



I AM WORTH YOUR INTEREST

CHILD TRAINING

IN

FANTE ENYIABIRIM

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I THE CHILD - BEFORE HE IS BORN AND JUST AFTER IT	6
CHAPTER II NURSING - THE BABY'S FOOD, DRINK AND MEDICINE	15
CHAPTER III THE CHILD'S WEANING DAYS	21
CHAPTER IV THE CHILD'S TOILET HABITS	27
CHAPTER V MOTOR DEVELOPMENT - THE CHILD FACES AND EXPLORES HIS WORLD	32
CHAPTER VI THE CHILD'S SLEEP AND HEALTH	36
CHAPTER VII THE CHILD'S CRIES AND SPEECH	43
CHAPTER VIII HIS CLOTHING	46
CHAPTER IX THE CHILD'S RELATION TO PARENTS AND ADULTS	49
CHAPTER X THE CHILD'S POSSESSIONS, GAMES AND SONGS	53
CHAPTER XI ADOLESCENCE AND WORK	60
CONCLUDING NOTE	67

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

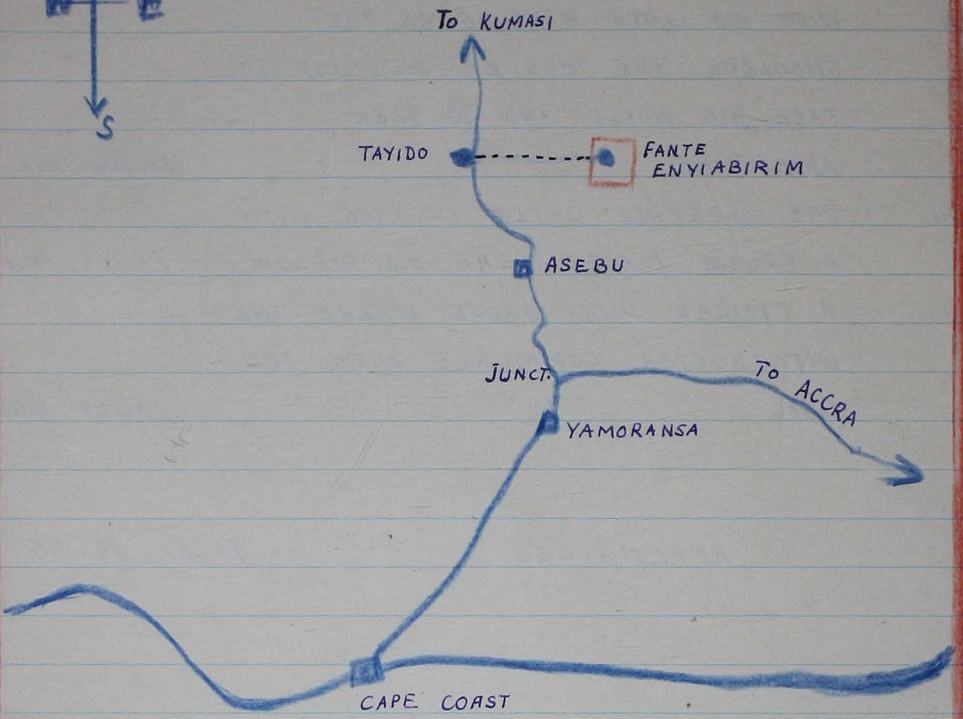
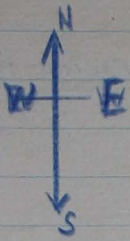
- i FRONTISPIECE - I AM WORTH  
YOUR INTEREST.
- ii MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF AREA  
UNDER SURVEY. FACING PAGE 1
- iii BEDZEW - AN IMPROVISED RECEPTACLE  
FOR CARRYING FOODSTUFFS - IT IS MADE  
OF PALM BRANCHES FACING PAGE 2

- iv THE CHILD, REPEATING "taa taa" AFTER  
HIS ELDER SISTER, LEARNS TO TAKE  
A STEP FACING PAGE 33
- v STEP BY STEP, THE CHILD LEARNS  
TO WALK FACING PAGE 34
- vi WITH HIS CLOTH HANGING ON THE  
SHOULDER, THE TODDLER SETS OUT TO  
FACE HIS WORLD AND TO SEEK  
ADVENTURE FACING PAGE 35
- vii THE SLEEPING CHILD IS SAFE WITH  
A BROOM PLACED NEAR HIS PILLOW FACING PAGE 38
- viii A TYPICAL "JUJU" GROVE WHERE THE  
WITCHDOCTOR COMMUNES WITH THE  
GODS FACING PAGE 41

APPENDICES

PAGES 69-75

ii



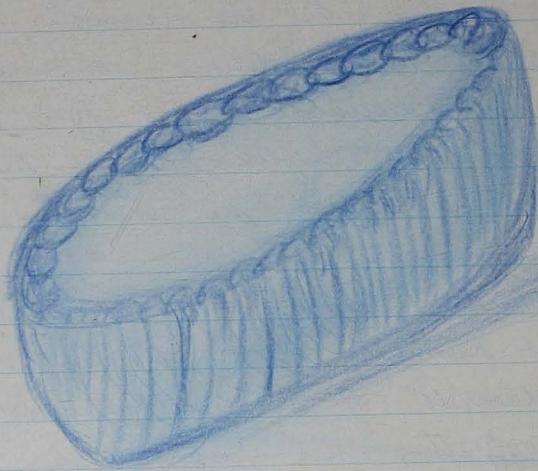
RELATIVE POSITION OF FANTE ENYIABIRIM

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction to this essay is intended to give an insight into the nature of the area under survey. I am deliberately attempting this because it is my conviction that the mode of life of any one community depends, to a large extent, on the nature of the country in which the people live, and to some degree, on the contacts they make with people of their immediate surroundings and with the outside world.

A knowledge of the conditions obtaining there will help one to appreciate to the full the many problems that have influenced in the past, and still continue to affect, the training of a child in that community.

Some fourteen miles from Cape Coast on the Cape Coast - Kumasi road is the village of Tayido. Eastwards of this village, along a much neglected footpath, and just about three miles away from the motor road is dotted the village of Fante Enyiasirim covering an area of about six acres and having a population of some five hundred people. The inhabitants are Fantis. Immediately surrounding it is a thick forest, and so in race, speech, culture, social organisation and economy the people constitute a community entirely composed of farmers. They need not go far from home in order to secure a plot for farming. They farm (for) such crops as cassava, plantain, tomatoes, yams, pepper and bananas. These they grow partly for home consumption, and partly for sale at a fair at Tayido which has



### BEDZEW

An improvised receptacle for carrying foodstuffs  
It is made of palm branches

Mondays and Thursdays as its market days.

One can watch with interest on a particular day groups of grown-ups, men and women together making for their respective farms. The women carrying wooden trays containing implements - hoes and cutlasses - form the vanguard, while the men carrying loaded guns on the shoulder form the rearguard of the small processions heading towards the bush. Children who are too young to work on the farm and the very aged men and women keep watch at home while the able-bodied are out on the farms working.

Work on the farm continues far into the evening and so it becomes necessary for cooking to be done in the bush. The young children at home, however, depend, in the interim, on the remains of the food prepared the previous evening. Sometimes, when they find this not satisfying they make the fire on their own and cook some of the foodstuffs - sometimes plantains, sometimes cassava - whenever they can lay hands on in the kitchen. It is most interesting to watch children of such tender age doing their own cooking. They naturally delight in their efforts yielding them a meal of plantain and raw ground pepper.

When the day wears on and evening comes, their parents arrive home group after group. Sometimes a father brings home in a "bedzew" \* the spoils of his hunt whilst a mother carries a load of vegetables and plantain meant for the fair on the next day.

\* See picture opposite

Cooking for the household begins. No doubt, the game that is brought home forms part of the meals. Because this is done late in the evening, it will be obvious how late dinner is served, and how soon after it the people retire to bed. Sometimes, the young children are not given a bath before going to bed, because the mothers either feel too tired to do so or rather find it unnecessary. This routine continues day after day and though the adults enjoy the benefits of baths after a good day's work, they still do not see the mistake of not extending this hygienic principle to the young.

There is no doubt that this neglect has its repercussions on the health of the children, and it is reflected in the many skin diseases that afflict these unfortunate children. Yaws are common among them; so are crawcraw and itches. At one time or another, I have seen a woman examining the hair of her friend for lice, because the latter had complained of signs of them. This is the result of lack of scrupulous care even with the grown-ups themselves. If the grown-ups, who boast of at least a wash a day, suffer from skin diseases, what can we expect the children to be like who only occasionally have a dip in a pool near by? The stagnant pool, the only source of water supply of a community like this, may be largely responsible for the several cases of bilharzia and Guinea worm which I found to be

prevalent among the people. At the time the present investigations were being made - just about Christmas, 1952 - the pool had almost run dry, and water supply was a practical difficulty. Under these circumstances the prevalence of skin diseases is inevitable, and it is natural to expect a very low standard of sanitation.

But the people attribute to witchcraft the invasions made on their health by the lack of good sanitary conditions. Nor is their village tapped by a good motorable road so that the mobile clinic from Cape Coast, that serves the more accessible villages, can reach it. Even if the clinic could reach them, I wonder how many of them would accept a treatment when no persuasion seems likely to have any effect on them. Superstition and suspicion are ~~or~~ pest among them. This is more so because their situation away from the main road has cut them off from the untold benefits other people receive from medical facilities elsewhere, three miles away.

Added to this, housing conditions are of a very low standard. Congestion is common, and one can find a family of ten or more including babies sharing in common a small poorly ventilated room about fifteen feet square and twelve feet high. Conditions such as these result in the prevalence of diseases like catarrh, tuberculosis and influenza.

A child among these people is a being to be seen and not heard. He has very limited chances of learning the why and

5  
wherefore of things around him. An aeroplane occasionally hovering overhead is an object of extreme wonder to him. These characteristics of this community have a special relevance for this essay.

Here is a village situated in the quiet of a typical African forest, remote from the hustle and bustle of townlife. Into such a world and under such conditions are children born and bred. This essay is an attempt to describe what sort of training is accorded to a child here, what sort of experience he gathers, and to explain in some measure why he is likely to make some contribution in afterlife to his community's well-being.

THE CHILD - BEFORE HE IS BORN  
AND JUST AFTER IT

Children are a great treasure to any married couple in Janti Enyabirin. They are the promise of support in their parents' declining years. In the event of sickness and destitution, parents look to their children, if of age to work, for support. As the culture of this community prescribes, greater still is a son's responsibility on his father's death; for, whether he can afford it or not, his duty is to provide for his departed father a shroud and a coffin. It is the obligation of the son; he cannot depart from it, neither can he shirk it entirely. Should there be no issue in the marriage, this responsibility is that of the wife. Children, therefore, are one of the blessings a married couple can boast of.

Married men and women, who are childless are looked upon with pity in one quarter of the village, and with contempt in another. Sometimes they form the main topic of ridicule and gossip. In society they command no recognition; in private, they wish they were never born. Many marriages in this community are unsuccessful when the couples concerned are not favoured with any issue within the first year of their married life. Cases of divorce on the ground of childlessness are a common feature of life here. But where the couples are devoted to each other and do not want to break their bonds, they subject themselves to native medical treatment. Some cases respond to treatment, others do not. In a

community like this where so much superstition preys upon the minds of the people, all cases of irregularities are ascribed to witchcraft, and it is the herbalist or the witchdoctor who treats cases of sterility. Knowing how advantageous it is to have offspring the married couple make it their chief aim to get as many children as possible. There is no attempt at limiting the number of children and in one homestead in this village, there is a couple with as many as ten children and another nearby with twelve. The relationship, therefore, between father and son is so unique and so loving that it is difficult to imagine what else can equal it.

