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AN ESSAY ON CHILD TRAINING

IN

ASANTE AKYEM BOMPATA.

BY.

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1954/55 SESSION.

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PREFACE.

This essay on Child Training at Asante Akyem Bompata has been written at the instance of the Institute of Education, University College of the Gold Coast. It is part of the course leading up to the Associateship Certificate in Education. No doubt, it is calculated to help to establish a system of educational psychology best suited to the needs of the Gold Coast Teacher in particular and of the West African in general.

In the 'Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa' commonly known as the Elliot Report, (Command No 6655) published in 1945 by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, there is this statement: "The study of Psychology in Africa is in its infancy. One factor which has hampered many students elsewhere, has been the antiquated educational psychology found often in the text books used in the Training Colleges. The other factor, potentially more menacing and distorting has been the outcome of the various schools of thought about so-called "Primitive Mentality". If education in Africa is to have its psychological basis, the initial step must be to study African children in their own environment without any such preconceived idea. We therefore recommend that the primary psychological research should be a study of child development including the full range from infants to adolescents. For this purpose, we attach the utmost importance to the securing competent African observers, at the earliest opportunity.

It is with some pride that this research has been undertaken. It is a rare opportunity to serve in

the company of such a band of 'competent observers' who would go down in Gold Coast Educational history as pioneers of local psychological research which is likely to yield results of immense benefit to the training of teachers and to the cause of education in this country.

In obtaining the information set down here, three main methods have been followed. Firstly, interviews with parents and teachers have yielded valuable information. They have been on the whole, very co-operative and willing to answer questions even when the answers involved their private affairs. Secondly, I have observed the children in the village at play and at all the other activities peculiar to children and the findings have been recorded. Lastly, as a native of Bompata, who has lived the greater part of my childhood there I have drawn freely on childhood experiences. The description of some of the common children's games and some of the songs included in the appendix are to a great extent, personal recollections. The games and songs change very little with the passing of the years and where it was difficult to get children to stage a game with singing under the observation of an adult, I had to sing and ask children to make ^{necessary} any corrections in the songs.

This essay is primarily a factual record of the investigations into beliefs and practices of child training in Bompata. It has however not been without a few expressions of personal opinion in the light of modern ideas on the relevant topics. These comments have been kept to the barest minimum.

Much inspiration has been drawn from my academic tutors Dr. F. H. Hilliard, Ph. D., and Mrs. Brooks, lecturers at the Institute of

Education, who have kindly helped me in the details of setting out the facts. Their suggestions have made this essay presentable and I wish to record my thankfulness to them.

Next, I wish to place on record, my gratefulness to all informants at Bompata and especially to Nana Yaa Adamu, the most well known local midwife for her information on the birth and outdorsing of children. To Nana Yaa Agyakoma, Bompatahemaa (Queen Mother) I wish to say thank you for the history of the village and for some facts on puberty rites for girls. The chief linguist and chief stool carrier of Bompata also deserve thanks for checking on the historical facts. The Rev. E. Agyako-Mensah, Pastor of the local Presbyterian Church placed at my disposal the congregation's station diary for facts about the religious background of the village, and I am grateful to him for his healthy suggestions and help.

Lastly, I wish to express my thanks to Mr. A. Taylor, M.A., Lecturer in Psychology at the Institute of Education. He organised the whole investigation and his questionnaire has been a helpful guide in the compilation of these facts.

Map of the Gold Coast showing the position of the village of Ashanké Akrim Bompata.



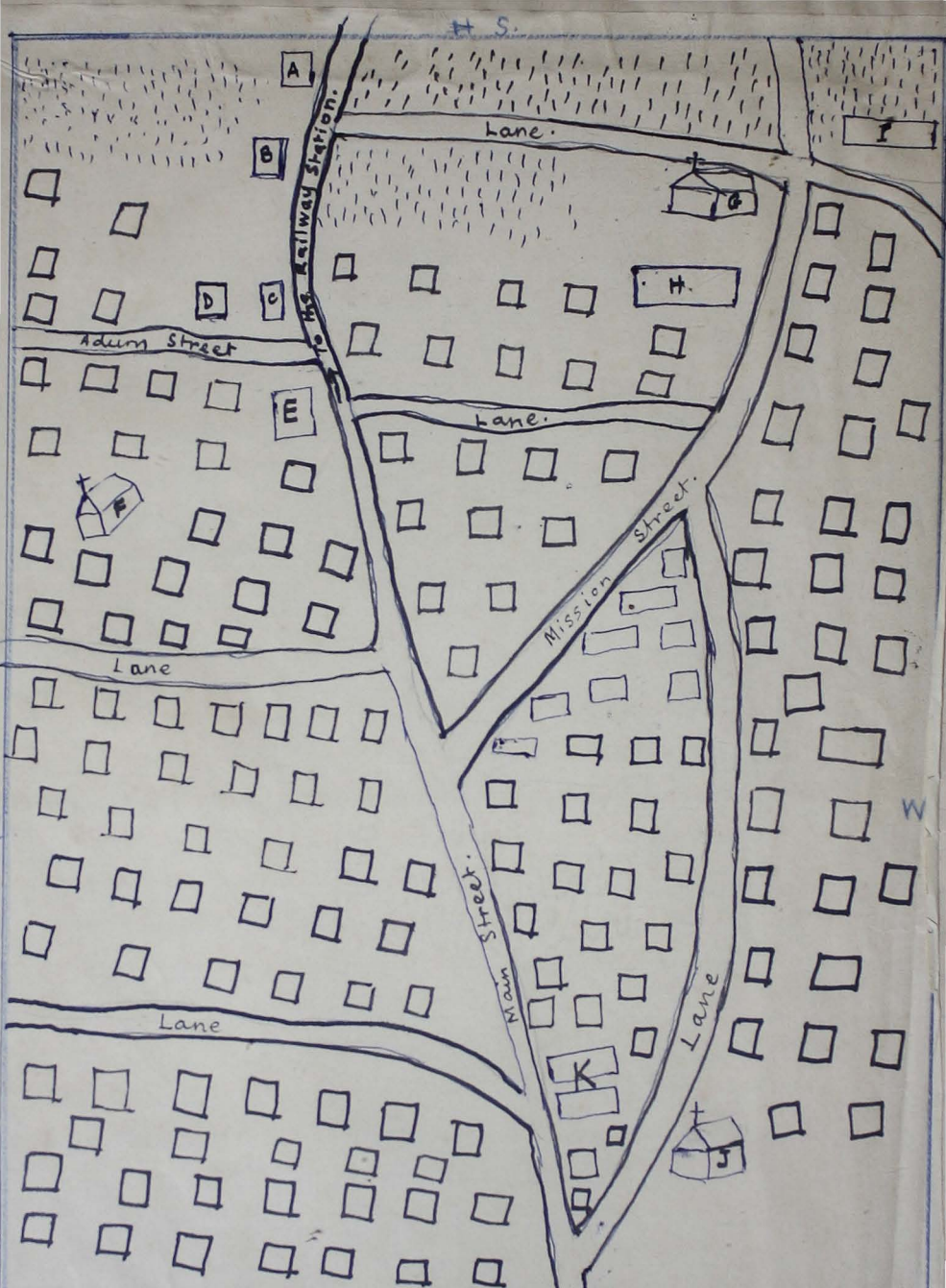
INTRODUCTION.

Geographical Background

BOMPATA is a village in Ashanti Akim, that is, the South Eastern portion of Ashanti. It lies at the point on the map, where the North Latitude $06^{\circ} 39'$ crosses Longitude $01^{\circ} 04' W$. It is about two and a half miles to the east of the Accra-Kumasi Railway line and Motor Road from a point about a hundred and thirty six miles from Accra or forty six miles from Kumasi. By road, it is a hundred and thirty eight and a half miles from Accra and forty eight and a half miles from Kumasi.

Bompata lies on the western slopes of the main central highlands of the Gold Coast which rise from Kintampo and run in a South-Easterly direction ending at Koforidua. The average altitude is about nine hundred feet above sea-level. The rainfall is heavy, being between 60" and 70" per annum. It rains almost all the year round. The farmers often refer to this phenomenon as 'Bompatasuo' (Bompata rainfall). They mean that if one allows ones work on the farm to be overtaken by the early March rains, the almost continuous downpour upsets farming.

The vegetation is forest. Most of this has been destroyed to give way to cocoa farms. The small patches of undestroyed forest abound in valuable timber and canes for basket work. The steep hills that rise almost abruptly on the eastern side of the village make the development of the timber industry impossible. The rocky hills however are covered with large cocoa farms.



A ROUGH MAP OF BOMPATA VILLAGE

- A. The Co-operative Society Cocoa Depot
- B. The Post Office
- C. The L. A. Court
- D. The L. A. Prison.
- E. The Chief's House.
- F. The Salvation Army Chapel.
- G. The Presbyterian Church.
- H. L. A. Primary School.

NOT ACCORDING TO SCALE.

- I. The Presby. Primary School.
- J. The A. M. E. Zion Church.
- K. Market.

▨ = Playing Fields.

The soil on which Bompata stands is soft and clayey. The sloping nature of the land encourages erosion. Gully erosion is a serious problem and it threatens the future of the village.

Bompata is amply supplied with rivers and brooks. Not once in the history of the village has there ever been any shortage of water. The main rivers are the Bompata and the Subin, which lie very close to the village and provide water for drinking, and for other household purposes for all the inhabitants. During the flood season in April and May, these rivers provide recreational facilities for some of the inhabitants who know how to swim. Anwamasu, a smaller brook, is another source of water supply for a large section of the village. A little distance out of the village, there are Asamansu, Atruku, Suakoro and Kodibenom all of which could have supplied water for ordinary purposes if ever there was the need to fall on them.

According to the 1948 general census, the population of Bompata was 2,300, made up of a thousand one hundred and sixty eight males and one thousand and eighty two females. The same census showed that there were a hundred and thirty seven compounds or houses. The most up to date Local Council records show that there are at present a hundred and thirty habitable houses. Six new houses have been built since the last general census. This is a living record of the damage to houses that the excessive erosion has been able to do in a period of six years. The lower parts of the village suffer worst from the havoc caused by the erosion.

