy taboo supported by law and popular sanctions formerly rested upon pre-marital sexual relations. A girl who is found with a baby before the puberty rites are performed or whose parents neglect to perform the puberty rites is teased by her friends and is more than often insulted with it. These have however, considerably relaxed. Pre-marital sexual relations are common and the celebration of the puberty rites is no longer indicative of virginity. Parents are all the same strict on their girls. They

often trace their steps to the house of their boy-friends who are charged £7. 4s. for having any relations whatsoever with the girls. There used to be a custom in which on the morning after the bridal night, the husband was to show through a window a bottle whose neck was tied with a white cloth if the girl was found a virgin and a black cloth if otherwise. The girl's family was very much honoured if a white cloth was shown, but if a black cloth was shown, the family felt disgraced. This custom has almost completely lost recognizance.

Adolescent girls meet their boy friends at night in the streets and converse with them. Sometimes they resort to dark places to play love. This is not sanctioned by parents and very often, they do not know about it because their children hide it from them. However, if anybody who knows the girl's parents sees her in a place which she thinks is suspicious, she reports it immediately to the girl's parents who check her immediately. Romantic love is new to the people of Shama and so it is not common. In the olden days, since a girl was betrothed long before she came of age, there was nothing like love making before marriage. Nowadays, confidences about first love objects are given to bosom friends. First love objects are almost always older than the girls. On the whole, in the Shama community, a girl is not allowed to marry anybody who is younger than she is so the girls take the hint and see that their lovers are always older than they are so that they are not handicapped in case they want to marry. All friendships have a view of ending in marriage.

Irreligiousness is a common feature in the life of some adolescent boys and girls but some boys

and girls manage to live up to their religious standards and so do not rebel against the church. Some of them do adopt radical ideas and rebel against authority at home. Young men and women of this age are difficult to control at home.

All the people I met during my investigation admitted and looked back upon the memories of their adolescent stage as a very happy time. There is no name for such a stage. Both boys and girls are considered adults as soon as they get married and so marriage is therefore, the criterion of entering manhood or womanhood.

CONCLUSION.

The pattern of life in Shama, though simple as it seems can be traced on fairly defined forms which may not be always understood by a stranger. Life itself is regarded as something sacred which is totally in the hands of supernatural agencies. These agencies - usually gods, according to how a person worships or displeases them, make him either succeed or fail in life. Protection from these gods is highly regarded and even before a baby is born, its mother takes it upon herself to see to it that the baby, though unborn, is well protected from harm by evil spirits and the bad influences of the gods.

Children are cherished by everybody and they are looked upon as one of the great properties a person can have in life. Although the material care of the children is shouldered by the parents, all other relatives as well as friends have a deep sense of affection for each other's children. Grandmothers are known everywhere for their love towards their grandchildren.

Self exposure is a common feature among the children of Shama. The church, the school, the Social Workers as well as the gradually developing public opinion to combat it are influencing the common people in the community and it is hoped that in the not very far future, except when children are bathing in the sea, they will be modestly clad.

Working is practically co-extensive with living and a great deal of knowledge is acquired by the children through taking part in adult activities. It is interesting to note that the schools take notice of the life in the community and therefore interest the children in such activities as fishing and making nets which are well within the interest of the school children. The number of girls in the schools are increasing steadily. The illiterate girls are taught to run the home, to cure and sell fish, and to care for babies. Through practice, they lay down the foundation of their future lives. The most important thing expected of a girl is for her to be prolific and to have as many children as she is capable of.

Adolescence is regarded as the next important stage after birth and a great fuss is made of it. Girls are paid more attention but both boys and girls admit that it is a really happy stage of their lives.

Marriage crowns the child's growth and training. A person becomes independent only after marriage and it is then only that a person shares in the adult responsibilities and privilege of the community in which he lives.

APPENDIX

CHILDREN'S STORIES

A Child's Favourite Story.

The Cat and the Mouse.

The cat and the mouse were great friends living together in a village. There was famine in the village so they decided to make a farm. Because they had planned to spend a greater part of each day on the farm, they agreed that they would cook the evening meal in the morning and leave it at home so that they shall not have to cook after the day's work is done.