But hardly does a man extend to an orphan or an illegitimate child that degree of love he has for his own blood. Sometimes a man's dependents include a deceased brother's children whose mother has died or married out of the family. These orphans, or sometimes illegitimate children, do not receive the love and care that should be accorded to them. No man among the Tantes can wholly take the place of one's true father. The general feeling is that such children are, for all practical purposes the woman's (wife's) and the children frequently leave the family when they are of age and have children. Much less commonly, a man may have an orphaned sister's son living with him in as intimate a relationship, ostensibly, as if he were his son or brother. Actually, both lawful and sentimental reservations hedge round a sister's son's position in the family, for his descent bars him, in the last

resort, from ever acquiring real filial status.

Such is the attitude toward children in general and since the primary aim of marriage is to get children, men and women are really anxious to choose partners who are likely to be fruitful. When a woman has monthly periods she is capable of conception; when she is pregnant her periods stop. Thus menstruation is a condition like pregnancy. It is the sign of capacity for child bearing. If pregnancy is the first experience of the woman, she expresses great concern as to what it may be, but when it is no longer a novelty to her, she hides the secret from her friends lest she come under the spell of a witch. She, however, communicates the news to her husband and to him alone. Later, she reveals the good news to her mother.

When the mother and the husband have satisfied themselves beyond all doubts that the wife is really pregnant, arrangements are made by which the expectant mother is placed under the charge of a competent herbalist who lays down special taboos to be observed by the expectant mother as safeguards against evil spirits. She is vaccinated and throughout her confinement she is to wear a special talisman round the waist to protect the child. This talisman must necessarily be taken off during a bath and worn immediately after it. She has not to exchange greetings with anybody, not even with her own mother, in the early morning except she has rinsed her mouth with a

special medicine prepared by the herbalist attending her. She is not to quarrel openly. These taboos the expectant mother has to keep with meticulous care; for she will have herself to blame if she has such things as miscarriage, unusual vomits and hiccup. These are some of the signs regarded as the work of witches. They are signs of some evils which face the expectant mother. If she is to evade those evils, she must observe the taboos to the smallest detail. With her confidence placed in the herbalist the expectant mother need have no apprehensions. Safe delivery is assured.

Being in the family way does not exempt the expectant mother from the daily routine of running the home, of working in the farm and going to the market. Her life is normal, her diet does not change, except occasionally, on the instruction of the herbalist she departs slightly from what the rest of the family take. For her special diet to insure the life of the baby in the making, she takes soups prepared with herbs. Nor do marital intercourse cease with pregnancy. It continues as far as the eighth month and, in some cases, right throughout confinement; for it is believed to be a good device for widening the woman's womb and thereby minimising any labour pains that may be experienced during delivery. In cases where a husband is a polygamist, marital intercourse with a pregnant wife is less frequent.

The period of confinement is one which

causes great concern in the family and tenor still does the atmosphere become when delivery is imminent. When the expectant mother complains of pains in the ninth month of pregnancy, it is taken that the great day is at hand and all relevant preparations are made. One chamber in the woman's own home is allotted to her. Only the native midwife, the woman's mother and perhaps a sister, to run errands, need be present. The herbalist should be present or near at hand, not necessarily in the same room, in case of danger. The husband stays out and comes to the scene only after delivery.

When in the process of delivery, a mother dies, she is not buried with the baby in the womb. The dead child is got out of the womb not by cutting the womb open as a surgeon would, but by a method ever unimaginable to all who watch it done as I once did. Libation is poured by the herbalist undertaking the process while a drug offered by him to an old woman is rubbed on the mother's stomach. During this time the incantations, that accompany the pouring of the libation consist of prayers and invocations calling on the spirits of ancestors to help in the process. Without subjecting the womb to pressure of any kind, the herbalist makes a loud ejaculation of "Pue!" meaning "Come out!" and the dead child almost imperceptibly glides out. The two dead bodies are then buried, each in a grave, without any elaborate funeral rites. The rites, rather economical in

every respect, follow a pattern that is accorded to somebody who dies in an accident (otsfo). In this, the dead body is laid in state in public and her coffin is wrapped in white linen. But every care is taken to bury the two - the child and the mother - as close to each other as possible, so that their spirits may "recognise" themselves as mother and child hereafter.

Difficult delivery may be caused by broken taboos as for example theft, either by the mother or the father. Only after confession in crucial cases at delivery will the child "consent" to be born. Another cause may be adultery on the part of the mother, which must be confessed before the child will "consent" to be born. The father's adultery may also cause trouble at this time, but this is more often believed to be the cause of serious cases of illness in his offspring. In any case libation must be poured to pacify the gods who may be largely responsible for the disorder. When, however, delivery is successful, libation is poured to invoke the spirits of the departed ancestors of the family to protect the new member of the family. All this is done under quiet for fear that many people will flock to the scene, some with evil eyes, to cast a spell on the baby. It is only after the baby has been bathed and given a toilet that few, and only a few people, are allowed a visit. All who come make such remarks as "Hwaaba o, mbo na ye o" (Welcome and well done),

congratulating the couple and the child on their achievement.

During all this time, it is obvious to imagine the attitude of the husband and wife who, throughout the past nine months have each been registering their <sup>votes</sup> vote for a male or female child. The attitude of married couples towards female or male babies depends on how many of either sex they have already got. If they have more males than females, they will undoubtedly wish for more of the fair sex to maintain the balance and vice versa. But (to all <sup>in practice</sup> intents and purposes) a husband will wish for a boy, and the wife, a girl. That is natural. If on the other hand the reverse turns out, they will have no alternative but to accept whatever Providence awards them and there is to rear and nurse it.

Nursing begins just when the baby is born. But, for the first three days of the baby's life, he is put on sugar solution diet and subsequently on the breast. It is the belief that when a child is born he is ushered into the world by some gods who lead him, paving the way for him during his "journey" from the womb. It is believed that these gods stay with the baby for eight days studying the conditions under which the child will live and grow, watching the reactions of the family to the advent of the child. Should attitudes towards him be hostile, it is believed that the gods will take him away; and so for the first eight days of the child's life, he is kept

indoors receiving every favourable attention. Under no circumstances should the mother leave him alone without placing a bundle of broom-sticks near his pillows to act as a sort of a scarecrow warding off evil spirits from without.

The eighth day is an important landmark in the baby's life history; for it is, as it were, a day of initiation on which he is formally proclaimed a member of the family and given a name. It is the day when the gods that accompanied him hither take a formal leave of him. It is a day of great jubilation; it means a lot to the family. Early in the morning of the eighth day, dressed in white and wearing white beads, be the baby a male or female, he lies in the arms of his mother who is also dressed in white. Old men and women together with friends of the father and some relatives are invited to the ceremony. Soon, an old man, usually the head of the family places the baby on his lap. With a glass of rum he pours libation saying:

"Oh, you our beloved kinsmen that have departed from this life, Oh, you gods and spirits that accompanied this babe into this family, be witnesses of this initiation ceremony. Guard the life of this child, guide his actions from the cradle to the grave. Impue him with the sense of righteousness and of truth, so that he may be a useful member of the society into which he is, this day, being initiated and so that he may take our place in afterlife when the generation here assembled has left this stage."

This done, drinks are served and toasts are proposed in which the parents of the baby are reminded of their duties towards the child. Gifts in the form of money, soap, eggs yams and fowls are offered to the couple. Then finally, the child is named after an ancestor. It is the father who proposes a name, usually one from his own family. I shall never forget my attendance at a similar ceremony during the Christmas of 1952 when I was making investigations relative to this essay. The invocation of the officiating oldman made such far reaching impression on me that it took my mind back to a time when a younger sister of mine was being initiated on a slightly different pattern. I was young, yet it is still fresh in my mind, and I can picture grandpa with hair so grey advising my father and mother about the duties they owe to us the children and on how best they should treat us. This ceremony is called "Dzinto" (The naming of a child).

When all else is completed the invitees retire and the household resort to feasting and ritual dancing to folk songs. All this is in honour of the child born into the family. It is grand and grander still it is when the home happens to be well-to-do. And so the child begins his life with this community.

## NURSING - THE BABY'S FOOD, DRINK AND MEDICINE

From the time the baby is born up to the age of three days, he is fed with sugar solution. But up to the time he is weaned, which occurs towards the end of the eighteenth month, a baby is wholly dependent on the breast for nourishment.

Sugar solution is light, and it is intended that this diet shall give the minimum or no strain at all to the young child's system. The navel is not healed; the child's intestines are tender, and so it is feared, if any heavy food is given, the navel will bleed and bring about disaster. From about the eighth day until about the end of the sixth month is the time during which the mother gives all her love, all her attention to nursing the child. At night the baby sleeps with his mother and by day he is carried in a cloth on her back (two). When it is not raining his head may be seen protruding from the cloth and he seems to spend most of his time sleeping. He has no regular time for feeding. When he cries the mother slides him around under her arm and gives him the breast. The only exception to absolute irregularity in suckling is that when the mother reaches the field for her morning work, she offers the breast lest the baby may soon demand it and hinder her after she has begun her work. If she has no helper, she does her field work with her baby on her back. Theoretically, the baby is almost never left alone lest some evil spirit

should bewitch it. If the baby is left alone a broom <sup>must</sup> necessarily be placed near his pillow for protection.

If there is a young relative, or if baby has an elder sister, the mother will give him to her to hold and to make him laugh under a tree. There he will stay with his sister while their mother does her work whether of cultivating or (of) breaking ground. Should he cry, the mother will sit down to nurse him and to feed him, meanwhile looking to see whether there are lice in his head. Often the mother will "speak" to the baby as if he were a grown-up. Sometimes she would address him saying, "Kwesi, papa's farm is being choked with weeds, suck the breast quickly and allow me to do ~~ra~~ good days work clearing the weeds." And so at any time of the day and (in) anywhere at all, should the baby cry or fret or the mother feel inclined to nurse it he is given the breast. Whenever the mother sits down to rest or has nothing else to do, her babe is at the breast sucking hungrily or, if it is replete, just playing with the breast with his mouth, his fingers and his toes.

This habit of nursing the child follows a pattern quite peculiar to this community. The pattern is one based on ignorance. The mother does not know that at such a tender age, the babe is forming habits, - feeding habits and a host of others including habits in elimination - and so she feeds the baby at random; she enjoys giving suck to her baby.

Should the baby have a frightful (a frightful) dream and cry in his sleep as a result, he is made to shut up by a thrust of the breast into his mouth; should he scream because an insect has stung him, he is pacified with the breast. So long as the child remains quiet it is generally taken that all is well with him. But the normal child refusing the breast is indicative of indisposition.

A sign like this is always referred to the herbalist who cared for the mother during her confinement. Under no circumstance should a second herbalist apart from this be consulted in matters affecting the health of the child; for it is feared the former herbalist taking offence (in it) might work miracles rendering the illness of the child incurable. A second herbalist, however, is consulted only when the regular one is temporarily out of town. Even there libations have to be poured by way of asking permission from the gods of the regular herbalist before any fresh medicine is applied.

It is a peculiar belief among this community that every normal child should have convulsions and malaria in his infancy. For, they are a means of giving off any impure blood that the child may have absorbed from his mother's system while in the womb. Any child who does not have them, (it is believed) will turn out an idiot and will remain so throughout adolescence. He will have a lower standard of reasoning than he

otherwise world. He will not command any place of distinction in his family. In fact, he will not be acceptable in society. I once watched a case of convulsion in this community. The child had been given some snuff to induce sneezing (for this is believed to be part of the treatment of this case). An old woman entering the house and hearing the child sneeze remarked: "Ubo na ya" meaning "Well done, you have overcome this illness that would have otherwise made you an idiot." This illness is better cured by old women skilled in nursing children. It is only in extreme cases of this that babies are referred to herbalists.