Economic Background: Over ninety five per cent of the inhabitants of Bompata are primarily peasant farmers. Apart from the teachers in the three local schools, the postmaster and his staff, the employees of the Local Authority and a few cocoa clerks and casual labourers of the Agriculture Department, the bulk of the population live by farming. Cocoa is the main cash-crop and the industry is mainly in the hands of the men. There were about eight women in one section of the village who own enough cocoa to be able to support themselves independently. An interesting point that came out was that none of these women was married to any Bompata man. All their husbands were strangers. Further investigation revealed that the men think that an economically independent wife tends to be less helpful and difficult to control.

There is a great deal of disparity between the annual incomes of the different members of the village. In the books of the Co-operative Marketing Society, there were members eight of whose annual cocoa crop was about five hundred loads of sixty pounds each. The lowest figures for some individuals were five and seven loads per annum. About sixty five per cent of the farmers employ labourers to work their farms. These labourers are paid in kind with part of the proceeds from the farms. Only a very small number of even the lowest producers work their own farms even when they are still strong to do so. Most of the labourers are natives of the village but there is now a general tendency to employ strangers instead of natives. Ewes and Krobos are taking an increasing part in the cocoa industry as labourers. Many informants held that strangers

are more honest, obedient, and hardworking than the natives.

A great proportion of the cash income of the villagers is derived from the cocoa industry. Owing to the increasing population and the comparative smallness of the forest land available, most of the cocoa farms are not large. The practice of dividing a dead man's farms among his wife, his children and his relatives is helping to make the individual property of farms much smaller. As there is practically no other money earning activity during the off-season, (i.e. when the cocoa season is over - between March and September) a great many of the inhabitants in the lower income group pledge their farms to money lenders for loans and many of them are in heavy debt. Nigerian cocoa brokers are the chief creditors and they are ruthless and unscrupulous in their treatment of their debtors. There was an informant whose farm with an average annual yield of thirty loads has been pledged to a Nigerian for three years in consideration for a loan of a hundred and twenty pounds including compound interest at fifty percent per annum. When a farmer pledges his farm, the creditor takes it over and finds his own labourer to work it. A third of the proceeds goes to the labourer, a third to pay of the debt and a third is used as interest on the loan. Such hard terms make the farmers poorer and they have to take further loans to enable them to live.

Food farming is the second most important economic activity. This is almost exclusively in the hands of the women. On the new farms that are to become the cocoa farms in future, the women plant yams, cocoyams, plantains and vegetables. A greater

part of this is eaten at home but many hardworking women find surpluses for sale to the few strangers who live in the village or to dealers who come from the big commercial centres to buy.

Some of the male informants said they claimed whatever money was got from the sale of the foodstuffs by their wives. This they do in order to reimburse themselves for the money spent on preparing the land for planting. A good number however, allow their wives to keep the money to spend it in running the home. Commodities like soap, table salt or even cloths for the family are bought from such sums.

It is remarkable that in spite of the abundance of foodstuffs in Bompata, the farmers are unable to benefit financially from the sale of the surpluses. Income from ^{the} sale of foodstuffs is comparatively low. This position agitates the minds of many of the citizens. An informant tried to explain this unhappy lot by referring to the fact that because the village is neither near Kumasi nor Accra, farmers could not easily market their crops. "That is why during the off-season, we are forced to fall on the brokers for loans," he concluded.

This does not seem to be the whole truth. Almost all the new farms lie between four and eight miles away from the village over the hills that fringe it on the eastern approaches. As no motor roads go over these hills all transport of food from the farms is done by head portage. The result is that little food can be brought home and lots are left in the bush to rot. This situation has led to an increasing lack of effort in food-growing on an economic scale - with the result that at certain times of the

year, the few strangers and even some of the natives are compelled to buy the staple foodstuffs and comparatively high prices.

A third economic activity in Bompata is the snail industry. Snails are molluscs. The female lays her eggs in the ground. After some months, these eggs hatch into little snails. It takes about three years for the young snails to mature. When the rains set in after the third year, the snails come out from their places of hibernation and begin to feed on vegetable matter. The inhabitants go into the bush and 'hunt' them. The fresh snails are very delicious in palmnut soup and they add to the meat supply during their season. Sometimes, these snails are pulled out of their shells, stringed on sharp, pointed narrow sticks and smoked over open fires. The smoked snails are then dried in the sun. Buyers from other parts of the country where there are no snails come into the village to buy the smoked ones. The price of smoked snails has gone up in recent years. A score of sticks which about twenty years ago cost half a crown can now be sold for over thirty shillings.

Both men and women take part in the snail industry, when the season comes round. The financial returns to the hardworking hunter is sometimes appreciable. The average income of four families interviewed was thirty two pounds. This was during the most recent snail season in 1952 which most 'hunters' agreed was not a good one.

Apart from the above-mentioned economic activities, a few families keep sheep and goats and poultry. Their method is invariably, the free-range system. The egg-production of the hens is poor.

The animals are poor in quality, and they are either sold to the chief for sacrifices to the stools or are killed during the festive seasons like Christmas to provide family treats. Their financial value to the owners is very negligible.

The fish and meat trade is in the hands of a few women and one or two Hausa butchers and their economic importance is confined to them.

Historical Background: The people of Bompata often fondly call their village 'Amantena' (Literally: 'May states come and stay'). Amantena however is a small village about twenty miles to the North of Bompata on the Western slopes of the hills on which lies the town of Agogo in Ashanti Akim.

It is said that the people of Amantena were originally Kumawu people. Kumawu lies on the other side of the hills on the Western side of which lies Amantena. About a hundred years ago, when the Ashanti power was at its zenith, part of the Kumawus left their village on the other side of the hills to seek peace and safety from the frequent attacks of the Asantehene. These emigrants crossed the hills and founded their own village Amantena at the spot on which it stands now. Later on, other families followed them and in due course a chain of villages was made on this side of the Kumawu hills. Amantena, Akutuase (under the lemon tree) Nyinamponase (Under the large silk cotton tree) and Wioso (in the sunshine) grew up in a short time. All these villages still exist and their connection with Bompata is proved by the fact that all the 'adehyee' (the members of the Bompata stool family) live at Wioso or Amantena and it is from there that chiefs

are selected to occupy the Bompata stool whenever it becomes vacant. All 'adehyee' in Bompata are buried there when they die or return there when they are destooled. Nearly every true native of Bompata has some close relatives or in any case some friends either at Amantena, Wioso, or Akutuase.

When the Kumawu emigrants came to settle at Amantena, they found a small village called Aninsua (Literally: The rivulet or pool of pythons). The chief of this village was one Nana Ado Kwaata. It is believed that he gave the Kumawu emigrants land to settle. At this time, (i.e. about eighty years ago), all the land lying between the Rivers Pra and Anum, (between the present Colony and Ashanti boundary and a little way south of Konongo) belonged to the Odahene, Nana Attefuah. When because of the frequent wars with Ashanti, many of Attefuah's people gradually left this part of their territory, the Aninsuahene, Ado Kwaata went to settle at the present site on which Bompata stands with a view to making a maize farm. The farm was so successful that he decided to settle there permanently. He called his new settlement "Aburopata ase" (Under the corn barn). This name was gradually corrupted into 'Bompata'. In due course, nearly all the people at Aninsua came to Bompata to join their chief. Aninsua is now a hamlet of four compounds and has a population of less than eighty people including children. Later, some of the Kumawu emigrants at Amantena came to live in Bompata too. Incidentally, a nephew of the Amantena-hene was among the people who came to settle at Bompata. He continued to be the head of his people with whom he had migrated under the Aninsuahene who had then become also the Bompata 'Dekuro' (Head-

man), because he was the owner of the settlement.

These two groups of settlers lived in perfect harmony and friendliness. There is still an old tree at the outskirts of Bompata. It is called 'Nkyekyeredua' (The Tortoise tree); It is said that in the buttresses of this tree, tortoises caught by the villagers were reared communally. Each household killed and ate any of the mature animals whenever they felt like doing so - a mark of great friendliness and understanding.

It will be remembered that Nana Ado Kwaata was the original owner of the settlement at Bompata, and by custom, was the owner of the land and also chief of the village. For the past fifty years, he has lost his title to the chiefship of Bompata and consequently, the direct ownership of the land. The descendants of the Amantena headman who joined him later, are now the Bompatahene, and they own the main stool.

It is said that shortly after the Yaa Asantewaa War, a certain white man called Captain Benson came to Bompata. This name may not be the correct name of the man because records of the Yaa Asantewaa War show that this Captain Benson committed suicide in the marshes near Konongo-Ddumase before the troops which he was commanding met the Ashanti Army in 1900. In any case, the said white man must have been a government official. At an informal durbar attended by the then Bompatahene and his sub-chief Kojo Dakwa, the official, who evidently might have been compiling some records for the government, asked the two chiefs which of them was senior to the other. Now, it is said that the sub-chief

Kojo Dakwa was a proud man who was always anxious to exert his influence over the real owner of the village. Probably because of this reason, the real chief, who was much older, in order to tease this proud sub-chief pointed to him and said: "He it is who is always anxious to be senior." By a misunderstanding of the joke, the official put it down on record that the Krontihene was the real chief of Bompata, and the change of titles has remained so in all government records since then. Some informants expressed the opinion that perhaps the older chief thought that after all, Bompata was then just a small settlement whose stool was not as important as the Aninsua one which he still continued to occupy. In a short time however, Bompata grew larger and more important and the Bompata stool became more important and richer than the Aninsua one. This unhappy change of status has been the cause of much discontent and expensive litigation between the two ruling houses for a long time.

During the Yaa Asantewaa War, Bompata fought on the side of the British. She was therefore created an 'Omanhene' (Paramount Chief) over the other villages that form Ashanti Akim. The earlier occupants of the Bompata stool after the unfortunate transfer of titles treated the Adokwaata Stool occupants with much respect. The stool was created the Kurontire stool next in seniority only to the Bompatahene. The Amantenahene was made a keeper of the Royal Cemetery (Banmuhene) and the chief of Wioso became the Akwamuhene next in importance to the Kurontihene at Bompata. With the restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy in 1935, the Omanhene status of

the Bompatahene was cancelled.

Soon after the Yaa Asantewaa War, Bompata went through a period of very rapid prosperity and progress. The first cocoa trees in Ashanti were nursed at Bompata on a farm that still exists. The first permanent Basel Mission station in Ashanti had been opened at Bompata eight years before the Yaa Asantewaa War started. A Primary School was established two years later and it became the seat of learning for many children from many parts of Ashanti. When the government constructed the first Accra-Kumasi motor road, it passed through Bompata. Trade was reasonably brisk. Many slaves from other parts of Ashanti ran away from bondage and came to join the band of Christians at Bompata, in order to throw off their yokes. It is said that there was a time when letters received in many other parts of Ashanti were sent to Bompata to be read by one of the literate Christians. Only chiefs, of course, could afford in such communication by letters.