On the first day they went marketing together and they bought some palm nuts, pepper, onions, salt, fish, tomatoes and some corn dough. They prepared a delicious palm oil soup and steamed dough. They left the food at home and went to work on their farms.

Half way through the journey, the mouse told the cat that he had forgotten his cutlass at home so he wanted to go back for it but the cat said that he could have his, after he had worked for an hour and that they could work alternately with the cutlass. The mouse disagreed on the ground that the farm was big and so it was very necessary that he collected his cutlass so that the two of them could work together at the same time. The cat gave him leave to go for his cutlass.

The mouse was full of smiles. He went home very quickly, sat down and ate the dinner they had prepared. After that he took his cutlass and returned to the farms. In the evening the two of them went home together and were very anxious to eat, for they were very hungry. The cat made for the pot as soon as he reached

home only to discover that it was empty. He suspected the mouse of eating the food so he was going to pounce on him when the mouse escaped. Ever since that time the cat has been looking for the mouse to revenge on him and that is why a cat eats a mouse.

A Bad Boy.

The boy is called Kodwo Kwansa. He is a very bad boy because when his mother abuses him, he answers back. He does no work for his parents. He is a cheat and always defrauds his parents. Sometimes, he steals things belonging to his playmates. He has been sent to school before, but he always went to pick mangoes and often played at the beach instead of going to school. At last he stopped attending school altogether. He only roams about in the village doing nothing in particular.

A Good Girl.

She lives at Bentsir. She is called Kuuma. She is a beautiful girl. She does whatever her mother tells her to do. She knows how to cook. She helps her mother with her housework and she cares for her little sisters and brothers. She always carries the little baby when her mother is not at home. She does not go to school. She sells fish sometimes. At other times she sells soap for her mother. Her mother likes her very much and she gives her fine cloths to wear. She is respectful and obedient. She never abuses older people.

A Wish

If I were granted one wish, I would wish that my father be given plenty of money. With the money he could build a house. He would buy more fishing nets and he may give two of them to my elder brother and me. He would go fishing, get plenty of fish, sell the fish and get plenty of money for ourselves. We would buy shoes and many clothes for ourselves.

Self Description

I am a dark coloured girl. I am fat and tall. My mother says I am so because I do not discriminate between different kinds of food. I eat whatever is given me. I am a good girl. I have a good character and I keep myself clean. I put on my clothes well. All my friends are good. They all like me very much.