When the convulsion is successfully cured, it is usual that the baby is given a special medicine (edubui) as a safeguard against future recurrence of it. This medicine (edubui) is a collection of roots and herbs stored in an earthenware pot and boiled. The tincture thus obtained is given to the child to drink as many times as possible in a day. In fact that forms his drinking water. During his bath, that is the water used. This is done not only to give the child immunity against convulsion, but also to drive away the evil spirits that have been largely responsible for it. This drink and medicine continue to be given throughout <sup>of</sup> convalescence. In normal times when attacks <sup>of</sup> convulsion are suspected, strong doses of it are given and, strangely enough, the child recovers.

At this juncture of the child's life (during the first year of his life) when he is so

susceptible to illnesses of all sorts, when suspicion looms so strongly among his parents that they think witches may cast a spell on the child and thereby kill him, the herbalist, to whose charge the child is committed, inoculates the babe and recommends a special talisman for him to wear at all times and under all circumstances whether in good health or in sickness. Every care is taken to observe the taboos regarding the prescriptions given by the herbalist to ensure ensure the child's good health in future.

When the child has recovered from this illness, a ceremony called, "Esubo" (discharge) is performed. It should not go unobserved. After libation has been poured by an elderly man in the family and drinks served to the household and a few invited benefactors, a feast of eggs and mashed yam mixed with palm oil is given to the convalescent and his playmates in the household. It is quite interesting to watch the child, a few days ago sick, now a convalescent dressed in white and seated among his playmates "fighting" over a bowl of mashed yam. There is a great deal of rejoicing over the child's recovery among the grown-ups and the children of the household.

And so the child grows under this condition receiving the meticulous attention of his parents when he is ill, but left to explore his world alone without the least direction as to the attainment of standards. Giving suck to the child is at first a pleasure to the mother but,

if in the course of time it tends to make too much demand on her convenience, the child through no fault of his own incurs the displeasure of his once dear mother who now feels nursing something exacting and a drudgery. This hostile attitude now adopted by the mother may sometimes be due to the fact that through lack of self-control she has conceived again and wishes to wean the baby prematurely. In circumstances such as this, the child is detached from his mother and placed under the care of his grandma or an aunt. In very rare cases, when there is no relative to cater for the child, do babies remain stuck to their mothers both at home and wherever they go.

In a case like this when the mother wishes apparently to be rid of her baby (not that she wishes the child were dead) she will not attend to the needs of the child as promptly as she did when the baby was first born. I once watched an infant screaming in a tantrum, nagging tiresomely at his mother while she was too busy cooking to attend to him, and his father came in and carried him off to soothe him. Perhaps it was yearning for the breast which was not given to him, for the mother was tired of giving suck. Now he must be weaned; but the age is too tender for this measure to be applied, yet the babe must endure it.

## THE CHILD'S WEANING DAYS

If ever there was a time when the growing child <sup>bope</sup> ~~love~~ his mother a grudge it was in his weaning days. For, since he was born the breast had played an important role in his life; it had been his chief source of nourishment; it had been his chief solace and soft pillow when sleep overtook him while lying in his mother's bosom; it had been his consolation. Now, without any show of reason he is compelled to part with it, and part he must.

In this community weaning, which should be a gradual process, is carried out so abruptly, and so crude are the methods used that children, for a time, register their disapproval of it in diverse ways. Rather more abruptly is weaning effected in cases where a woman has had premature conception. Some children, however, do not stop sucking quickly and if that is the case, and if premature conception is the reason for wanting to wean a child, this extreme measure is adopted. His mother will frighten him when he wants to suckle, for she will apply something bitter (bosen) to the breast to render it distasteful to the child. Many a child of the average age of eighteen months is clever enough to get a rag, damp it, clean the part made bitter and suckle sufficiently. Sometimes the mother applies a second deterrent when the first has failed. She will place a dead cockroach or a spider and sometimes a dead lizard on the breast.

But the child with a stick in hand cautiously removes it. The parent will try many different things until the child is weaned.

In very rare cases do mothers adopt a more liberal and gradual process. Every day the child goes to the fields with his mother. As he grows and gets fatter and heavier he becomes quite a burden for her or any relative who may be helping to nurse him. Until he has passed twelve months, however, there is no alternative, and more often his daily excursions continue well past his second birthday. When he is able to walk a little, his mother may begin to leave him in the village with his elder sister while she goes to her fieldwork. So in the morning, at daybreak, his mother will give him his food on a little earthenware dish and the toddler will eat until he is full. Then his mother will speak to him saying, "Suckle (num) for I am going to the bush or field;" so he will suckle and his mother will go. He will not suckle again until she returns late in the evening. Thus he begins to be weaned quite unconsciously. Even in this case it will require all the mother's ingenuity and diplomacy to turn the child's attention from the breast.

I have known a case in this village in which a child, registering his disapproval for the methods adopted to wean him, threw stones at his mother. The child was four and was still suckling. It was after the child had been

promised live birds from the bush which he kept as pets that a compromise was effected and good relations established.

But the weaned child remembers his relations with the breast and occasionally, lying on the mother's lap, he will play with it, handle it and even suck it at the same time watching the mother's reaction to the situation. This relationship between the child and the breast persists far into the time when another child appears to succeed him as it were. The child feels completely ousted, he feels as though his birthright has been taken from him and behaves as if he were not part of the family.

Nor is any proper attention given to the child's diet when it is weaned. He is given some of the solid foods (which which are quite foreign to his tender system, and he, because his parents enjoy taking a particular food, is inclined to partake of it whether or not his system can cope with it. It is surprising to watch a mother in this community offering a piece of cassava to a child under two years of age as a substitute for the breast. Even more surprising it is to see a baby being given soup tinted with pepper. When a baby reacts vehemently to a situation like this, the only ~~done~~ done to soothe him is to offer him water while the mother at the same time remarks, "Wengim ye has" meaning, "It serves you right". It is actually

reprimanding the baby for choosing to crave an adult's diet at such an early age. The child is weaned without any provision made for an ideal food for him and he has no alternative but to eat the food fit for the adults.

Just after the child is weaned, however, his food is supplemented with small lumps of porridge often pre-masticated by his mother. Soon he becomes accustomed to taking Zupu, Kenkey, Cassava, Cocoyam and any other food which the rest of the family takes. Sometimes when the child's elder brothers and sisters gather round the fire in the hearth toasting pieces of plantain or cocoyam to supplement whatever meals they have had a few hours before, the toddler will be seen in their midst anxious to have his share of the repast. It is really interesting to watch groups of little children so engaged with the youngest member, the toddler crying impatiently and anxiously demanding.

To all intents and purposes, this change over to solid foods is a transitional period in the toddler's life in which he experiences a great deal of difficulty in feeding himself. He has not yet acquired the skill of feeding himself sufficiently well. The mother helps in the matter by transferring the food to his mouth. When the mother hesitates or stops in the course of the feeding to attend to something else the toddler will nag and yell.

But this does not continue for long. Gradually

the child learns to join in with the rest of the family and wishes now to dip his hand in the common dish. He thinks he can safely help himself. But because he has not picked up the rudiments of accepted table manners in this community, he is allotted a separate bowl. This is at the age of three. Sometimes he joins in with other relatives, sometimes he prefers to have a separate plate to himself.

His mealtimes are not regulated. He is attended to and served with meals when he cries or complains of hunger. Sometimes a mother gives her child meals when he notices him begging for a bit of kenkey or so from a near friend or relative. In this community, the practice is to have a major meal in the evening when people return home from the day's labour on the farm. When the child accompanies the parents to the farm he partakes of the improvised repast consisting of cassava and spinach (Fan). On his return from the farm the child, whether hungry or not, has to wait till dinner, which is usually served late in the evening, is finished. It is remarkable how docile a child is in the acceptance of whatever is offered him for meals. As long as he feels that his parents take the food, he has no alternative but to accept it. He refuses a dish only when he finds that his elder brother's is bigger than his. He wants equal share. In any case, during the major mealtime, the child is given more than enough to eat, and he enjoys eating as much as he can.

I have once seen a child doze over his

plate of palm soup and fufu with his stomach protruding tremendously. Before he went to sleep over the plate, the mother had noticed that he was full and wanted to clear the plate away, but the child enjoying the taste of it had vehemently objected to the mother's action and had even gone so far as to throw stones at her. The mother, therefore, yielded to the child's demand and there, sitting keeping watch over the fufu was this drowsy child. It was an interesting sight. Over-eating of this nature is endorsed by these people because not only is it satisfying to the child but it is an assurance that the child has had enough to maintain him till the next day, and there will not be the possibility of his clamouring for food in the middle of the night when parents do not expect distractions.

Apart from the regular habit of serving the child with food, occasional use is made of it as reward for an errand run. A child will sometimes refuse to do a good turn running an errand unless he has been promised food.

Throughout the child's training or upbringing here, no attempt is made to teach him proper habits of eating. In fact, there are no standards set for the child to follow. He eats in any way he likes as long as he can feed himself, and he eats as much as he can. No check is imposed on indecent manners of eating and he grows up with whatever he gathers from his elders at such an impressionable age.

## THE CHILD'S TOILET HABITS

Were a health officer to visit this village of Enyabirin early one morning, he would be shocked at the sight of night soil deposited quite close to dwelling places. That is the work of young children of ages of two and upwards who, forced by circumstances and because no proper provision is made for them, have no alternative but to use the immediate approaches of their homes or the open spaces at the back of houses as lavatories. Sometimes, he might find some of the children in the very act making the situation still worse and using the walls or poles hard by as "toilet rolls" as it were. This state of affairs reflects the training given to the child in the matter of elimination and is a result of the parents' attitude to the child in this respect.

But the attitude of mothers to elimination is varied. A young amateur mother, who is just faced with the problem of bearing and nursing a child, looks upon elimination with horror; she will make faces, blame the child or sometimes slap him slightly on the buttocks if, accidentally the child soils the clothes which she has taken pains to wash an hour or two before. An experienced mother, who can easily place herself in the position of the child, will make allowances and look upon the situation as natural and conventional. She will say to the young amateur mother, "Do not blame the infant, for this".

The only attempt at training in this field is made when the child is tender in the cradle. He is made to empty the bowels into the chamber pot which the mother places in between her thighs and which she presses hard to keep in position. The mother is constantly on the look out for signs of elimination when the child is at rest. This she detects from the face. Sometimes, if the child wets his swaddling clothes, he is rushed to the chamber pot as described above; for it is the general conviction that passing urine is naturally accompanied by attending the call of nature. It is not all the time that the mother will be close to the baby to watch for signs of intended elimination, and so contrary to her expectation and wish, the child breaks the standards set for him to follow. A scene thus ensues in which the mother "quarrels" with the child saying, "Why do you give me such trouble? a few minutes ago, I sat you on the chamber pot, but you refused to conform to order; now, when I least expect it you have soiled the clothes I have assiduously washed. What a worry!" Such is the petty quarrel a mother enters into with her child in a situation like this. But the mother is unaware that this tender mind is not mature enough to conform to standards, and so the disappointments recur.

When at the age of two or so the child can sit by himself and can crawl in and out the house, he is given the freedom to choose wherever he likes for toilet. It is no wonder, therefore, that he squats in the very

presence of grown-ups in the kitchen, whether they are at meals or not, to attend the urgent call of nature. Every part of the house affords him a convenient spot. It may be the bathroom or the back of the house, it may be the corner of the father's chamber or just at the door to it. In fact, he sees no fault in his action in this field, although he is reprimanded most often for that. In an extreme case, he is given a thrashing. This happens when the child is about five years old.