In the early 1930s, the discontent over the exchange of positions and privileges of the two stools flared up and there was a long period of litigation between the two rival ruling houses. This got many of the elders of the village into very heavy debt. This destroyed the peace and harmony that had existed between the two houses. Co-operation for general development in the past twenty five years has been negligible. When the Accra-Kumasi motor road was re-aligned to its present position in 1938, it was not made to pass through Bompata and it is believed that completed the decline of her glory. There is now very little commercial



'There is very little commercial activity in Bompata'
One of the two little sheds that form the
market of the village.

activity in the village. The cocoa industry is the proverbial one basket into which all the inhabitants of Bompata have put all their eggs.

Social Background:

Housing: At present, Bompata has a hundred and thirty two compounds built almost invariably of mud and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. In the Zongo section of the village where the Northern Territory emigrants live, the thatch roof is still commonly used. Nearly all the houses were built more than twenty five years ago. Erosion has caused a great deal of damage to the present houses and there are very few of them that are healthy to live in or beautiful by present standards of housing in many other parts of Ashanti. There is not a single cement-block building in the village. Housing is inadequate and strangers find it difficult to obtain suitable accommodation.

According to the 1948 Census, the average number of people per room in Bompata was 2.6. The position is getting worse and the average is about 3.2 people per room now. Of a sample of forty children between ten and fifteen years old, interviewed, twenty two shared rooms with one or the other or both parents. Only six had their own rooms which they shared with at least three other siblings or friends. The rest slept with other relatives or friends and the least number in such rooms at night was six. There was a singular case of one informant who shared a room with nine other friends.

This sad lack of proper sleeping accommodation is a cause of much shame to many adults in Bompata especially when one has to accommodate a casual visitor. During the past year, the village has been replanned by a competent surveyor and many

people have started building new houses or are repairing unsuitable ones.

Religious and Educational Background: Christianity has by far the greatest following in Bompata. The first cate-chist of the Basel Mission arrived at Bompata in 1890.

In less than three years, he was replaced by a full minister. Many converts were made in a short time.

The new converts were made to leave the part of the village which they occupied at first and a new settlement called the 'Salem' (Christian Quarters) was founded for them. Gradually, two communities were set up in the village. From the Church Chronicle of what is now the Presbyterian Church there is the following entry made on the 16th of October, 1898: -

"Sixteen new members who have been instructed in the Lessons for the past six months were baptised by me. All their family fetishes were burnt, in the presence of our growing band of believers, after the service."

(Sgd) Boateng

Pastor-in-charge.

An old informant remembered that this public denunciation and burning of fetishes whenever new converts were made continued in the early life of the Church in Bompata until after the influenza epidemic in 1919. No doubt, this met with some opposition from other members of the families who had not been converted yet. It nearly brought about persecution from the heathens. 'Owura' Boateng, (as the first minister was fondly called) who though he came from Akropong in Akwapim claimed some blood relationship with the Juabenhene wielded such great influence in Bompata and in Ashanti in general, that no serious trouble ever arose between



The chapel of the Presbyterian Church.
A centre of religious worship and
other social activities.

the heathens and the Christian community. In due course, almost all the ancient fetishes were destroyed.

Whenever any of the Christians committed a grave offence, which from the records already referred to above, seems to have centred round sexual offences only, he was suspended and asked to go out of the Christian station. The influence of such 'backsliders' over their heathen relatives and friends must have been great.

Gradually, it became fashionable to be identified with Christianity. The Christians had visible symbols of their religion in their chapel, their priest and the sacraments. Most of the ancient family fetishes had been destroyed.

School work went hand in hand with the evangelization. Before 1900, there had been established a Primary school in Bompata and children received instruction in the three Rs., and Religious Instruction. The educational work greatly aided and completed the influence of Christianity over Bompata. "When the school was first established, it was thought that it existed for Christian children only and the children of slaves. But when after some time, the children of these slaves became important men in government and mercantile service, everybody realised the value of school education" an old informant said.

The present percentage of literacy in the vernacular especially among the Christians is comparatively high for an average Ashanti village like Bompata. It is difficult to find about thirty adults in the 'Salem' who have not lost sight for reading, who cannot read Twi. The percentage of literacy is lower among the pagans. But the

average number of years spent at school by their literates is high. This is so perhaps because the pagans sent their children to school with an economic motive. They therefore persevered better than the christians in keeping their children longer at school at least till the end of the Elementary course in order to qualify them for a post with the government or a firm. Among the christians, education was and still is more or less compulsory. It is one of the obligations enjoined on parents towards their children when they baptise them as infants. For this reason, lots of the ^{christian} girls and boys leave school as soon as they are able to read the bible in Twi, to memorise the catechism for their confirmation, or are able to sing from the Twi hymn-book at church. This situation has created a ^{social} problem which will be discussed fully under the chapter on Schooling.

Apart from the Presbyterian Church, there are two other churches. The Methodist Church (Now called the A.M.E. Zion Church) was founded in Bompata in 1913. They have a large following of over two hundred and twenty members. Their educational work flourished for a short time only, and since 1926, they have confined their activities mainly to evangelization and congregational work only.

When in November, 1930, a Salvation Army station was opened at Bompata, it provided a solution to the problem of some polygamous adults who had found christianity fashionable but who were debarred from full membership of either the Presbyterian Church or the Methodist Church, because of their matrimonial 'sins'. The Salvation Army established a school which functioned for about eight years only. The Army of believers can still be identified even though



All that is left of what used to be a very 'strong' fetish in Bompata—The neglected resting place of the Tano Fetish—Now no longer worshipped.

The number of members has gone down. Most of these original members have broken their vow to be teetotallers. Teetotalism is one of the tenets of the Salvation Army creed.

Amongst the Northern Territory residents in Bompata Islam is the chief religion. A few Ashantis have become Muslims too but they are so few that their influence is negligible.

The influence of christianity in Bompata, as may be seen, is very great. Many more cases between citizens are settled in the ecclesiastical courts of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches than in the local secular courts. At present, there is no active fetish in Bompata. 'Tano' and 'Nana Bompata'— the two state fetishes have no priests now. Many of the ancient customs have been shorn of their superstitious tinge. Apart from the usual Adaye festivals, all the ancient Ashanti festivals have been lost. So also have many of the elaborate rites concerning puberty.

It would be incorrect to imagine that superstition as a mental state has been completely overcome in Bompata. The following description of child-training will show the truth of this statement.

Leisure: One of the problems of Bompata is the useful employment of leisure hours. The women have very little leisure and they constitute no problem.

Many people in Bompata think that one of the greatest disservices the christian churches have done to the social life of the village is the fact that they branded all the old leisure-time activities as unfit for christian participation. At the same time, they have failed to introduce activities which might be acceptable to the pagans on whom they had

made their influence felt. The singing of folk-songs which almost invariably were sexual in character was forbidden among christians. There have been instances in the history of the church in this village when christians were punished for dancing to the drums of local native musicians. Evening native dances which provided so much entertainment and healthy exercise have ceased to be staged. This has affected the people in the pagan section of the village. When at an Aday festival, out of a gathering of over two hundred men, only six men of over sixty years of age could dance to the 'bomaa' drums, the influence of christianity in this aspect of the social life of Bompata was made clear.

The men spend their time in the evenings playing draughts - and in drinking palm-wine of which there is always ^{an} ample supply. The drinking of illicit gin is becoming more and more common. There is only one man in Bompata who has a useful hobby in basket-making. It is strange that in a forest village where there are many canes and where a single basket can be sold for anything between four and six shillings, only one man should pursue this hobby.

There is a Brass band in the village. This occasionally provides music for the youth to dance. This is frowned upon by many of the adult inhabitants of Bompata, because it is believed that it has encouraged immorality among the youth. To the churches, it appears that Brass Band is a more 'civilised' source of entertainment and christians and pagans alike enjoy its music.

Of course, the christians have their church societies - the singing bands, the church

choirs and the Women's Evening Bible Classes.

These are well patronised especially during Yuletide and the Easter when the societies may be expected to perform certain functions during the services. For most of the adults, the days are divided between working on the farms and drinking to intoxication a great deal of palm-wine in the evenings. The result of this unhappy state of leisure time activities is reflected in the behaviour of most of the non-school going adolescents. This will be explained more fully in the relevant chapter of this essay.

From this brief background of the village of Bompata, it may be realised that the people of Bompata are a homogenous group whose customs and ideals have been greatly influenced by christianity. Despite that however, they have been able to preserve some of the basic beliefs and practices calculated to enhance the future well-being of their children.

CHAPTER ONE.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS HAVING CHILDREN.

At Bompata, every father has two major obligatory duties towards his adult male children. The first, which is fast losing its importance is to provide the son with a gun (generally a cap gun). The second and most widely accepted as a more important duty even in our changing society is to 'find' a wife for the lad. The actual choice of the bride is now generally made by the young man himself, but it is the father who sanctions the marriage and pays the "tiri nsa" (Head rum) which is the decisive formality for the establishment of a legal marriage. The source of the money for this gift does not affect the fact that the father "marries for his son". This giving of the "tiri nsa" is preceded by the giving of a series of presents, all of which are customarily determined, to the bride's father and maternal relatives. It is the giving of the "tiri nsa" which gives the bridegroom exclusive sexual rights over his wife and the legal paternity over the children of the marriage while it lasts. In these days, the registration of the marriage at the Local Authority Treasury is demanded. In addition to this general customary procedure for acquiring a wife, all the Christians usually seek the recognition of the marriage by the church by asking the blessing of the church on the union.

Investigations revealed that there are several conjugal unions which have no customary recognition as such. This type is called "mpena awadee" (Lovers' marriage) and it is entered into when a man cohabits with a woman and a child is born to them. Most male informants living with such wives were of the opinion that the children between them and the lovers were enough to

safeguard the sanctity and continuity of the unions and they are not inclined to undergo the extra expense of making it legal. Among the christians such marriages are not allowed and full church membership is denied such a couple. All informants of both sexes, both christian and pagan agreed that they would prefer to be expecting a child before they are customarily married. "Because" one woman said, "then you can be sure that you will not go to serve the man (i.e. the husband) FOR NOTHING. A marriage without children is of no use to anybody. If it were for sexual satisfaction only that we marry, we could have had it more profitably by being mistresses to other men. We attach ourselves to men because we want children and also a man to father them." There is a common folk-song for the women in Bompata, "Mekoo aware na mannwo ba, masoa kenten hunu kwa." (Literally: 'If I went to marry and remained childless, I have carried baskets for nothing!').