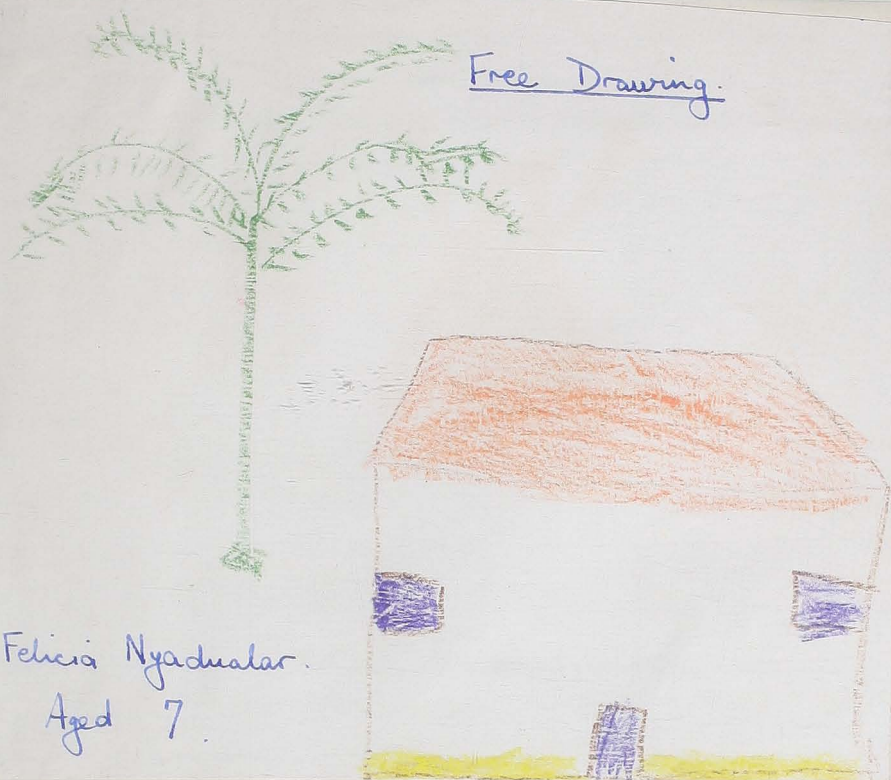
My Life History

I was born on a Tuesday twelve years ago. My name is Araba Kraba. My mother is called Name Esi and my father is Rodwo Esuor. My father is a fisherman. My mother sells fish. I was sent to school when I was six years old. When I was in Primary class two my aunt came from Tarkwa and told my father that she wanted to take me to Tarkwa with her. My father agreed and I was taken to Tarkwa. I did not like Tarkwa because I did not know the children there and there was no sea to bathe in; so I cried until my aunt took me back to Shama.

where I continued attending school. I was very sick when I was in class five and my grandmother cared for me. I did not go to school for one month. I am now in Middle Form One.

CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

Free Drawing.



Felicia Nyadualar.

Aged 7.

This is the girl's house.
There is a coconut tree behind her house.



A Man and A Woman.

by Grace Taylor. 7yrs.

F. Sekyi Addoquaye Aged 8yrs.



A Man and A Woman-

A FIGHT.



by David Boamah. Aged 8 yrs.

The most pleasant thing the child can think of :-



Stella Anthon
Aged 7

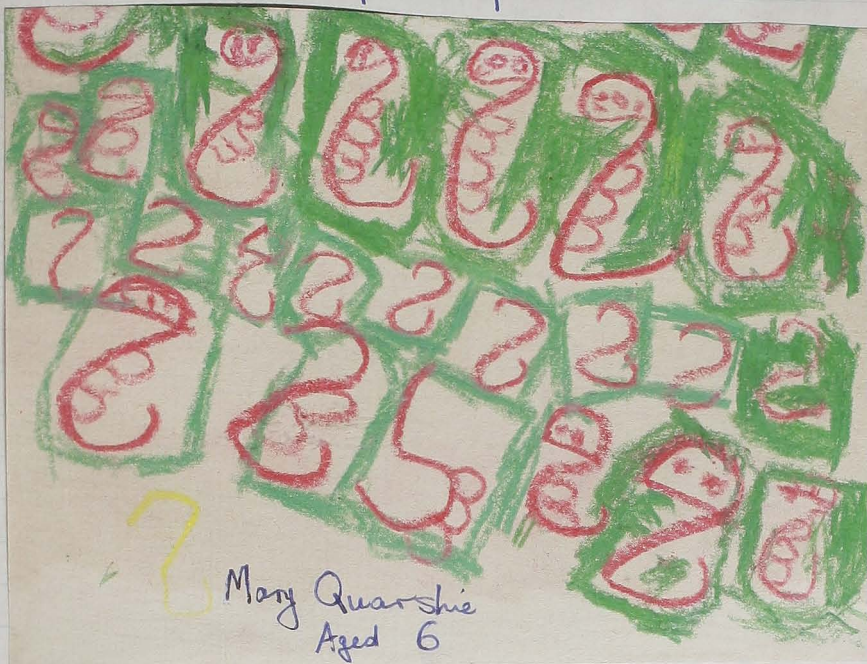
Little Children Playing.

The Most Pleasant Thing a Child can Think of:-



Fishing in The Sea.

What I am Afraid of.



Mary Quarshie
Aged 6

Above - The girl is afraid of Snakes, curled up and hiding in grass.

Below - This Boy is afraid of A Frog.



Kwesi Baffoe
6 yrs.

A Dream. by Sarah Mends Aged 12.



The girl dreamt that her mother was dead.

Many mourners came to her house.

They followed the dead body in the coffin to the cemetery.

The mother was buried and all the mourners went to their houses.

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The Inside of the Child's House.

Charlotte Wilberforce Aged 12.

This girl's father is a driver. In the compound of her house stands an old car in which children play. There is also a coconut tree under which there are benches for people to sit on. The house is a two storey house. There is a duck in the house. Her mother cooks in the yard of the house.