Even greater is the concern expressed by parents about a child whose wetting habits persist. I have, on more than two occasions watched with sympathy the treatment meted out to a child who was a victim of this kind of treatment. The rite (if it may be rightly termed so) was intended to strike fear into the child so that he might discontinue that practice. He was smeared from head to toe with red clay or laterite (ntwoma). Sometimes naked, sometimes with a piece of cloth tied round his loins. The victim is made to dance and parade through the village while a group of his playmates clapping, sing: "Suankye kurobon, Awēwēē, Suankye kurobon, Awēwēē" meaning, "Shame on you for your wetting habits."

The child can be imagined weeping and shivering under a situation like this, all because he wets his mat every night. The irony in this is that, in most cases some of the children who are active participants in the singing are also victims but their constitutions are such that they cannot stand

the strain of the extreme disgrace to which they may be exposed, and so their parents choose to hide the shortcoming. The child shivers (all along) in the cold of the early morning, and weeps because he has been made an object of scorn and ridicule. The last stage of this ritual is that the subject is led to the riverside where he is immersed in the water thrice, in the hope that the god of the particular river will help put an end to the wetting habit.

Of course, this turns out to be an inefficient antidote and yet it is a long standing practice which is still indulged in. This reflects the concern expressed by parents over their children whose wetting habits persist. If toilet training is given systematically, there will not be the necessity for this anxiety about getting children to conform to standards. There, the child will gradually get to know how to conduct himself in cases of emergency.

In this community diseases of any kind are ascribed to witchcraft. Should a child be constipated or have diarrhoea, it is suspected that a witch is the cause, and the witchdoctor has generally something to say in corroboration of the suspicion. He will give inoculation against witchcraft and then prescribe drugs for syringing. So in cases of children's persistent habits of wetting, the witchdoctor is consulted. But in almost all the cases reported to me in this respect no degree of success was obtained. Continued habits of wetting carried far to the age of seven is considered a disease caused by

witches; but there is not a definite cure for it.

The child grows in this world of ignorance and gradually imbibes, under pain of abuses and sometimes torture, what are accepted as good standards of behaviour with regard to the toilet. He is not taught to carry out elimination privately. It is the adults who enjoy the use of the village pit latrine which is dangerous for the growing child, yet no provision is made to cope with his demand. To the adult mind, the child need not feel shy about carrying out his toilet in public near the incinerator. He will pick up standards when of age. Nor is he taught the proper language to use to speak of toilet. The adults are addicted to using vulgar languages to the hearing of children. What, then, is expected of a child who lives in a community with such a background?

In the main, these people do not consider it detrimental for a feeling of humiliation, embarrassment or punishment to be associated with toilet training. Personally, I feel that expressions of commendations when the child is regular in his toilet habits are effective, and that this approval should be objective and not emotional.

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT—THE CHILD FACES  
AND EXPLORES HIS WORLD

The anxious mother watches with interest the physical growth of her baby and rejoices immensely at every stage of his development. Between the ages of six and twelve months of the child's life, attempts are made to help him to sit. These efforts, though forced, do really help.

In one of the techniques, the parent digs a little hole in the ground just the size of his buttocks that he may not fall over. There they always place him and if he starts to fall over, they set him up again, until finally he sits up properly by himself and does not fall over. At that time he snatches everything within his reach to play with it or to put in his mouth. Another popular practice to help the child to sit is to place him in a basin containing some swaddling clothes. These clothes keep him in position. An elder sister sits near the basin to watch and hold him should he appear to be falling over. Equally helpful is a third method in which the child is seated in between the thighs of an elder relative who holds him securely occasionally leaving him to sit by himself. In all three methods the child is entertained with children's songs. The smiles of the child and his nods to the rhythm of the songs indicate to what great extent he enjoys his training. In the commonest of these devices, the child pushes a wooden bicycle till he can stand on his feet and toddle.



THE CHILD, REPEATING "taa taa" AFTER HIS ELDER  
SISTER, LEARNS TO TAKE A STEP

When a child can sit alone there begins a new period in his life, and crawling begins with reaching for what he sees; he moves little by little until he gets it. This is a period in the child's life in which he appears to be really troublesome. He crawls to touch the burning candle; at one time he touches the dog's ear to feel what it is like, at another he draws near the fire which his mother has repeatedly warned him not to approach. He opens the cupboard to see what is in it, and sometimes, perhaps, he rearranges the contents to suit his taste in an attempt to touch and feel what each article in it looks like. When at last his mother "catches" him in the very act, she drags him along the floor and places him yards away from it at the same time remarking, "Kojo, wo ho ye ahontsew" ("Kojo, why are you so troublesome?") so his crawling life continues and he continues to discover still more of the mysteries in his world.

When the child is still not yet mature enough, he is encouraged to walk. At first, he is made to stand by a stool for some time, and as time goes on, an elder sister holding his hands and facing directly opposite him, pulls him along at the same time saying, "Taa taa, taa taa, taa taa," which the child rhythmically repeats as he toddles along. Like any new process being learned, it is a difficult practice for the child at first but after some months, he becomes used to it. Normally, by the age of eighteen months, the child is on



STEP BY STEP THE CHILD LEARNS  
TO WALK

his feet, able to face his world outside the house. This ability to toddle is a great turning point in the child's life and is usually marked by a special ceremony peculiar to his community.

The day of the week on which the child was born is fixed for this ceremony. Thus if the child is called *Lojo*, (a male child born on Monday) a Monday is fixed for the ceremony. This ceremony, far simpler than the one performed when the child was eight days old, is attended by children, some, of the child's own age, and few, slightly older than he. Before the invited young toddlers sit round the bowl of mashed yam and oil and some eggs (this food is called "It's"), an elderly man in the homestead pours libation "to give thanks to the gods (on behalf of the child) for helping the toddler to reach the stage in his life which is being marked by the feast about to be held." This done, the floor is cleared for the toddler to enjoy the feast with his playmates. It is usual to find the feast so nicely begun ending in a duel, one child complaining that he has not had enough of the feast, another crying because he has been hit on the cheek. It ends in an informal way. However, children enjoy these repasts and often look forward to having as many of them as possible. This union of toddlers creates an opportunity of making new friends. In fact the child is initiated into his natural group.

Since he was born, the child has considered things around him as a catalogue of mysteries.



WITH HIS CLOTH HANGING ON THE SHOULDER  
THE TODDLER SETS OUT TO FACE HIS WORLD  
AND TO SEEK ADVENTURE.

He has been kept spell-bound by the movements of domestic animals and has been mystified by his own reflection in a mirror. He will now not be content with merely seeing things, but he will ask the why and wherefore of them. But what bitter disappointment does he find in the response given to his questions! Should he run to the father to interrupt his conversation with visitors by asking a question, he is distressingly turned back with reproaches. Should he carry home some empty tins from the dustbin with which to construct a "house" or so, mother with her usual tongue-lashing remarks forestalls the child's ambition and damps his adventurous spirit.

The child in this community is a being to be seen not heard. There is no doubt that many of his problems remain unsolved. Precocity in a child is detested, and when these restrictions have been imposed on the child for long, he gives expression to his feelings outside the home. He will roam about with his companions in search of adventure, chasing the birds, plucking fruits in people's "ture" (gardens) and committing all sorts of crimes. If he is entertained in the home by parents who regard him and his views as important he will, no doubt, respond to discipline. But as it is, he learns from outside what he cannot be taught at home.

This brings about disastrous results. He may cultivate undesirable habits, and home influence on him becomes lax. However, he learns as much as he can pick up from his environment.

## THE CHILD'S SLEEP AND HEALTH

Iba yi woana ba a ?  
 Egya Kwesi ba a.  
 Wonye no nko abe ase,  
 Abe ase wo nsoe;  
 Wonye no nko onyaa ase,  
 Onyaa bobu abo me ba,  
 Abo me ba, abo me ba.

Literally this means

This is papa Kwesi's child,  
 Soothe him either under the shady palm tree  
 Or the tall silk cotton tree.  
 But neither is a convenient  
 Place for this purpose.  
 Thorns are likely to be found in  
 The case of the former,  
 And a branch falling from above,  
 May kill the child in the  
 Case of the latter.

With this popular lullaby, so sweet in sound and  
 so penetrating in effect, the mother sends her  
 child to sleep, after she has given him a  
 bath and the breast.

Whereas hours of quiet are usually observed  
 in the home when a grown-up relaxes in  
 the afternoon or at any time of the day, the  
 child's sleep is not regarded at all in this  
 way. He is forgotten for a time. The other  
 children can make any amount of noise, so  
 can the adult. Perhaps they think that since

The child is young with senses so tender and immature, it does not matter if one sings or shouts, if one drums or bangs and even if the slamming of doors is unattended to. There is no wonder therefore that the child starts in his sleep unnecessarily or wakes up and cries after having slept for just about half an hour.

It is when the child has been made to wake up prematurely that the mother, engaged in the kitchen, finds her child a pest. "Kojo will always hinder my work. He waits till I am busy and then with his cries he makes unnecessary demands on my time," the mother will remark. She will then thrust the breast into the child's mouth, whether he is hungry or not, to pacify him. Instead of placing him back on the mat, the mother chooses that the child should spend the rest of the time sleeping on her back. Where an elder sister or a maidservant is available, she is asked to carry the child away under the cool shade behind the house and soothe him with the lullaby quoted above.

Soon the child goes to sleep again and sometimes, when the maidservant is tired of this duty, she places him back on the mat. But the conditions which prevent the child from having restful sleep still obtain and so in the daytime amidst the hustle and bustle of the life in the homestead the child does not enjoy his hours of sleep. He is considered to be troublesome when, with his



THE SLEEPING CHILD IS SAFE WITH A BROOM  
NEAR HIS PILLOW

cries, he reacts to this state of affairs. It is only when a noise is accidentally made very near him and he wakes in consequence, that his mother scolds the one who has been largely responsible for it.

While the child is asleep a native broom is placed near his pillow. It is believed that evil spirits and witches hate to see a broom, and so they will never attempt to come near the child who is asleep with a native broom placed near him. When a broom is not available, there should be somebody (an elder relative or a maidservant) to keep watch over him. But in most cases these "sentinels" leave their posts, when they are not under watchful eyes; to join their group of friends playing outside. They are often careless, and they leave without placing a broom in their stead. When the mother comes in to find her baby unguarded, she runs after the elder sister or whoever should have been keeping watch and rains abuses on her. Sometimes the one concerned gets a thrashing for breaking the order.

From infancy up to the age of about three when the baby is weaned, the child shares the same bed or mat with his parents at night, lying nearest to his mother so that he may have access to the breast in case he feels hungry. Sometimes the mother may feel sleepy earlier than usual though the child may wish to enjoy the company of his brothers listening to stories by the

fire. Then she will come along to the group remarking, "Kojo, let's go to bed, papa is asleep. If you do not come, nobody will defend you if the lion comes to catch you." At this remark Kojo will start with arms stretched to embrace his mother who will carry him to bed. There with the breast in his mouth and the mother breathing in his face the child sleeps with the doors and windows shut, the lantern dimly burning but the flame sometimes dying out in the middle of the night. When, in the dead of night the child, on waking up, finds that the room is dark, he cries as if his sleep had been disturbed. The mother then keeps wake nursing him till he goes to sleep again.

These sleepless nights of the mother end when the child is weaned and can (now) mix freely with his brothers and sisters. This is when the child is four years old. Now, perhaps, his wetting habits have ceased to be intolerable. But when these habits persist, none of his brothers will allow him sleeping space. At least none will consent to share a mat with him. He will be rejected till the mother intercedes for him and sometimes rules that he should sleep with Essi or Amba. Even in this case either of these may drag him away from the mat when the child is fast asleep, so that next morning he finds himself lying on the bare cement floor. He will not agree to have a separate mat to himself because he has been trained from his infancy to sleep in somebody's company; he cannot now, because of his wetting habit be made to detach

himself from others, especially, his brothers and sisters in whose company he always likes to be. However, as he grows and as his improved standards make him acceptable, he shares the group's mat.