This desire for children is equally strong amongst the men-folk. It is the strongest incentive to all kinds of marital unions. Childlessness is a strong point which is often upheld as a reasonable ground for dissolving a marriage. When a couple get married, all the relatives of both watch keenly to see that the bride becomes pregnant as quickly as possible. If that happens, the man has 'shown his manliness' (Twi: Wakyerɛ ne barima'). Generally, a period of about a year, is considered enough for the man to have made his wife pregnant. If however, the couple remain childless, the maternal relatives of the bride become deeply concerned and may become very strongly inclined to take their daughter away from the husband who is merely 'wasting her time.'

An interesting case at which I sat as one of the arbitrators came for hearing during this investigation. Mr. K. had been married to Miss N. for over two years and they had no children. Miss N., an only daughter of her mother was the "abusua's" (maternal family) only hope for extending their lineage. The whole family therefore met in a house and Mr. K. was summoned. After the customary greetings, Miss N's maternal uncle opened his case. "Mr. K," he said, "you know that we all liked you before we gave our daughter to you in marriage. You are also well aware that she is the only hope of this family. Her continued childlessness is causing us much concern. We have therefore decided to give you six months from now after which if no definite signs of her having become pregnant are seen, we shall be forced to take her away from you to enable her to try her luck with another man." Mr. K. who evidently was very fond of his wife was greatly upset by this piece of news. He asked for the time to be extended to twelve months. It is still to be proved by him if he had any reason for asking for an extension of time.

Usually in such circumstances as that immediately described, the women think their parents are right. On the other hand, a man may sometimes be advised by his relatives and friends to divorce a childless wife or to marry another who may bear him children.

The emotional upset under such circumstances of involuntary divorce is sometimes considerable especially if the union is the result of a real love-match and the couple are still fond of each other. Some ^{female} informants confessed to have become pregnant by

other than their legal husbands and to have secretly allowed their sterile husbands to possess the children. Two of the five informants said it was an agreement between them and their husbands that such a course be taken by the wife in order to enable them to ^{continue to} live together. This is of course surprising and unusual but it shows the strong desire which some men and women have for possessing children. This information, since it is based mainly upon the confidences of only a few informants, is of course, far from being complete.

Advantages of Having Children: To a man, the possession of children has both a social and economic value. A childless man is not considered normal. He is the object of vulgar jokes and taunts. He is called "krawa" (Sterile one); "saadwe" (one who cracks nuts for nothing) The number of children a man possesses enhances his social position. If he is an elder in the chief's court, he has servants to accompany him there and carry his chair always. It is a common saying that if a childless man sends somebody's child, an unwilling child can always make an excuse by saying that he is on an errand for his real father. One's own child of course is at his father's beck and call always. It is a custom for a man's children to provide a coffin for their father when he dies. If a man dies childless, it is a great shame for as it is said, he will have died in debt over his coffin. (Twi: Nadaka ka aye no ka) The maternal relatives will then have to add the cost of the coffin to their normal share of the funeral expenses. There is also a superstitious belief that in the underworld (asaman') there is a sentry called "Amokye" whose duty is to thrash the spirits of all men who die without having

having replaced themselves in this world with even one child. This is done before the spirit is allowed to join the spirits of the ancestors - in the "asaman". A man wants children so that he can pass on the names of his forebears. It is the father who gives names to his children and such names are those of his own forebears who led or are leading a good life in the world. This according to all informants is a very important filial duty and a source of pride. There are several men in Bompata who are so poor that they can hardly provide adequately some of the bare necessities of life. They are however, quite willing to add to their incapacity, the burden of supporting several children. Every informant proudly showed his children to me. In many cases, the condition of these children was such as did no honour to their fathers.

Children have been and to a certain extent still are a source of free labour on the farms of the parents. It is true that schooling has tended to reduce the economic value of children in this respect but they are still a reliable source of considerable help both in domestic work and on the cocoa farms especially during the holidays.

It appears the root of the general strong desire to have children goes beyond the material considerations just enumerated. There is no degree of sacrifice or humiliation to which men would not subject themselves in order to enjoy normal parenthood. The "Krawa" custom, which has almost disappeared in the light of christianity and a general change in the beliefs regarding methods of overcoming sterility, was a torture to which only a man who considered the possession of a child above his very life would

subject himself. Eighty-year old Opanyin 'A.' during an afternoon chat under a shade tree told his hearers of his own experience as a young man above thirty five. "I had married three wives all of whom remained childless", he began. "I was very miserable and all my friends endeavoured to make me feel that I was not normal and I was the object of laughter amongst all friendly gatherings. I tried to drown my unhappiness in drinking hard. A friend suggested that if I agreed to undergo the 'Krawa' custom, I would have children. This I agreed to do. Early one morning, I was awakened by a familiar knock at my door. As soon as I stepped out, I was seized violently, stripped completely naked and a long rope with a noose at one end put round my waist. I was led about from one end of the village to the other. My tormentors sang after me "Ikrawa ee, ma wo yere nwo ba! Ikrawa ee, ma wo yere nwo ba!" (Sterile man, make your wife a mother!) I was told to clap and dance along. A long line of spectators, especially children, came out to share the fun. Meanwhile, a small child of about six was placed on my shoulders. He was told to hit me in my temples. The men also beat me occasionally. Whenever I came to the fetish shade tree in the middle of the village, I was told to make a promise and I proceeded as follows: "Meka, meka, meka Praso ne Ntwoma (The State oath of Bompata), Ekyere ne Tano nku me, se ebeduru afe sese na menwo ba a, meto." (Literally: 'I swear, I swear, I swear, the Great oath of 'Praso' and 'Ntwoma', may the fetishes Ekyere and Tano kill me, if by this time next year, I shall not have made my wife a mother, I shall have sworn falsely). This humiliating process went on for about two hours. In the end my three

wives and I were placed on white stools, and a large basin of water was placed before us. With the leaves of 'adwera' (Boerhavia species) we were sprinkled with the water and purified. Before the end of the year, two of my wives had become pregnant" the old man concluded.

This custom according to most informants was unduly severe but its efficacy in restoring fertility to sterile men is upheld by all who have seen it practised before. It appears much of its success must have been due to ordinary co-incidence or to the implicit faith of the victims. Instances of suicide by victims in the event of failure to have children after such treatment were cited by some informants.

The role of the medicine man in restoring fertility to sterile men and women is still a very important one. Treatment usually consists of the drinking of potions prepared from the leaves, roots and bark of trees which for professional reasons, informants were unwilling to reveal. One informant spoke of another kind of treatment. Four groups of seven small cuts (like vaccination incisions) are made around the waist. A group of four is ^{cuts} made on each of the following points - The back of the waist immediately above the coccyx bones, the mons veneris immediately above the root of the penis, and on each of the hips. Black magic powder mixed with gin is smeared into these cuts amid mumbled incantations by the medicine man. The power of the witch to render one sterile is commonly believed in. When the medicine man divines that such is the cause of one's sterility, he promises to go out in the night to the witches' meeting-place to ask for his patient's "mmadwoa" (Seed of children) which he

returns to the patient if the Witches are co-operative enough to hand the "mmadwoa" back. There is a widespread belief in Bompata that a man's own mother or his female siblings who are witches can "take out" the man's ability to procreate. A childless brother, it is held will devote all his attention to the care of the mother, the sisters' children and perhaps to his other maternal relatives.

Sterility is considered to be graver in women than ⁱⁿ the men. This is because motherhood cannot be mistaken, and while a sterile man's wife may bear him children secretly from another man a sterile woman has no such chance of deceiving herself. The common saying is that a childless woman's 'line is burnt' (n'ase ahye). She is not made fun of in public as a man may be, but her barrenness may be cast in her teeth during a quarrel. A wealthy barren woman is not envied by anybody; her things as they say in Bompata, will be shared on the dunghill when she dies. This means that there will not be any children, who by custom should inherit their mother's property, to take what she leaves behind. An "obonin" (a barren woman) it is said, never knows any happiness and joy in life, because she is always 'alone'. It is strange how late in life some barren women still hope to be able to become mothers. Of ten women interviewed all were hopefully receiving treatment from drug-peddlers and medicine-men to enable them to bear children. Over seven of them had their puberty rites performed thirty four years ago when they may have been between fifteen or seventeen years old.

Methods of overcoming sterility in women

are much more widely known than those for men. In fact, many informants thought that the quickest way of making money in Bompata and in the whole of Ashanti, is to pretend that you can restore fertility to sterile women. Considerable sums of money ranging between £20 and £50 are spent by husbands on their wives' sterility. An informant was of the opinion that it is much less expensive to keep a wife and three children for a whole year than it is to maintain one barren wife for double the period. "For" he said, "a barren woman would never stop thinking about her "yafunu" and would ask you to buy any medicine she hears of once it is said to enable women to conceive. If you dare refuse, yours is an unquiet house. She would accuse you of being more in love with your money than with her.

The methods of overcoming sterility in women are so varied that they require some classification. First, the whole of a girl's puberty rites which will be described in a subsequent chapter are meant to ask the ancestral spirits (asamanfo) and the tribal gods (abosom) for abundant fertility for the young girl. If however, after marriage, a girl continues to be childless, she may ask her husband to go and sacrifice a sheep, a dog or a cat to her maternal family god if that was not done before the bride was taken to her husband's house. This is often accompanied by a bottle of gin part of which is poured as libation to the gods. Where the woman is of the ruling house (ɔdehye) the libation may be poured in the stool house. This first method is purely spiritual and it is a propitiation of the gods who it is believed have a great deal of control over fertility

All the other methods of overcoming sterility in women are dominated by the jujū man, the fetish priest or the herbalist. Their main method is to administer potions and some medicines for douching calculated to correct certain irregularities in the female genitals. All of them however never work with an impressive magical rite. They claim possession of supernatural insight into things spiritual and also of powers of divination. They often give their clients the impression that if a woman is sterile, almost always it is a witch who has taken away her "mmadwoa" (seeds) and kept it somewhere or that a spirit or a family god is angry with the unfortunate woman. Elaborate sacrifices and purifications are made and some informants strongly held that this could easily restore fertility. Some of these 'doctors' it was said always asked to examine a husband along with the sterile wife, and both receive the treatment accordingly.

All these methods of overcoming sterility are undergone by both christians and the pagans, for investigations revealed that the belief in witches, witchcraft and in the ancestral spirits is held by all people in Bompata.

Other causes of childlessness in a marriage are known and these are not based on witches or on 'nsamanfo'. It is generally known that if a woman's 'blood' does not agree with her husband's, it is no use trying to let her bear him children. When the medicine man returns such a verdict after his examination of the couple, involuntary separation which the woman's maternal relatives will readily enforce is always the outcome.

Other causes of barrenness are attributed to home conditions of the pair, a quarrelsome wife makes her husband unhappy and since children are part of his soul they may not come to be borne at all. An imposing tall, stout man married to a small woman is feared in spirit by her wife's spirit and she may not bear him children. Lack of respect for a husband brings barrenness; too frequent sexual intercourse does not 'make children' for as soon as the child is formed, fresh hot semen goes into the womb to melt it. It is also believed that an offence against the gods or the ancestral spirits causes barrenness.

SIZE OF FAMILY: With the present rising cost of living and of training a child, most male informants preferred comparatively small families between four and six children. Most of the christian women also shared this view of the ideal size of a family, if the number would include both sexes of children. There were a few pagan informants who wanted to have at least ten children. "Whatever number God gives me" one said, "I shall bear them all." It appeared this desire for large families is due to the high rate of infantile mortality. The common proverb on this subject is: "Wonom ahina koro mu a, wonom fom" (Lit. "If one drinks from only one pot, one drinks from the ground") This means that if you have only a few children and they die, you may not be left with any at all.

Some of the male informants preferred any number of children. These were generally pagans who had no intention of giving their children any school training. They expressed pride in the number

of children they had been able to bear. "I have received two "badudwan" from my two wives." one proudly said.

Badudwan: When ten children are born to a husband and wife, (This includes still-births) the maternal relatives of the woman are obliged to say thank you to their son-in-law who has 'built their house' by giving them so many souls. A live sheep is presented to the husband and the tenth child. This sheep it is said may either be killed by the man and the meat shared amongst the man's relatives and friends or it may be reared and allowed to multiply for her off-spring to be sold for money.

Ewes, I gathered are generally given as 'badudwan'

Birth Control: In spite of the growing tendency to regard large families as undesirable, there does not seem to be any knowledge of contraceptives or birth control amongst the inhabitants of Bompata. Several female informants were bearing children against their wishes. A mother of thirteen children complained most bitterly for her husband threatened to divorce her because she had placed too heavy a burden on him. This woman's method of controlling birth is interesting even though in her case alone, it had let her down completely. It is said that when a woman thinks she has had enough children, as soon as the last child she desires is born she must call into the room in which she laboured, her first female child. While the new-born child is still lying on the rags with the placenta still attached to it, the eldest daughter must stand in front of the mother and say: "Eno, ayε yie, gyae awoo na yen nas yenwo nkayε no" (Literally: 'Mum,

it is enough, stop bearing so that we i.e. the daughters, may bear the remaining children). It may be seen that this method of controlling birth is attended with many technical difficulties. If the woman has no daughter at all, then the process cannot be carried on. But most female informants were emphatic about the efficacy of this simple rite to control birth.

In the matter of birth-control too, I learnt that the herbalist has some potions which can help women. Most women however were of some vague opinion that the after-effects of such birth-control measures on the woman are always unpleasant as it is accompanied with protracted ill health.

Illegitimacy: At Bompata, illegitimacy is no problem at all. Though unmarried motherhood has no social sanction, it is not looked upon with any marked disapproval. The common saying when a girl becomes pregnant before she is married is: ~~that~~ "Dee ebye biara, onipa na obwo", (literally: 'In any case she is going to bear a human being'). I learnt that in the olden days there were penalties inflicted on men who made spinsters conceive whom they had no intention of marrying. It ranged between thirteen shillings and four pounds thirteen shillings, according to the rank of the woman in the society. Practically nothing was charged if the man agreed to marry the girl afterwards.

The christian churches, especially the Presbyterian Church has brought a new outlook on the question of unmarried motherhood. Their punishments have, according to the church chronicles, always been heavy and if both offenders happened

to be members of the church they were, in addition to the heavy fines paid by the man, subjected to social humiliation in the congregation. At present, the public confessions in chapel, the segregation of those members who have 'fallen from grace' during worship, their burial outside the cemetery fence if they died in their sin are all stories of amusement for people who care to read the church chronicles. All lapses from strict sexual propriety and the relative punishments have been recorded in the Presbyterian Churches' station diaries from 1892 and make interesting reading.

In more modern times penalties for male fornicators has tended to be financial and they are always heavy. There is a scale of fines for pacifying the parents of a wronged girl. The sums payable range from thirty five pounds to twenty five pounds for an offence against a girl whose education has been above Primary Class Six. The amount payable for wronging an illiterate girl is below these figures. If however an offending young man decides to marry his lover, he does not need to pay such heavy fines. Most parents nowadays, prefer to deal leniently with any young man who wrongs a daughter in such a way in order to encourage him to marry the girl and to support the child that is born. Greedy parents who try to take as much money as they can from a young man, estrange the young man. He may flee the village and leave the care of both the pregnant girl and the baby that will be born in due course to the girl's parents.

Owing to the matrilineal nature of the Akan family system, an illegitimate child has

the same status in his mother's home as that enjoyed by other children born out of wedlock. Amongst the christians however, where a man's children are entitled to a share of a father's property on his death, the problem of the illegitimate child arises. If a widow is greedy, she would never allow her children to share their part of the property with the children born outside wedlock.

Adoption: When a married couple remain childless, it is common for them to adopt a child. This is usually a child belonging to a close relative of one of them. There are no adoption rules as obtain in England and other places. The child is not kept ignorant of his true parents and is allowed to visit them and they may send him food during visits if the foster parents and the real parents do not live in the same part of the village. As there is always the possibility of the real parents of the adopted child taking away their child in case of maltreatment, there is always satisfactory treatment. Of five cases of adopted children, all the children were maternal nephews and nieces of the wives of the households. Most of the children were of the opinion that life with the aunts was happier than in their own homes where the mothers scolded them often.

Another type of adoption is by other relatives and friends not necessarily childless ones. A man or a woman by mutual consent may send one of his or her children to live with an old mother or father. The aim^{is} to place at the disposal of the grandparent, the services of the child because the mother or the father cannot find

time to perform those services for any of their own parents. Friends too are sometimes given the custody of a child from an early age. The children live with them until they become adults. It appears this practice is fast disappearing because most parents can ill-afford to part with the services of their children. Then also it is said that if there come reports of maltreatment of the child, from the foster parents, it might ruin the friendship.

At Bompata, adoption of children is not very common. Most parents would like to bring up their own children.

Orphans: When a woman dies leaving little children, one of her closest female relatives takes care of the orphan. The child, being an "saman ba" (the child of a ghost) is looked after with great care. If the real mother died when the child was still too young to recognise her, great care is taken to conceal his real parentage to him. This concealment is often so very well done that some orphans get to know of their real parents only when they are really old and even then most of them do not believe the stories. Such was the case of a thirty five-year old informant whose mother died half an hour after she had given birth to her. She had been brought up along with her own children by an aunt and it was not until after she was thirty one years old that she had learnt that her real mother had died. "I did not believe it at first," she said "but as my aunt confirmed it later, I found out that perhaps it might be true." It is not always that the adoption and upbringing of orphans are so easily and

perfectly done. Many informants held that it is a most difficult task. "Orphans are extremely difficult to please especially if they were old enough to know their mother before she died," an informant said. Most foster-mothers try to be kind to orphans put under their charge because it is believed that such kindness and devotion to a dead person's children carries special blessing. A few informants however spoke of unkind foster-mothers who were cruel to children. This is specially so if the women themselves have large families of their own.

A man's orphan children are taken care of normally, by the widow if she survives him. His successor or other siblings have duties towards their dead brother's children. His successor is to ensure that the children are well brought up both physically and morally. If he is kind and loved his dead brother well, he does these duties well. Very few men however can play the ideal foster-father to a dead relative's children. The most that some men do is to give a few presents of clothing and food during Christmas. For the rest of the year, the children's mother if she is alive or her relatives have to provide food and clothing for the children. There were extreme instances of people who did nothing whatsoever for a dead relative's children. All informants were unanimous that it was a great shame to be so negligent of one's duty to one's dead relative.

CHAPTER TWO

ANTE-NATAL PERIOD.

From the observations about attitudes towards having children in the previous chapter, it is clear that when a pair get married, the onset of pregnancy is awaited with great anxiety and when it is known beyond doubt that the the wife is expecting a baby, the joy to both husband and wife and their relatives knows no bounds. It appears a first pregnancy is kept as secret as possible by the husband and wife. Mr. N. an informant gave an interesting description of his own experience. "Soon after our marriage, I took Jane to my station. God blessed us for she menstruated only once in my house. She kept her condition a secret even from me until I discovered after some time that she was becoming increasingly warm to the touch. I was quite ignorant about all these things. One morning I dropped in from the office to collect some papers I had left behind. I caught her vomitting in the bedroom. Vomitting was the only sign of pregnancy I had heard of and I asked her if she thought she was going to have a baby. When she gently nodded in the affirmative, I felt like hugging her in my arms. She now meant more to me than she had ever been because we were going to seal our union. A month or two later, I invited my mother to spend a week-end with us. She had this congratulation to make when she saw Jane's condition: "Jto bos no no!" (Literally: One who shoots and never misses the target). I felt happier than a king.

All informants both male and female agreed that the knowledge that a newly married

couple are going to have a baby is a pleasurable experience second in intensity only to the actual sight of the new baby.

Most of the old ladies in Bompata who were also often the traditional local midwives held that they could tell that a girl is pregnant after two weeks of conception. "When a woman becomes pregnant," one said, "the first sign to the trained eye is some shininess in the region of the eyelids." Opinions differed however from one informant to another as to the significant changes in the parts of the body. So while Madam 'A' held that the nipples offer a surer sign another held that the warmth of the body indicated pregnancy. It was clear that six or eight weeks is a period after which pregnancy can best be detected. To the expectant mother herself, the first sign is the cessation of periods. Five informants said that they continued to see varying amounts of menstrual flow every month for the first three or four months of conception. Such a condition is of course looked upon with alarm and the herbalist is consulted as early as possible to arrest the position from going from bad to worse.