Though the attempt is made to give the growing child a sufficient amount of sleep, yet the regulation of it which is more important is lacking. He is forced to sleep, sometimes, in order to allow the mother to attend to her cooking. But if his hours of sleep were quiet enough for him to derive the maximum benefit from them, I think the child would not be a disturbing factor when the mother is busy; rather he will lie or sit and laugh with his brothers, play with them and then be an entertaining being.

This lack of sufficient hours of sleep, the door and windows shut at night, the mother breathing in the face of the child are factors which these people are ignorant of as being some of the causes of illnesses, instead, as I have often referred to in preceding chapters, they attribute the cause of illness to witchcraft. They however appreciate the fact that dirt is injurious to health; that they should dry their beddings and the child's swaddling clothes every day. Though they know these rules of health, they do not know that insects like the housefly or the bedbug can cause serious sickness. They fail to believe that the stagnant pool which dries up in the dry season is the source of



A TYPICAL "JUJU" GROVE WHERE THE WITCHDOCTOR  
COMMUNES WITH THE GODS

CHILDREN'S COMMENTS ON THEIR DRAWINGS:

(AGES 7 - 8)

- Drawing 1. A man travelling on foot to a farm. The man carries a gun while the woman carries a basket on her own. The baby is young and so he cannot be left behind. Their dog by name "Fajer" walks behind them.
- CHILD TRAINING**  
**IN**  
**FANTE ENYIABIRIM**
- Drawing 2. Two children, Ake and Kenneth fight over a marble. Finally the marble belongs to Kenneth, the younger of the two. A. K. ACQUAH, a bully, wishes to claim it from Kenneth, and so a fight ensues.
- Drawing 3. Ebenezer Eke is a good goal-keeper of whom all the village is proud. He is very popular indeed.
- Drawing 4. Teck Yaw is being chased by a snake, but because he is young he cannot run very well.
- Drawing 5. Once, I was nearly bitten by a snake and so I hate to see snakes even when dead.
- Drawing 6. I dreamt at one time, not long ago, that a lorry was about to knock me down. But just at the crisis I awoke. My heart was racing for breath.
- Drawing 7. My home. In the kitchen a pot full of soup is on fire.

## CHILDREN'S COMMENTS ON THEIR DRAWINGS

(Ages 7 - 9)

- Drawing 1. A man and his wife travelling on foot to a farm. The man carries a gun while the woman carries some corn to be sown. The baby is young and so he cannot be left behind. Their dog by name "Papaya. asa" walks behind them.
- Drawing 2. Two children Ato and Mensah fight over a marble. Really the marble belongs to Mensah, the younger of the two but Ato, a bully, wishes to claim it from Mensah. And so a fight ensues.
- Drawing 3. Kobena Ebo is a good goal-keeper of whom all the village is proud. He is very popular indeed.
- Drawing 4. Poor Yaw is being chased by a snake, but because is young he cannot run very well.
- Drawing 5. Once, I was nearly bitten by a snake and so I hate to see snakes even when dead.
- Drawing 6. I dreamt at one time, not long ago, that a lorry was about to knock me down. But just at the crisis, I awakened. My heart was panting for breath.
- Drawing 7. My Home. In the kitchen a pot full of soup is on fire.

(a) The Child's Favourite Story

Ananse's Greed

Long long ago, famine broke out in Ananse's village and so he and his family decided to make a cassava farm. When the time for harvesting was gradually approaching, Ananse formed a plan by which he would have the whole of the cassava farm to himself. He therefore called his sons to him one day and told them that, as he was getting old, it was possible he would die at any time, and that when he died, some cooking utensils including mortar and pestle should be enclosed in his coffin. He advised that the coffin should not be nailed, and that he should be buried in the cassava farm itself. A few days later, Ananse complained of severe fever and general weakness and in the end pretended to be dead. His wife and children mourned the loss and, after performing the necessary rites and following the advice given them, they buried him in the farm. But the grave was not covered with turf. Every detail of the instructions given was carried out.

In the night, when all was quiet, Ananse got out of the grave and stealthily began harvesting the crop and cooking bit by bit any amount he could. In the middle of every night he did some cooking and slept quietly in his grave during the day when he expected that his family would come there to work. Every morning, when the wife and the children came on their usual rounds, they noticed that somebody yet unknown tampered with the crop, Ananse was dead; he was no suspect. They could hardly

trace the source of the mischief. So one night, armed with guns and cudgels two of the sons went to keep watch. In the middle of the night Ananse was seen gradually coming out of his grave. But the sons afraid as they were, fled to a distance, for, they imagined they had seen the ghost of their father. However, they had the courage to stay at a distance and watch events. Soon they saw a fire near the grave; somebody was uprooting the crop and making a meal of it. "Who must this be", the sons said. They thought of approaching the fire but a second thought occurred to them not to venture. Approaching the scene step by step and examining the situation more closely they found Ananse dozing near the fire cooking. Ananse, waking up to find his sons, became ashamed and began offering excuses. All doubts were now clear. The sons now saw the reason why their father advised that cooking utensils should be placed in the coffin, why the coffin should not be nailed and why the grave should not be covered.

However, they took home their father, but they were careful not to placard the situation lest it would discredit him. All that was said of it was that Ananse had risen from the grave. But the rest of his family saw in him a cheat and never confided in him again.

(b) The Child's Story About A Bad Boy

Kweku Babon

Kweku Babon lived with his parents in a small village. He was known among his young friends as a bully and among his household as the most treacherous boy that they had ever come across.

One day, when a group of little children were out playing on the river-side he, in a playful way, and at the same time showing his bullying habit, pushed a boy from the bank of the river into the water. That part of the river was deep and so the child could not swim ashore and so he got drowned. Kweku himself was very sorry when the body of the child was recovered so were the rest of the children on the scene. It was because of this very act that Kweku, whose real name was Kweku Mensah, came to be known as Kweku Babon, i.e. "Kweku, the bad boy".

The Child's Story About A Good Boy

Kodwo Tandoh is my very good friend who lives quite close to our house. He comes to my house and I go to his almost everyday. One day when I was sick and was unable to visit him, he wondered why I did not go to his house, and so he ran to me and, on finding that I was feeling really feverish, he stayed with me the whole day because I enjoyed the fun with him together. He is really good. I never had a better friend than him.

(c) The Child's Wish

The child wished he was one of the band of masqueraders who were parading the streets at the time the investigations were going on during last christmas. He wished his father gave him a toy of a bicycle and a mask. He seemed to be extremely fascinated by the wearing of masks. His only wish was to be given a ride in an aeroplane.

(d) The Description of Himself

I am short, I am eight years old and dark in complexion. My name is Kwesi and, because of my dark complexion, my friends usually call me Kwesi Black. I have glossy hair, a dark eye-brow and white teeth. I am bow-legged, right handed and often wish to wear a smile. I have one tribal mark on my left cheek, and a small scar on the chin. This scar is the sign of a wound I had when somebody accidentally threw a stone at me when a group of my friends and I were plucking apples in a garden. People who knew my mother before her death usually remark that I resemble her a great deal.

(e) The Child's Own Life Story

I am eight years old born of poor parents. My mother died soon after I was born and so I grew up under the care of my grandmother who died a couple of years ago. Though my father loves me so well because I am the only child of his, I do not feel happy at home because of the ill-treatment given me by my

step-mother. She pretends to like me when she is under the watchful eye of my father but gives me very shaby treatment when we (the step-mother and myself) are alone in the house. Once I ran away to Cape Coast to my uncle (my mother's elder brother) who sent me back to my father because, he said, I went to him at Cape Coast without my father's sanction. The same conditions at home persist and I hope some day to go to Cape Coast to attend school.

Comments:

My interview with children for the mateiral relative to the appendices was done both at home and in school. Some difficulties were encountered at the outset, because I was not familiar to the children. However, after staying in the village for some time, mixing with them and taking keen interest in their work and games, I overcame much of the difficulty. The atmosphere was then friendly; the children became responsive and work begun smoothly.

It was difficult, however, to get them to answer questions to the point. I expected this difficulty and I had it. Leading questions helped me a great deal to overcome the difficulty. For example, in getting a boy to tell the story about a bad boy, I had to introduce the topic in this way.

Question: Who is the most troublesome boy you know of  
either in school or in the village?

The child could easily name another boy and he began discrediting him a lot; another set of leading questions.

"Why do you say he is bad?"

"What has he done lately that makes you say he is bad?"  
helped the child to give me a story about the boy.

It was in a friendly atmosphere that the whole work was done.

the guinea worm which is most prevalent among them. It is always the witch (nyen) that causes illness and it is often the herbalist or the witchdoctor who diagnoses ailments and predicts whether a sick child shall die or live.

When therefore a case has been referred to the witchdoctor he does all he can to restore the child to health. He first of all claims a sum of money (ntoase) which, according to him, will be given to his special god (bosom) who will go round during the night to find out the cause of the disease. The god will then undertake a survey, and during his rounds, he will find out the cause. The next day, the parents of the sick child will assemble before the herbalist who will tell them what has really been the cause. Sometimes, it may be ascribed to the spirit of a dead relative who during his lifetime was not on good terms with the mother and who wants to take revenge; sometimes an old woman in the house may be suspected of witchcraft and be said to be the cause; sometimes a neighbour who has lately quarrelled with a close relation of the child is suspected as having resorted to some charm in order to kill the child. These are some of the general beliefs when a child falls ill.

What is strange is the ability of some herbalists to heal by their "trial and error" method. Some herbalists, however, apply the right drug or herb to the right situations at times and as a prevention against a disease, the child who has been healed has to wear a

special talisman prepared by the herbalist.

As the herbalist is the arbiter of the fate of the sick, he is sometimes looked upon as a saviour. For this, he sometimes receives gifts of sheep, eggs, yams and money which, according to him, he hands over to his god but for whose power, it would not be possible for him to heal.

There is of course, a comparatively little section of the community who, through their contact with the Mobile Clinic which serves the district, combine their knowledge of native drugs with whatever drugs and medical treatment the clinic can offer. The services of the Clinic are helping to bring new life to the people thus fortifying them against the inroads of superstition and suspicion.

THE CHILD'S CRIES AND  
SPEECH

A child reacts to a pleasing stimulus by smiling or by throwing the hands and feet about, but registers his disapproval of a situation by screaming, yelling and crying. This is the general clue which guides the mother in knowing when to feed her child, and when to soothe and comfort him. As I have suggested in a preceding chapter these people have no regular ways of life. The child is fed at any time of the day. Should he cry under the impulse of a frightful dream, he is given the breast; should he scream, because an insect has stung him, the breast is thrust into his mouth to keep him quiet. And so in the early part of his life when he cannot yet speak, the child communicates his wants and desires by crying; he makes his presence felt by screaming.

His early speech is recognised at the age of about twelve months when he begins to call "ma ma" (mother) and later, "pa pa pa" (father). Later he associates the bark of the dog with the animal itself and, in calling one's attention to the dog he shouts "wo, wo, wo". In this way, the child gradually learns to translate his ideas into words. He imitates what people around him say.

But this community do not know what forces are at work in the changes that are gradually occurring in the child's life. They are quite ignorant of the fact that

childhood is a wonderfully impressionable period in man's life, that whatever action an adult performs leaves its mark on the infant mind, that whatever language a man uses creates a lasting impression on the child. These impressions not only remain but are imitated and become part and parcel of the child's life. Every thing, whether good or bad, is therefore practised by the child.