All informants agreed that certain typical changes in body and in the mind are attached to pregnancy. After about two months of conception, the expectant mother's breasts begin to enlarge and the nipples become dark and very sensitive to the touch. At three months, most people even men are able to recognise a pregnant woman in Bompata. It is said that she begins to look paler than usual, and the warmth of her body increases. Among some women, morning sickness, drowsiness, vomiting are

some of the typical signs.

After four months, it is said the abdomen begins to enlarge and the fact of the pregnancy becomes unmistakable. Most informants confessed extreme irritability from the third to the ninth month of pregnancy. This state of the pregnant women is known of by all adults in Bompata. It is called "Nyimsenkoko" (The temper of pregnancy). A great deal of tolerance is made for the rash acts of women in this state. As it is a great offence in native customary law to assault a pregnant woman, most of the male informants were of the opinion that some of the women took undue advantage to be very rude to their husbands. The case of a young male informant whose wife hit him in the face and tore a very important letter he was writing to pieces because he had not attended immediately to her request for money for the market is an extreme one but there is no doubt that other men suffer similar treatment at the pregnant wives' hands.

Medical Attention: As soon as a wife becomes pregnant, it is the husband's duty or if she is unmarried, the 'lovers' to find a herbalist who has the power of identifying evil men and to put the wife under his care. For a fee of about seventeen shillings part of which is paid on the day of the agreement and the rest after the safe delivery of the baby, the herbalist promises to give the pregnant woman medicines and to guard her spirit and that of the unborn baby. It is said that the formal taking over of the pregnant woman is attended with very impressive ceremony and magic. In the presence of both

The pregnant woman and her husband libation of gin or schnapps is poured to propitiate the gods and the ancestral spirits for their help during this difficult period. After this, the pregnant woman is asked to strip the upper part of her body naked down to the waist. After some whispered incantations, the woman's abdomen and breasts are washed with a special potion of leaves mixed with white clay. Further, the herbalist teaches his patient special herbs with which she is to make soup weekly and drink. This type of soup is always made with 7x7 palm nuts and the meat to be used is usually the head of mud fish. It is believed that the flat head of the fish will give the child a flat forehead also, — the Ashanti idea of a beautiful head.

The series of taboos and other observances are then given the pregnant woman by her 'doctor'. The first is that she is never to eat in the public outside her house. It is believed that Ewes, Krobos, Nigerians and some Ashantis have bad juju and when a pregnant woman is seen eating in public, the wellbeing of both herself and her unborn child will be at stake. Secondly, a pregnant woman is not to carry exposed to everybody's view a pawpaw, garden eggs or tomatoes. It is held that when she is seen by a possessor of an evil juju already referred to, the child will suffer from 'Asram' at birth. This term 'asram' is used to describe any departure from health of a child of under eighteen months. An uncle's baby died of what was due to careless treatment of the umbilicus and everybody in the house believed that the child had had 'asram' because as soon as it was born a

Nigerian cocoa broker had come to the house and had seen it being bathed. Other less important taboos to be observed by pregnant women are, the avoidance of extreme physical exertion, especially one that is likely to cause bodily injury. A pregnant woman, it is believed passes any injury she may suffer to her unborn child. Eating from a cooking pot or a soup pot is also forbidden to a pregnant woman, as such a way of taking her meal will encourage the incidence of convulsions amongst his children including the unborn one.

Generally, no particular change in the diet of the pregnant woman is made. It is said that most women develop unusual appetites and crave for unusual types of food and meat during pregnancy. The flesh of rats and mice it is said, become so very appetising to them that the husband will have no peace until he has been able to find her one. Some women too eat clay and other kinds of soil. It is said that when the sun bakes the clay hard and the rain falls on it, the scent becomes unusually nice.

One other particular change in the life of a pregnant woman, I was told, is her increased desire for sexual intercourse. This is specially so during the first six or seven months of the conception. A female informant was emphatic that the most unpleasant thing would be for a woman to be married to a student. "Because" she said, "when he gets you with child he leaves you and goes back to his college for you to endure the 'cold' alone. Most male informants had taken note of this change in their wives during pregnancy.

"They seem to enjoy coitus better at that time than at any other" one said, "and they are a nuisance in their constant demands for it."

There is a general sanction for sexual intercourse during pregnancy. If at the dissolution of a marriage, it is found out that the woman is pregnant, it is the custom for the elders to set aside their decision and allow the woman to share her husband's bed until after parturition after which the divorce may be enforced. Whenever a case of pregnancy before marriage comes before the elders' courts, the most important instruction to the young man after the case has been settled is that he finds a private room, if he had hitherto had none, in which his lover can visit him regularly. If a married man commits adultery and gets his lover with child, it is viewed with a great disfavour if the lawful wife refuses the husband access to the lover in the nights. The relatives of the new lover may even institute action against her in one of the household courts.

This general insistence on the necessity for a pregnant woman being allowed ample time for sexual intercourse is based on the belief that intercourse during early pregnancy has a good effect on the unborn child and the absence of it may bring complications during childbirth. The semen I learnt, helps to complete the formation of the child. The passage of the penis through the vulva, it is also held, enlarges it for the easy passage of the child at birth. Intercourse during the last two months of pregnancy is not considered to be so essential to the well-being of the child. Only a small number of informants

admitted that they indulged in it at that stage. Most male informants said they found the women unattractive enough and to many of the women the act becomes unpleasant and a hardship owing to the enlarged abdomen.

While on the question of sexual intercourse during pregnancy, it is necessary to add that intercourse between a pregnant woman and a man other than the putative father of the unborn baby is a very serious taboo. In the olden days the punishment was by slow torture unto death. Now, an offending man is punished still very severely. Sheep are slaughtered to pacify the gods and the spirits and he is made to pay for their cost; fines ranging between forty and a hundred pounds are sometimes imposed on offenders. The loss of social prestige accompanying such a moral lapse is a deterrent. "Odi apemfo" (literally: 'one who cohabits with pregnant women') is a very strong term of abuse enough to curb any normal man of his passion for a pregnant woman.

So much shame and punishment is attached to this act because it is believed that it can complicate the birth of the child and mean certain death of the mother if she does not confess her guilt. Briefly it is considered as attempted murder by the man.

It is also widely believed that a husband who cohabits with another woman should not come directly from the act and 'sleep' with his pregnant wife without having allowed a day or two to pass. Some informants held that it led to abortions especially if the man's mistress is a witch. It is strange that if the intercourse had been with another lawful wife of

the man, a bath was all that was required of the man before cohabiting with his pregnant wife.

Pregnant women are treated with unusual kindness and sympathy. The usual vulgar words for a pregnant woman is: "Aban" or "Okuroni Yarefo" (Literally: "the government's or the whiteman's invalid"). Perhaps this name originates from the fact that an assault on a pregnant woman has always been dealt with very severely in both the European and Native Courts. Most female informants would have liked at least to avoid some of the heavier household duties, but this privilege is denied them and they carry on their normal duties right up to the period of their confinement. Most of the local midwives held that undue laziness in a pregnant woman will prejudice her chances of safe and easy delivery when the time comes.

It is becoming increasingly fashionable in Bompata for pregnant women in Bompata to seek ante-natal care from the government and private clinics. Only three of the forty women interviewed had never attended any ante-natal clinics during their pregnancies. "I have always depended on herbs and my babies are healthy and easy born. Most of the regular attendants go there merely to find out how many more months they have to go before the baby arrives. Except when the pregnant mother has some fever, all the midwives' drugs are poured away because it is believed that if it is drunk for a long time the foetus becomes so big that delivery becomes difficult and sometimes fatal. Every family knows of one or two common herbs which when pounded along with oil-palm nuts and made

into soup which is drunk as often as possible by the pregnant woman. The usual thing to make the soup with a lot of good fresh fish, mutton or beef. The normal diet of most people in Bompata including pregnant women is not very nourishing. This extra occasional treat to good fish or meat and palm nut soup must be of some considerable value to the health of the pregnant woman.

CHAPTER THREE

BIRTH AND POSTNATAL PERIOD.

At Bompata, it is quite normal for a person to meet a familiar pregnant woman in the street and after the usual greetings ask her, "When are you going to die?" or "Are you still wasting our food, do you not want to die?" "You wait," the pregnant woman would reply unperturbed, "I have about a fortnight more to live." Such conversation takes place only between close acquaintances, and none of the participants has the least wish to see the pregnant woman dead nor does the pregnant woman look forward to actual death. But this sums up the attitude of the women in Bompata towards labour and childbirth. It with an attitude of helpless resignation to the will of 'Nyame' (God) that the whole thing is looked upon. It is a matter of life or death. Clothing of pregnant women is reduced to the barest necessities. No ornaments are worn and I learnt most of them discard the usual beads put round the waist. The girdle used in keeping the lower piece of a woman's cloth in position round the waist is also left out. The omission of the beads and the girdle, it appears

is of some practical value. Their continued use especially during the last three months of the conception is likely to have some bad effect on the foetus. It is not considered usual for one to buy new cloths for one's wife, while she is pregnant. The period after parturition is the correct time for it.

Any active preparation in anticipation of the arrival of the unborn baby is considered to be prejudicial to the child's chances of survival at birth. The best time for thinking of the child's clothing, bedding and other things is after it has actually been born. Witches, I learnt, can bewitch these clothes before the child is born so that as soon as it wears them it dies.

Domestic preparations however, because they are normal and can hardly attract attention, are made long before the day of confinement arrives. All the female members of the compound including the pregnant woman herself, co-operate to make these preparations. Firewood is collected and stacked behind the house. Ripe pepper is dried in readiness for seasoning the confined woman's soup. Some enthusiastic husbands travel long distances to buy smoked meat or fish in readiness for the confinement. Others rely on the local meat supply. As local foodstuffs cannot stand long storage and as they can be easily got no storing of foodstuffs is made.

Most of the male informants admitted that the thought of a wife's labour can be very disturbing and prefer to have as little as possible to do during the process of delivery. If however everything goes well, the men celebrate the occasion in a fitting way by

palowine or gin drinking in the company of friends

Birth-giving is considered so essentially a feminine process that very few men at Bompata know anything at all about the usages observed. The women themselves keep the details as secret as possible. The chief informant, a very well-known local midwife, the first sign of the onset of parturition is the continuous and increased flow of the amniotic fluid. This, she said, is accompanied by sharp pains in the waist and in the lower region of the abdomen. As the time for the delivery approaches, the pains become more smarting and continuous. Meanwhile, a room is prepared for the birth. Formerly, I was told, labour often took place in the household bathroom or in the porch of the house. But a real clean living room is now often set aside for it. The pregnant woman reclines against some relative, preferably her own mother if she is not the midwife at the same time. The woman against whom the pregnant woman supports her strongly in the armpits. There are usually two or three helpers at the place of labour to help the midwife. Some clean rags or in some really good homes a mackintosh are placed under the parturient woman. The real birth of the child, I learnt is accompanied by an unusually strong desire to defecate. In the attempt to do so, the foetus is pushed out. Sometimes when the head comes out of the vagina, the midwife may help to draw the baby out by gently pulling it by the head.

As soon as the child is born, and the placenta has been expelled, but not till then, the midwife ties the umbilical cord in two places and with any sharp instruments she cuts it. If

the baby had hitherto not made its first cry, hot pepper is ground and smeared all over its body to make it cry. Salsans liniment is also used in these days to cause it discomfort and induce crying. If the baby is a normal one, it is bathed very carefully three times over with soap and warm water. This first bath is of great importance to the child's future happiness for it is said that if it is badly done, the child will grow up with an unpleasant odour about him always. The task is performed only by the most trusted and experienced friend or member of the family. After this, the after-birth and the rags are removed and sent out of the village to a dunghill or to any convenient spot and buried. It is believed that if a woman who is desirous of having a baby goes to bury the placenta and squats on it three times, she will conceive immediately afterwards. It appears the belief is based on a few coincidences. After this, if the husband of the mother lives in another house he is officially informed and he comes to see his baby and to congratulate the wife.

If labour is difficult or protracted, the woman is made to undergo all kinds of unusual treatment. The first is for the midwives and the attendants to try to let her confess any marital infidelity or disrespect to her husband or to any of his relatives. Even a thought in the mind is believed to be able to delay the arrival of the baby, if the thought is against the child's father. Thus Madam Abena's labour was difficult and protracted because during her pregnancy she had planned to divorce her husband for his inability to support her reasonably well. If a woman

admits having offended the husband in any of the ways described, the husband is brought into the place of labour and she is advised to ask his forgiveness on his knees. This forgiveness is often given quite readily and the husband then proceeds to talk to the child in the womb not to linger any longer but to come immediately to enjoy the pleasures of the world. Most of my male and a few of the female informants upheld the efficacy of this simple ceremony. Other men however did not attach any importance to confessions made under pain and preferred to take their pregnant wives to the hospital to deliver, in order to avoid scandals.

Apart from this purely superstitious method of aiding the mother to have an easy labour, there are scores of herbs, massages and potions known to be able to relieve pains and to procure an easy labour. All the herbalists' antenatal prescriptions of herbs to be taken in palmnut soup are of this class — to make the birth easy for the pregnant woman. All informants subscribed to the view that these antenatal prescriptions and other herbs used during the course of the labour are very effective. Another type of medicine most commonly used ~~to~~ to aid birth is a mixture of some herbs, ginger, hot pepper and guinea grains. These are ground together into a mass and put into the parturient mother's anus. It is said this gives her a strong ~~to~~ urge to defecate and in the strain, the delaying foetus is ejected. If at a birth, it becomes necessary to summon a professional herbalist, he is always ready to help.

Most of the herbalist's preparations are

are given with the added importance of a purely magical rite. The most common rite known of by all informants is the "menom mema wo" medicine (Literally: I drink it for you). After the herbalist has prepared the potion he goes to stand at the back of the room in which the birth is taking place. After calling the woman in labour by her name three times he informs her that he is drinking the mixture for her. The herbalist leans against the wall and takes the mixture. It is said that this medicine too always proves very effective.

Different presentations of the child's body during birth are considered to be evil omens. It is held that every normal child presents the head first to enable the attending midwife to help the mother by pulling the child out. A child who presents a limb or the buttocks first is illomened. It is believed that such a child may have been sent by some angry spirit from the 'asaman' (the underworld of departed spirits) to bring the mother, i.e. to kill her.

Another unusual thing at childbirth which causes much concern is the delay of the placenta. It is said many more deaths occur in childbirth as a result of such a delay than as a result of all other possible complications put together. There are therefore many usages and practices amongst all women in Bompata which help the early expulsion of the placenta. A massage with shea butter and some herbs of the lower abdomen is one method. Preparations of herbs steeped in water and drunk by the woman are also well-known. A less important treatment is to give the parturient woman something to blow hard into in order to force out the after birth. Perhaps the

dangerous and in any case the least effective is the treatment in which the midwife puts her bare hands into the birth canal and tries to pull the placenta out. An informant who had suffered a similar fate about seven years ago related the agonies of the treatment. "If I had not been rushed to the hospital at Kumasi, I should have surely died," she concluded. Nowadays such complications in childbirth are rushed to the hospital at Agogo or Kumasi.

Most of my old informants, who have been local midwives in Bompata over long periods of years held that difficult labours are decreasing and the time when it could take a woman three days giving birth to one child is gone forever. They all agreed that this change for the better is due to better examination of the pregnant women in the clinics and the local herbs which are now more generally known and not the property of the herbalist alone.

At a birth all female informants preferred to be attended by their mothers and one or two trusted friends of the family including the midwife if the mother is not herself one. Husbands and their relatives were not desired to be present at a wife's labour at all. In a protracted labour however, most women set aside all the conventions of who should or should not be present. All resources in medical knowledge are pooled to overcome the emergency and friends, mothers-in-law may be freely admitted into the place of labour. Since the exclusion of a relative or friend from the scene of an emergency in Bompata is tantamount to a charge

of witchcraft a crowd usually collects in the room to the discomfort of both the patient and the real attendants.

As soon as a woman safely delivers her baby, she is given mashed plantain mixed with palm oil to eat. It is said that an acute feeling of hunger follows childbirth and if the mother is not immediately fed she may collapse and die. After the meal she is gently led out to the bathroom for a thorough bath. A bed is then made for the mother and the baby and they enjoy a restful sleep together, the child lying very close to the mother. Meanwhile, and in any case as soon as possible after the birth a herbalist or a juju man is found and brought in. He makes small cuts on all the joints of the child including the forehead. A larger cut is made on the left cheek. Black powdered medicine mixed with a little gin is smeared into the cuts. The mother and the baby may be given some of the medicine to drink. It is believed that this medicine protects the child from 'asram', convulsions and other childhood diseases during the first few months of life. At this time both the child and the mother are kept in seclusion and allowed to be seen only by the usual attendants and some trusted relatives.

Activity in the home where a new baby has been born is always brisk. The mother is fed regularly thrice a day and instead of the usual carelessly prepared soup eaten daily, she is given palm-nut soup mixed with herbs and containing a lot of fresh or smoked meat. It is believed that the palm-nut soup helps quick lactation. The older children in the house enjoy this period of confinement very much for they always get plenty to eat. Friends and relatives come to see

the mother and her new baby. Nearly every brings a present of foodstuffs, firewood, oil-palm nuts or edible herbs. The men usually make monetary gifts.

The care of the confined mother's genitals receive much attention. It is said that if any inflammation in it during the birth is not well attended to, the mother will fall ill and perhaps die. Douching with warm water in which some herbs have been boiled, and the massaging of the genitals with some hot ground preparations are, I was told, the most widely known treatments. Every woman however over-sensitive she may be to pain would gladly consent to be well-nursed in this way for it is also believed that if that is not well-done the genitals never return to their normal shape. Many husbands divorce their wives because of bad nursing after birth.

Outdooing and naming the child: A week (i.e. eight days)

after the birth of a child is the day of its ~~outdooing~~^{out-dooing} and naming. This is usually a purely private affair, to which only the closest relatives and friends of the family are invited. On the morning of the eighth day, the child is taken out of the bedroom and placed on a bed prepared in the yard for it. Meanwhile, it is thickly smeared with melted shea butter. Some of this shea butter is mixed with soot from the bottom of a cooking pot to make a black greasy stuff. The child's hair and eye-brows are dyed black. A large basket is put over it and it basks in the little rays of sunlight that reach it through the holes in the basket. After about half an hour, the baby is taken out of the sun for the actual naming ceremony to begin.

The father of the new-born baby sends presents to his wife and the baby. These are packed in a

large pan and carried by one of his female relatives to the wife's compound if the couple do not live together. If the wife lives in the same house as the husband, the ceremony of bringing in the presents may start in a friend's house. A bottle of schnapps or gin is brought along with the gifts. The real person whose duty it is to perform the naming ceremony is the husband's father or any of his male or female siblings. But in these days most fathers do not strictly observe the custom. In any case, a spokesman is always found for such occasions. He begins by pouring a libation to the gods and the ancestral spirits, asking for their guidance and prosperity for the child that is going to be named. "Your father," he addresses the child, "has decided to name you 'X', after his own father (or any other relative as the case may be); be like him, when you grow up, brave, industrious, kind and wise. With these articles, your father is removing you and your mother from the confinement." He then proceeds to mention in detail all the articles that were brought as presents to the mother and child. In these days the value and range of articles vary greatly but the basic necessities ~~of necessity~~ are: a bath towel, a bath sponge, soap, a tin of powder, two yards of wax-block print^{cloth}, many fancy print gowns or frocks, a teacup (for the child's drinking water) a teaspoon (to serve it the water with), a straw mat, a blanket, a small bucket. In addition to these, most fathers add a small gold ring and an amount ranging from seven shillings to thirteen shillings as "naming" money. The presents for the mother are usually articles of clothing or a sum of money given for their purchase. If the mother is only ~~love~~ of

The man's mistress,

~~the bride~~ a sum of money for her boarding expenses for a period of time is also added to the presents.

The ceremony ends with the pouring of more libations and the drinking of more intoxicating ~~liquor~~ ^{liquor}. Similar rites are observed for the naming of both boys and girls. In the libations poured on behalf of female children, the requests to the gods are for abundant fertility, a long life and humbleness in marriage.