It is rather strange that the use of vulgar language in the hearing of children is a commonplace feature in the life of these people; though this is not a deliberate attempt to scandalise the young mind, the growing child naturally picks up what he hears from the mother or the father. I was, on one occasion, struck to hear a child of about four years old use such vulgar language to speak of toilet as would never be tolerated in any decent home. But it is the habit of adults, especially the mothers to call things by their true names and not qualify them although more polite use of words would be possible.

In the same way do they fail to restrict their talks about sex to themselves. Whether a child is near or not they speak without the least restraint on their tongue. In an environment like this it was not surprising to me in the end when I found some of the children vulgar in their speech and in their actions. Their parents set bad standards; and what good will come out of an experience drawn <sup>from</sup> "poor example"?

In their normal intercourse with grown-ups children show a marked degree of respect.

It is when they are in their age-groups that vulgarity appears. There in the open they have every freedom to speak their minds, because in the home limitations are imposed upon them. In the home, they are expected to be still, to check their voices when, especially, adults are engaged in conversation. Should they sing to give expression to their feelings, they are regarded as making noise disturbing the peace of the home.

They are but passive recipients of orders and of ideas and instructions. Theirs is not to reason why. They have not to ask questions which baffle their tender minds. They are indeed to be seen not heard. If the child asks such questions as why does baby suck my mother's breast? Where does he come from? Where does rain come from? and such like questions, he is hushed and cornered. Parents and some grown-ups do not know that the growing child is passing through a world full of wonders, full of mysteries which only the mature mind can help him to solve, and that it is through questions such as these, which they consider childish and meaningless, that the child can find answers to many of his puzzles facing him.

There are of course a comparatively few people here who have some contacts with the more enlightened and progressive villages and towns around. These pass on whatever ideas they collect, to the less unfortunate inhabitants whose manners of setting standards for the child need be polished.

## HIS CLOTHING

Children are very much neglected in the question of clothing. It is during the period of infancy that the child is clad sufficiently well; but when <sup>he</sup> is old enough to seek adventure beyond the home, he is given a strip of cloth which usually hangs loosely on the shoulder. It does not serve any real purpose save to drive off flies that attempt to settle on, perhaps, the child's sore.

For example I saw a cloth which was dirty, for it had not been washed for the past month, according to the owner who said, "The pool has run dry; water is scarce; we wash our clothes more often when there is plenty of water." The only cloth which the child has is replaced only when it wears out. It serves not only as the sleeping cloth, but also as the one used for public attendances such as going to church.

A male child can go about naked, and nobody will express concern; but a female child's nakedness is viewed with very great concern. When, however, the child is about seven he is made to wear the "pials" (drawers) when he is engaged in household duties or is running errands. This serves as a substitute for the small piece of cloth which has served its day. During this time he can make use of a mother's "abatar" (cover cloth) when he feels cold or when he sleeps at night. I remember overhearing a mother remarking to her

child, "You will never have any cloth from me again, because you do not take good care of your cloth. In the course of this year you have been provided with three cloths which can no longer be traced." This remark was made in response to a child's petition for a sleeping cloth one cold night. The child, as can be judged from this remark, had not taken good care of his cloth previously and was in the habit of using "piato" drawers in the day time and sleeping with his mother's cloth at night. Sometimes, in the day time, he would use the mother's cloth and make it dirty to the displeasure of the mother. So the mother had decided finally not to lend her cloth to the child again, until he had learned the proper way of handling the cloth. This training in the proper use of cloth and who is to give that training are a matter of conjecture. The child has not been given the standards to follow nor has he any criterion on which to base his behaviour outside the home, and he is probably expected to learn by the "trial and error" method. When he fails in his attempts to attain the accepted standards he is held to blame.

On the whole girls are better catered for in the question of clothing than boys. This is mainly a result of the greater interest mothers have in them. In most homes here the provision of cloth for the children is the sole concern of mothers and so mothers tend to give the minimum of attention to their sons,

and the maximum to their daughters. They believe it is the daughters who will build up future homes and so they should be given more attention.

However, for purposes of farming and other manual labours, old cast off clothes (shirts or pairs of knickers) are provided for the young boy of eight who can now join the father when he goes to the farm. These he learns to keep in good order for they are as it were his "office" uniform and he dare not take to the farm any cloth which the parents have provided him for sleeping purposes. He learns to practise the strictest economy in the use of his cloth and is warned strongly that he will not get any cloth again if, through his fault, the one he is using now either is missing or gets torn.

The child now learns that he has been born into a poor family who can provide him with only one cloth at a time. He begins to learn to be frugal. He is now coming of age; he must learn to take advice not as it stands but as it is implied.

## THE CHILD'S RELATIONS TO PARENTS AND ADULTS

One of the most interesting things about the relations of parents and children among the people of Santi Enyabirin is their conduct to one another in the intercourse of everyday life. It brings out, incidentally, the distinction always clearly made between parents and adults, other than parents.

Parents generally love their children although sometimes the former are compelled by circumstances to administer punishment for wrong done. There is a familiarity between parent and child that makes the observer wonder how the authority of the parent can be as effective, and the respect and obedience of the child as sincere as the evidence of custom and belief show them to be.

As I have stated in Chapter one of this essay, the child owes some duty to the father and the latter in turn is bound by nature to love his son or daughter and to bring him up. From babyhood up, the child addresses his father as "Papa". The term "Egya" (father) is used to refer to one's father, but never in addressing him, while he is alive. After his death, it is often used in addressing him in prayer, in pouring libation as an expression of reverence. It is also used as a term of respect when addressing someone from whom one is begging a favour, or to show particular deference or courtesy chiefly to old men.

when a child is asking for forgiveness for wrong done, he will say to his father, "Egya, mepa wo kyew, gya mu ma onka" (Father, may you please forgive me). Similarly, parents speak of a child "me ba" (my child), but always address a child by name.

At the age of five, when children generally ask questions the freedom of speech and behaviour towards parents become rather restricted. Here, instead of the parents answering the children's questions, they put them off and damp their efforts in consequence.

One's mother, on the other hand, is never addressed by name in the more polite homes. But in comparatively few homes where relations are such that the mother indulges her son very much, the latter takes advantage and calls the mother by name. In this case the father, if he hears that, corrects the child's mistake or lack of respect for the mother. There is often more restraint in the manner in which a child speaks to his father than in his manner of speaking to his mother. A boy might order his mother about when the family is out harvesting, for instance, and a girl might argue with her mother as spontaneously as if she were an equal. But the underlying attitude of deference can always be detected.

A child shows respect for an adult other than his parent only where he finds that he is friendly and approachable. But generally a child will ask for a tip, or

show signs of asking for it, after he has run an errand

In the main, there is a high degree of consistency in the relations between son and parents. The mother is thought of as the food-giver. Her love for children is subject to no limits or laws and her status in relation to them is almost unique. Her relations with them are based on love tempered with authority. The father is thought of as the source of discipline, the guardian of good conduct. He is strict without being harsh or tyrannous. His role is of special importance in the face of the community at large and in relation to the spiritual powers that govern human life. His relations with his children are based on his authority over them, his responsibility for them and justice tempered with love.

In principle, only the parents of the child have the right to administer punishment to him; no other adult has the right to do so. Should an outsider punish without first reporting to the parents of the child concerned, he is liable to be called to an arbitration, and when he is found guilty, he may be fined. This practice has had a very bad effect on the children, because a child can choose to run an errand for a strange adult or not, and nothing, by way of advice, is done in that direction. The child recognises the authority of his parents and close relatives and that alone.

That is the more reason why childlessness

is looked upon with pity and a marriage that is not blessed with issue is faced with an enormous problem. It is indeed a blessing to own a child among this community, but his training is another question.

In some homes, however, the child is advised to give due respect to every adult irrespective of his status and influence in the community. On the whole the standard of the reverence paid to adults is quite commendable. ✓

THE CHILD'S POSSESSIONS, GAMES  
AND SONGS

The child's most valued possessions are his toys; deprive him of them and he will follow you wherever you go to claim them. Though the provision of toys by parents is something not practised, it is an appreciable fact that children need have something to play with, something to occupy them while at leisure. The toys which the child possesses are of his own making and are models of the things he sees in his own environment.

The natural imitative skill of the child here knows no bounds. The child in this community makes many of his playthings out of clay, and some of the boys and girls cleverly model dishes, pipes, dolls and tents. I was once struck by the sight of a miniature coffin with a bit of glass set in, beneath which was a clay baby. Some child aged four had lately seen the funeral of a relative in the house and had devised a new plaything. From this it is apparent that the child indiscriminately copies the features of his society, and were these children to be exposed consistently to the advanced culture of other people, this also would probably soon be absorbed. In this community the child has for his fighting implement a gun made of wood, a direct imitation of the gun his father carries on his shoulder to the farm. The child accompanying his father to the farm

carries his own gun which he has made himself. Nor do the young girls fail to play the role of mothers. Whether in the home or outside it the young girl can be seen carrying her doll on her back, feeding it with her "breast" when the doll "cries" and soothing it when it is necessary for her to do so. But it is surprising how parents restrict the play of their children. They are afraid to give their children free rein, because they fear they may pick an unnecessary quarrel with their friends.

These toys which are so dear to the child form his main possessions and no one can snatch them from him. They are his companions wherever he goes and they are his partners when he sleeps at night. When a mother sees them packed near the bed when the child is asleep she sometimes thinks they are but a heap of rubbish fit only for the dustbin, and so she consigns them to the litter. I once watched a little child whose playthings had been collected and thrown away by his mother. It was a heart-breaking sight to see him throwing stones at his elder brothers whom he suspected as having thrown away his toys. From the extent to which the child expressed concern over the lost toys it can be concluded that it is dangerous to interfere with a child's play and furthermore to deprive him of the very things that give him enjoyment.

These people have no idea whatsoever

of the fact that children learn through play, hence the undue restrictions imposed on the adventurous spirit of the child. At the least opportunity young children leave home, collect themselves and hunt birds; sometimes they divide themselves into two fighting parties armed with guns, and engage themselves in a sort of informal war. At night, the practice is for as many children as possible from the same vicinity to group themselves to listen to stories, usually strange stories, interspersed with folk songs. On moonlit nights, however, play takes the form of hide and seek. In this, the group divide themselves into two parties, one party of which hides in a secluded corner while the other goes in search of them. While the former party is on the way to their hiding place, the latter sounds a warning that they are coming sound to search which the hiding party respond to in defiance.

Thus:

The searching party say: Kwā Kwā

The hiding party respond: Yoo, Ye!

searching party: Kwā Kwā

hiding party: Yoo Ye!

searching party: Yeba a yebekye ahen?

hiding party: Bekye du.

searching party: Manemane ngo.

hiding party: Mane ngo.

searching party: Yereba o.

hiding party: Bra o.

With their last word, the hiding party choose different directions and hide in nooks, while

the other party anxiously looks round probable places in search of the opponents. The number caught are regarded as prisoners and those who are able to reach the base without being tapped on the shoulder by any of the searching party are freemen. If the number taken prisoner is quite considerable, there is an interchange whereby the searching party gives back the prisoners to their recognised group and now becomes the hiding party and vice versa. The prisoners taken by the new searching party are compared with the number taken previously and those who caught the greater number of prisoners win the game. This thrilling game in which boys as well as girls take part is played far into the night. It is very popular among this community and children will stay up to about eleven or twelve midnight to watch it or take part in it.

Another popular game is one in which the female section line up on one side, and the male on another. The two sections face each other with a distance of about forty yards between them. In this a male child with a handkerchief in hand dances in the space between the two parties while the rest of the children sing. The idea of the dancer is to give the handkerchief to any girl he likes most and then dance with her back to the male group. The girl in turn makes her choice among the boys. The two dance gracefully and the boy, on getting near the girls chooses his own lover and so

the game goes on. This is highly enjoyed and will also take the children far into the night.

I remember once joining in a game like this figuring prominently. I intentionally joined to get the children to play it longer so that I might get the details of it clearly fixed in my mind.

Plays and games at night, especially on moonlit nights, are a popular pastime and enable the children to dance away their worries if ever they have any.

Equally important are sex games in which the children imitate the actions of grown ups. It is usual to see a young girl playing the role of an (expectant) mother who has just delivered, nursing her doll made of wood. Wherever she goes the doll will be on her back in the same manner as the mother carries her younger sister. She will bath it whenever she wishes, give the doll the "breast" whenever it is "hungry" and lay it down on a miniature cot to rest. What is more interesting is that this very girl, in her capacity as the mistress of a household, orders her maidservants about in an imaginary household. There in the household the maidservants obey whatever orders the little mistress gives them. They "cook", sweep, lay the table for the master to take his meal and imitate the intonation and gestures of grown-ups. The mistress will sometimes order a maid about saying, "Run to the kitchen for the salt which your father (referring to the husband at table) requires at table". And so the household in the open goes on depicting exactly some

of the actions of grown-ups at home.

Sometimes a girl will play the role of a bride "gorgeously" dressed (the children use their own cloths in doing this) following the fashion and practice of adorning a girl during puberty rites. Sometimes, a "woman" will reprimand her "daughter" for wrong done.

In the same play grounds under the shade of a tree a group of "youngsters" will be seen installing their chief, playing the asaf drums, and singing the war songs they often hear their fathers sing at home. Amidst these shouts and singing, the chief will be seen carried shoulder high. One admires the ingenuity used in planning such games which are true to life.

In another corner of a house a child in the capacity of the village parson will be seen holding his audience spell-bound in a sermon. This very child, a few minutes later, with a collection of other children under his control, will pose as a school teacher with a long stick in hand to keep order when there is confusion, and to punish when things go wrong. He will "teach" his pupils not only to read and write but to cipher too. At the end of the day when the "school" closes he will give his word of advice to the children to attend school early the next day and not to give much trouble to their parents at home.

Thus the role of different personalities in the community feature prominently in the child's make-belief. The blacksmith is imitated, so is the farmer. The tinker goes from "door" to "door"

asking for old pans to be mended. In all this, children manifest and practice what part they also are likely to play when of age.

## ADOLESCENCE AND WORK

A boy's social development is a process of gradual advance along lines laid down in early childhood. For a boy in Fanti Enyiasirim, the years between thirteen and twenty bring changes in degree rather than in kind in his relations with his parents.

As the boy grows older, he grows more and more proficient in the economic skills he began to acquire in childhood. By the time he is twenty or so he knows most of what is known to his people about farming, hunting and building. He is imbued with the values of his culture and has a good working knowledge of his institutions and customs. It is enough to enable him to play his part as a young man in the life of his community, but there is still much to learn which only years of experience and responsibility will give him.

During this period the identification of father and son is greatly deepened. It grows out of the intimacies and co-operation of everyday life. As they work side by side on the farm the father teaches his son some farming skills and lore. When he performs a sacrifice of sheep to the gods during the major festivals of the year such as "Kobaa", his son is his assistant, learning from him how to carry out such rites, and what doctrines and beliefs lie behind them. In such situations he learns the names of his ancestors and begins to understand the

structure of the lineage system and where he fits into it. Sometimes a man will call his adolescent and adult sons to him and tell them various things they ought to know in case he gets ill and dies. He tells them about his farms and other property, about his debts and those who owe him debts, and, a most important matter, about his ancestor and medicine shrines. In doing this, he is, in effect, telling them what he knows of the history and tradition of his lineage and clan. These are matters which a man does not speak about to his daughters or wives. If they learn of them it is only accidentally, through listening to the conversation of the men. Daughters and wives are present at domestic sacrifices to ancestor spirits, but only sons are allowed to share in the cult of a man's private medicine shrines. Most important of all is the responsible part an adolescent begins to play in the household economy. His work becomes an essential contribution to its welfare and hence he has a voice in its management. It is a commonplace feature that an adult son grows under his own father's direct tutelage and learns the art of life from him. These people perceive that this is a mechanism of primary importance not only for maintaining the bonds of the family and the lineage, but also for the transmission of their culture to their offspring. Such is the relation between the adult and his father.

The relationship of mother and son also

changes during this phase, but again there is no abrupt break. As a boy approaches manhood he becomes more and more absorbed in the activities and interests of men and sees less of his mother in everyday intercourse. But his affection for her remains. He still helps her to cultivate her cassava plot, if he has no younger brothers to take this on, and assists her in other ways. Later on, when he marries, his intimacy with his mother will be revived. It is to her mother that he brings his wife and in her charge that he places the girl.

By the time a youngman marries he has advanced on the path of economic independence beyond the stage of helping his parents in their farm work. He has his own plot to work on. This is usually a plot of land allocated to him by his father, or an uncle or the head of his family, where he can grow the ordinary cassava, plantain and some vegetables. It may be no larger than a few hundred square yards or it may be up to an acre in size. The larger the father's home farm (asaase) is and the fewer his brothers, the larger will a young man's plot (haban) be. A man allocates these private plots to his sons with an eye to the future. When, in course of time, the son (or their sons) separate, each will keep the plot given to him by their father as the portion of the patrimonial land that henceforth belongs exclusively to his descendants.

It is not all the youngmen who take

to farming; some drift to the urban areas to learn various trades like driving, carpentry, mechanical work and masonry. When a youngman is about to be apprenticed to somebody, it is usual for the necessary customary rites to be performed. A day is appointed on which the father together with some prominent members of the family meet the would-be master of the youngman. The youth is seated in the midst of the small gathering and sworn in with the very tools he will use while learning the trade. If he is about to learn carpentry the usual tool used is the saw, if masonry, Holding the appropriate tool, the youngman promises to be faithful to his master, to study diligently and to be honest. The master then claims a bottle of rum and the sum of a guinea. Later, libation is poured to mark this important occasion and the spirit of the family god is invoked to help the youngman to learn his trade. On the completion of his course, it is the responsibility of the father to provide his son with the necessary tools and supply him with kit.

Thus the youngman enters the amphitheatre of life equipped with the best of what his environment can give him. Though he has now left home to face the world all alone, it is his duty to remember the debt he owes to his father, his mother and his kinsmen; and it is customary that he should remit money to his parents and should help to cater for his younger brothers at home. Occasionally, especially during the major festivals of this

village he has to come home to pay homage to the departed relations who are mostly remembered and for whom libations are poured. It is really interesting, when re-unions of this nature take place during the "Ahoaba" festival which occurs in August every year. It is a festival to mark the beginning of the harvesting period. In it, each household meets to pour libation in honour of their dead ancestors and to tell the young people the history of the departed. This re-union offers the opportunity of settling all disputes and differences that may be existing between some members of the family. In any case the youngmen leave home at this time inspired by the advice they receive from their people at home and try to make amends where necessary. This re-union, a refresher course in itself, meant a lot in days gone by, but it is a pity that it is gradually losing its significance.

Adulthood in the fair sex is of special significance in this community. Menstruation is the sign by which the people judge that a young girl is gradually entering into the period of adolescence and a special ceremony is performed to usher her into that stage in life. The rites are called "Nhyehye" (adorning) or "going out of doors" because the girl goes out during the rites, gorgeously dressed in silk and heavily adorned with gold, to greet her kinsfolk and neighbours. Though these rites are usually observed on the girl's first menstruation it is usual to postpone the celebration until she is betrothed, or until enough money has

been obtained for the rites. This may be several years after the first menstruation. The central rite takes place at the riverside where the girl is shaved and bathed. Only old women need be present at the riverside to perform the ceremony. This is followed by a ceremonial meal of mashed yam and oil, some of which is offered to the spirits of the ancestors who are besought to assist the girl so that she may have a successful marriage. It is usual to invite some of the girl's friends to the ceremonial meal. After the meal, the friends resort to singing folk songs and dancing. Later in the afternoon, when the feast is ended, the girl and an attendant, both in gorgeous attire, call on kinsfolk and neighbours who offer gifts and money. Where these rites are performed on the girl's first menstruation, procuring the food and things necessary for the festivities during the rites is the responsibility of the girl's parents. The adorning is primarily intended to advertise the girl to the public to show that she has now reached the puberty stage when any man can ask for her hand. A girl who is not accorded this treatment is usually jeered at by her neighbours and looked down upon by men. If such a girl dies during his or her marriage life, she will be dressed on her death bed as gorgeously as somebody being adorned at the expense of the husband.

When these puberty rites have been performed, the girl is ushered into a new life. She can be married; and the whole household now regard

her as part of the elder group of her sex. She is now taught how to behave in her dealings with the opposite sex.

Thus the child, be it male or female follows his or her own path of training. The former leaves home to build up a family which in the end he will not have the right to call his own, while the latter comes home after her wanderings with issue to constitute a home. ✓

## CONCLUDING NOTE

Such is the sort of training accorded to a growing child in Janti Encycicism. The picture indicated in this essay is representative of one of the undeveloped villages one can often come across in this area. It is not likely that the factors which impose limitations on life here will persist for long. Conditions of life were worse than they are now in days gone by; nobody knows what sort of life the future will bring to them. However, it is hoped that the superstition, suspicion, and ignorance that loom so largely in men's minds there, and which are the major impediments to progress will yield to the efforts of the Mass Education team which is at present advancing in its crusade to bring new life to every home in this part of our world. Not until "Prejudice, superstition, fear and ignorance have been attacked in their strongholds, - men's minds" can real progress and better standards be achieved. Perhaps this will come to pass; and when there really comes about a dissipation of these evils there will follow a better understanding between man and man. There will no longer be the fear that a sick child has been bewitched by a neighbour. The belief will be that germs have been the cause. But let me not leave off without emphasising that much will depend on the extent to which people will put their whole spirit in the

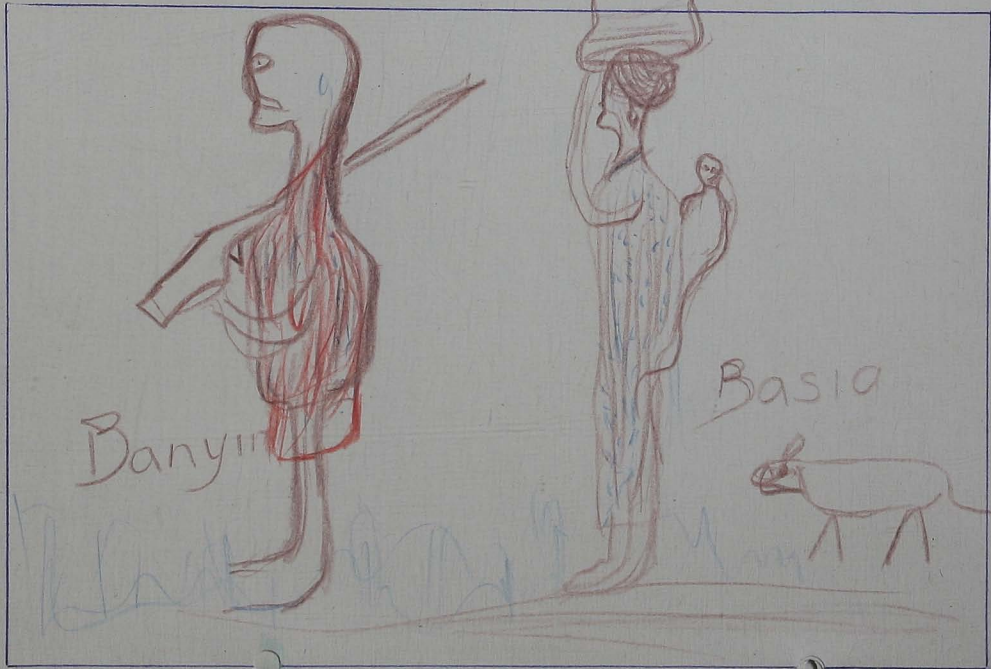
carrying out of the various projects the team will initiate. Where self-help is lacking much cannot be done. Much will never be done without understanding, and it is with the object of developing this that the country is sponsoring mass education.

✓ 22/6/53

# APPENDICES

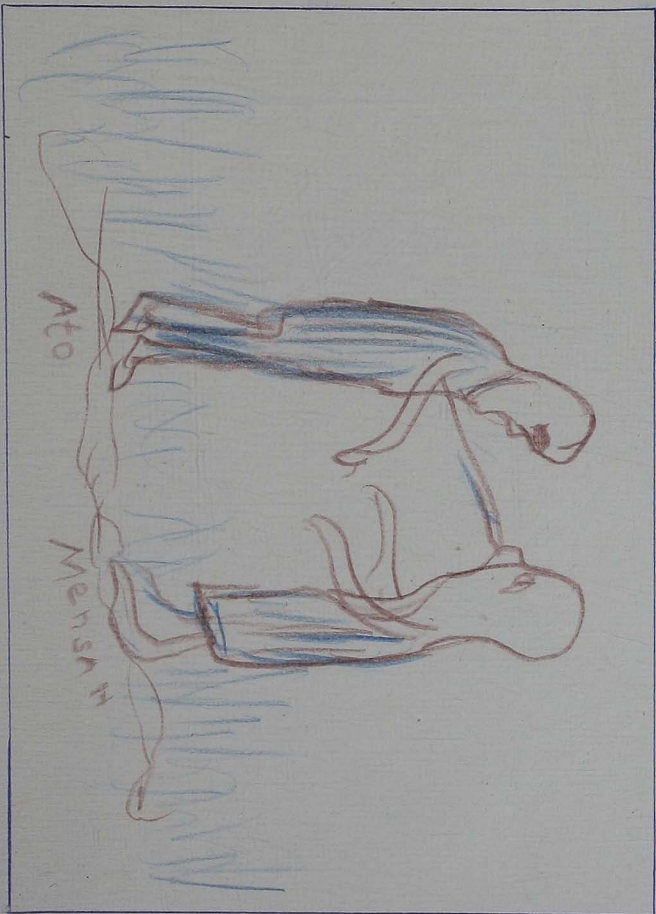
A MAN AND A WOMAN

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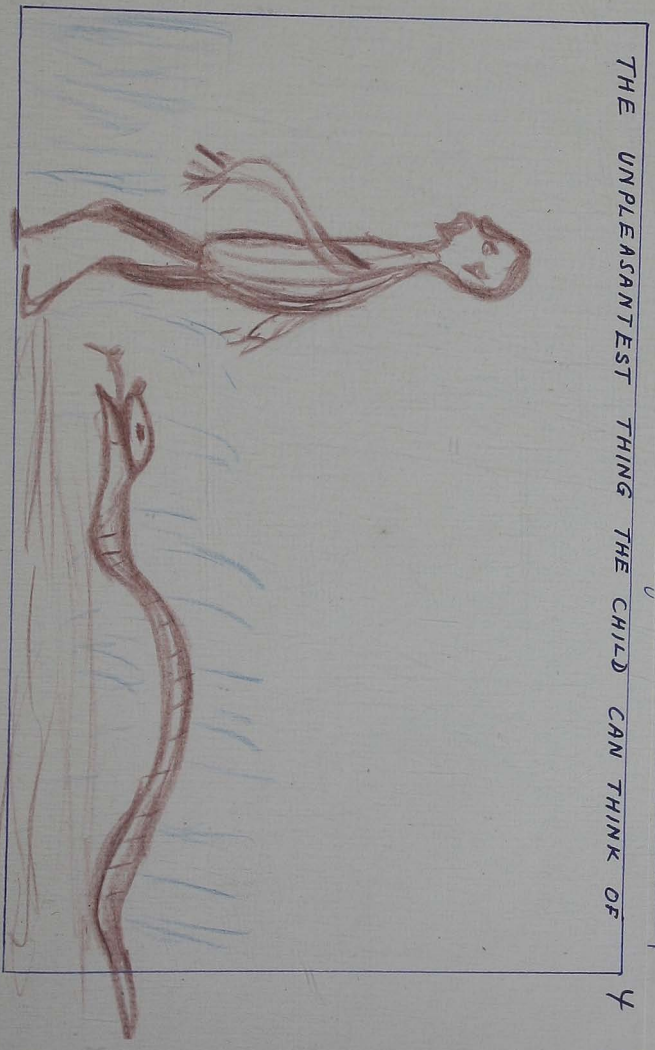
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THE PLEASANTEST THING THE CHILD CAN THINK OF



SOMETHING THE CHILD IS AFRAID OF - A SNAKE  
THE UNPLEASANTEST THING THE CHILD CAN THINK OF



SOMETHING THE CHILD IS AFRAID OF - A SNAKE



D W S

THE CHILD'S DREAM - A LORRY ACCIDENT





## CHILDREN'S COMMENTS ON

## THEIR DRAWINGS. (Ages 7-9)

Drawing 1: A man and his wife travelling on foot to a farm. The man carries a gun while the woman carries some corn to be sown. The baby is young and so he cannot be left behind. Their dog by name "Papaye asã" walks behind them.

Drawing 2: Two children Ato and Mensah fight over a marble. Really the marble belongs to Mensah the younger of the two but Ato, a bully, wishes to claim it from Mensah. And so a fight ensues.

Drawing 3: Ksbena Ebo is a good goal keeper of whom all the village is proud. He is very popular indeed.

Drawing 4: Poor Yaw is being chased by a snake, but because he is young he cannot run very well.

Drawing 5: Once, I was nearly bitten by a snake and so I hate to see snakes even when dead.

Drawing 6: I dreamt at one time, not long ago, that a lorry was about to knock me down. But just at the crisis, I awaked. My heart was panting for breath.

Drawing 7.

My Home. In the kitchen a pot full  
of soup is on fire.

## (2) THE CHILD'S FAVOURITE STORY

## ANANSE'S GREED

Long long ago, famine broke out in Ananse's village and so he and his family decided to make a cassava farm. When the time for harvesting was gradually approaching, Ananse formed a plan by which he would have the whole of the cassava farm to himself. He therefore called his sons to him one day and told them that, as he was getting old, it was possible he would die at any time, and that when he died, some cooking utensils including mortar and pestle should be enclosed in his coffin. He advised that the coffin should not be nailed, and that he should be buried in the cassava farm itself. A few days later, Ananse complained of severe fever and general weakness and in the end pretended to be dead. His wife and children mourned the loss and, after performing the necessary rites and following the advice given them, they buried him in the farm. But the grave was not covered with turf. Every detail of the instructions given was carried out.

In the night, when all was quiet, Ananse got out of the grave and stealthily began harvesting the crop and cooking it bit by bit any amount he could. In the middle of every night he did some working and slept quietly in his grave during the day when he expected that his family would come there to work. Every morning, when the wife and the children came on their usual rounds, they noticed that somebody yet unknown

tempered with the crop. To them, Ananse was dead; he was no suspect. They could hardly have the source of the mischief. So one night, armed with guns and cudgels two of the sons went to keep watch. In the middle of the night Ananse was seen gradually coming out of his grave. But the sons, afraid as they were, fled to a distance, for, they imagined they had seen the ghost of their father. However, they had the courage to stay at a distance and watch events. Soon they saw a fire near the grave; somebody was uprooting the crop and making a meal of it. "Who must this be", the sons said. They thought of approaching the fire but a second thought occurred to them not to venture. Approaching the scene step by step and examining the situation more closely they found Ananse dozing near the fire cooking. Ananse, waking up to find his sons, became ashamed and began offering excuses. All doubts were now clear. The sons now saw the reason why their father advised that cooking utensils should be placed in the coffin, why the coffin should not be nailed and why the grave should not be covered.

However, they took home their father, but they were careful not to placard the situation lest it would discredit him. All that was said of it was that Ananse had risen from the grave. But the rest of his family saw in him a cheat and never confided in him again.

(B) THE CHILD'S STORY ABOUT A BAD  
BOY

KWEKU BABON

Kweku Babon lived with his parents in a small village. He was known among his young friends as a bully and among his household as the most treacherous boy that had ever come across.

One day, when a group of little children were out playing on the riverside he, in a playful way, and at the same time showing his bullying habit, pushed a boy from the bank of the river into the water. That part of the river was deep and so the child could not swim ashore and so he got drowned. Kweku himself was very sorry when the body of the child was recovered so were the rest of the children on the scene. It was because of this very act that Kweku, whose real name was Kweku Mensah, came to be known as Kweku Babo i.e. "Kweku, the bad boy".

THE CHILD'S STORY ABOUT A GOOD  
BOY

Kodwo Tandoh is my very good friend who lives quite close to our house. He comes to my house and I go to his almost everyday. One day when I was sick and was unable to visit him, he wondered why I did not go to his house, and so he ran to me and, on finding that I was feeling really feverish, he stayed with me the whole day. Because I enjoyed the fun with him together. He is really good. I never had a better friend than him.

## (c) THE CHILD'S WISH

The child wished he was one of the band of masqueraders who were parading the streets at the time the investigations were going on during last Christmas. He wished his father gave him a toy of a bicycle and a mask. He seemed to be extremely fascinated by the wearing of masks. His only wish was to be given a ride in an aeroplane.

## (d) THE DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF

I am short, I am eight years old and dark in complexion. My name is Kwesi and, because of my dark complexion, my friends usually call me Kwesi Black. I have glossy hair a dark eye-brow and white teeth. I am bow-legged, right handed and often wish to wear a smile. I have one tribal mark on my left cheek, and <sup>a</sup> small scar on the chin. This scar is the sign of a wound I had when somebody accidentally threw a stone at me when a group of my friends and I were plucking apples in a garden. People who knew my mother before her death usually remark that I resemble her a great deal.

## (e) THE CHILD'S OWN LIFE STORY

I am eight years old born of poor parents. My mother died soon after I was born and so I grew up under the care of my grandmother who died a couple of years ago. Though my father loves me so well because I am the only child of his, I do not feel happy at home because of the ill-treatment given me by my step-mother. She pretends to like me when she is under the watchful eye of my father but gives <sup>me</sup> very shabby treatment, <sup>when</sup> we (the step-mother and myself) are alone in the house. Once I ran away to Cape Coast to my uncle (my mother's elder brother) who sent me back to my father because, he said, I went to him at Cape Coast without my father's sanction. The same conditions at home persist and I hope some day to go to Cape Coast to attend school.

## Comments

My interview with children for the material relative to the appendices was done both at home and in school. Some difficulties were encountered at the onset because I was not familiar to the children. However, after staying in the village for some time, mixing with them and taking keen interest in their work and games, I overcame much of the difficulties. The atmosphere was then friendly; the children became responsive and work began smoothly.

It was difficult, however, to get them to answer questions to the point. I expected this difficulty and I had it. Leading questions helped me a great deal to overcome the difficulty. For example, in getting a boy to tell the story about a bad boy, I had to introduce the topic in this way.

Question: Who is the most troublesome boy you know of either in school or in the village?

The child could easily name another boy and he began discrediting him a lot; another set of leading questions

"Why do you say he is bad?"

"What has he done lately that makes you say he is bad?"

helped the child to give me a story about the boy.

It was in a friendly atmosphere that the whole work was done.