After the outdooing and naming, the child and the mother spend much of their day out in the yard of the house. Beads are stringed and some put round the neck, the waist, the wrists, and the below the knees of the child irrespective of its sex. The child begins to wear some kind of regular clothing. The practice of waiting until the father has brought the customary presents before the child wears any clothes is dying out and most children begin to wear clothes as soon as they are born. Female children have holes made in the lobes of their ears at this time to enable them to wear ear-rings. In homes where circumcision is becoming fashionable, the operation is done on the same eighth day. Muslims shave their babies' heads of all hair and begin to let them wear protective charms.

One custom calculated to enhance the well-being of a child in Bompata is the 'Abamo' custom. The 'abamo' is really the guardian fetish of the child. All twins and the ninth and tenth child in a family are expected to possess this fetish which, it is believed, protects them from harm. The making of the fetish is the exclusive right of a few old women who hand the art down

to their children. It is said it consists of a piece of navy-blue cotton yarn, some few beads, an egg, a piece of fresh yam and some herbs. All these are put in a calabash and after sacrificing a chicken to it, the abamo is kept either in a corner of the house or in the buttress of a tree on the farm. This is worshipped on behalf of the child by its parents until it attains the age of about fifteen when it is no longer considered important to the child's wellbeing. Every forty days, I learnt, a chicken is sacrificed to it. At the yam harvesting season it is a taboo for any child who possesses the 'abamo' to eat yams without having placed a piece of the new yams on the fetish. Any breaking of the taboo, it is believed may cause ^{the} blindness of the child. Rats and squirrels are forbidden to be eaten by a child with an 'abamo' or his parents. This taboo is broken is believed to have similar results.

Most parents of children who should normally have had to possess 'abamo' do not make the fetishes. The few who practice the cult have shorn it of its expensive aspects. Two or three chickens to be sacrificed every forty days has no doubt proved ^{an} expensive ^{item} in child-training.

The period of confinement for the new mother (i.e. the period when she is relieved of her normal household duties after the birth of her baby) depends on the woman's family and her conduct in it. The number of children she has born also determines the attention she requires. A woman of a large maternal family who is kind and sympathetic to her relatives will receive ready and good service from them for long enough to

enable her to recover fully from the fatigues of child-birth. Mothers receive more and longer attention from their relatives when they have the first, second and third babies than they do at other subsequent births. It is considered that in the early births she is not experienced enough to look safely after herself after a short time. Three experiences of confinement are considered enough to make the mother used to certain usages of early post-natal care. A woman receives equally long period of attention at the birth of say the ninth or tenth child. This is so because she may have her own adult daughters to serve her. The number of presents from the husband to his wife and new-born child also diminish as the family grows larger. An informant, the mother of eight children told me that since she had her fourth child she has never received any confinement presents for any of the last four children. She is always told to make do with some of the old materials used by the older siblings.



The baby's bath is of much importance to her well-being and Akua receives her morning bath half asleep.

CHAPTER FOUR.

EARLY TRAINING.

Bathing: At Bompata, the first and most important duty of a parent towards a newly-born baby is to keep it clean by bathing it well and regularly. The importance of the baby's first bath after its birth has been fully discussed in a previous chapter. So important is the baby's toilet in the first few months of its life that only the most experienced and trusted women in the family are allowed to have anything to do with it. The midwife who delivered the child, a paternal or maternal grandmother of the child is often entrusted with the task and very often she does her best in the discharge of that all-important duty.

Babies under six months are bathed twice daily. The first bath is at about 8 am. and the evening one at any time between 4 and 6 pm. Late baths for a baby, I learnt affect the child's development and may be the cause of scabies. Every baby under nine months has its own toilet requisites including a bath sponge, a bucket, a towel, a comb and soap. None of the older members of the family are allowed under any circumstances to use these articles. It is held that the use of a child's toilet equipment by an older person retards the child's normal development. The rule is observed in all homes and if by any mistake a sponge or towel is used by an older person, it will be replaced immediately.

The baby's bath follows a certain routine in all homes and it is strictly followed. After warming the baby's bath water, it is poured into its own bucket. The woman in charge of the baby's bath takes

out a large enamel pan or wooden bowl. In this is collected the baby's bath water, for it is strongly believed that if the water is allowed to flow on the ground, and certain juju men step into it, the baby may get pneumonia or chest pains. The woman in charge of the baby's bath sits on a low stool and undresses the baby. She stretches her legs over the enamel basin keeping the legs together. The child is laid on the legs with the head pointing towards the body of the woman. The head is washed first with soap and water and then dried. The face is rubbed with a moist towel. The body and the limbs are then washed as vigorously as the child can bear. The body is then rinsed and dried. Hot fermentations are then applied to the child's head to try to give the head a nice shape - a flat forehead - the Ashanti idea of a beautiful head. This is done ^{also} to help the head bones to join up more quickly at the top. The elbows receive similar fermentations in order to give suppleness to the joints. This suppleness of the elbow joint, I learnt is of more importance to the girls; a rigid elbow affects a woman's gracefulness. After this, the towel is soaked again with warmer water and the water is carefully dropped into the genitals to heal any inflammations that may be there. Girls receive much more attention about their genitals than boys. Only a few informants pull back the foreskin of the male baby's penis and wash the glans. This is known to check inflammation and remove genital discomfort. Circumcision is becoming increasingly fashionable and if the male child is circumcised very early, bath time is the time for dressing the wound. This is done by the local surgeon who

performed the operation. Most women considered the dressing of the wound very embarrassing.

The umbilicus is also dressed at bath time, during the first few weeks of the baby's life. A clean stone is put into the fire until it is quite hot. The leaves of a special plant, "Nunum" are squeezed in the palms of the hands and pressed on the hot stone. The umbilicus is then dressed by being pressed gently here and there with the steaming leaves. A little palm or palm kernel oil mixed with fresh pepper juice is dropped into the wound. This method of dressing the umbilicus though held to be very effective is gradually giving way to more modern methods prescribed by European trained midwives. The Maternity Clinics now give mothers certain powders which they use as dressing for the umbilicus. The last item of the baby's toilet is the smearing of the body with white clay made moist with water. This, I learnt, makes the babies grow fat very quickly. After all this has been gone through, the baby is dressed and suckled into sleep.

As most children grow older in Bompata, the care and attention given to its bath are relaxed. Most children above nine months have only one bath a day preferably in the evenings to enable the child to sleep soundly in the night. A first child receives longer care and attention than the subsequent babies. The larger the family grows the less attention is given to the baths of the children. Men in Bompata take very little part in bathing their children even though such a practice would have helped the women to keep the children cleaner than they often are. When one decides to help his wife by bathing the older children, one is praised by neighbours for being fatherly but it is clear that the task is looked



These children are enjoying a cold bath on a hot afternoon, all by themselves.

upon as unduly effeminate.

Very often, a younger child of a large family is bathed by his older siblings, but mothers are expected to bathe their children in order to ensure that the task is well done to avoid scabies and yaws. It is now a shame to many parents to allow their children to get these skin diseases. As in other activities of life, children love to imitate and it is a common sight in Bompata on hot days to see children playing at bathing themselves and their dolls outside the compounds. Nearly all mothers look with approval on these healthy games.

Breast Feeding: The time after parturition when mothers begin to breastfeed their babies varies from one woman to another. From a sample of forty women interviewed, seventeen could suckle their babies on the day after the birth. Fifteen could do so after three days and the rest after four days.

There was one extreme case of a woman whose rate of lactation is so slow and inadequate that all her six children have had to be fed artificially for about ten days before she could suckle them herself. The breastmilk had to be supplemented artificially all the time until the child was weaned.

During the period of waiting for the breasts to be full of milk, several kinds of substitute feeds are given the baby. Some mothers give plain water with a bit of sugar dissolved in it. The water from the coconut is also given by people who can afford it. Fresh unfermented palmwine is said to be a good substitute too. Its continued use for a long time, I learnt, causes diarrhoea. The most widely used substitute now is condensed milk diluted with a little water.



This young mother is happy that she can
suckle her own baby and in the right
way too.

Many herbs are known which when used in making palmnut soup for the confined woman help to quicken lactation. Fried groundnuts, and all kinds of vegetable oil are known to help to increase the supply of breast-milk when eaten by the mother. Melted shea butter is also smeared on the breasts to soften the skin and to aid the supply of milk. The fullness of the breasts with milk, I was told, is accompanied by pains in them. As soon as the mother observes this sign, she begins to breastfeed her child. The procedure of the first feed and of subsequent ones is much the same. The woman sits on a low stool and puts the baby in her arms supporting the head on her right or left forearm according to the breast she is going to give to the baby. The mother puts the nipple of the breast in her own mouth to moisten it for the baby. Then it is given to the baby who begins to suckle.

All mothers at Bompata are proud to be able to suckle their babies themselves and it is clear that they overdo it. Feeding bottles are not known by many. It is considered unfortunate if a woman has to feed her child artificially before weaning. A baby is not tied down to any time table for feeding; it is fed every time it cries. Whenever a baby begins to cry, the mother's first re-action is to put the breast into his mouth. It is only when the baby refuses it persistently, that other causes of the cry are investigated. Lessons on child-welfare and feeding times learnt at school by most literate young mothers are easily forgotten. Keeping a child crying without feeding him because it is not the feeding time

is considered inhuman. Children are fed in all sorts of positions when the mothers resume their normal household duties after delivery. It is common to see a mother sweating under a heavy load carrying her baby in her armpit and suckling him.

The period of time that is allowed to pass after confinement of a woman before marital intercourse is resumed appears to vary greatly from family to family. It is a common saying that when a child is able to smile at people playing with it, that is an indication that the parents have resumed sexual intercourse after its birth. This stage of emotional development of the child is reached after the third month. The connection between a child's ability to smile and the resumption of marital intercourse is perhaps, far-fetched, but that is an indication of the generally accepted minimum time after parturition when people should resume sexual intimacies. All informants held that there was nothing detrimental to the health of the mother nor to the baby's for intercourse to be resumed during nursing. A few male informants especially the polygamous husbands held that they resumed marital intercourse with their wives only after their children have been weaned. This arrangement, I learnt is resented by many of the women and has been the cause of many family feuds. Though there is no taboo against it, intercourse with a confined woman before the end of the eighth week is considered unhealthy for the mother as it may cause genital disorders and serious illness.

Weaning: At Bompata, women decide to wean their babies on three grounds. Most women do it when

a new baby after the first one. Children are weaned when the mothers are convinced that they have enough teeth to enable it to eat solid food. There is the third reason of inadequacy of breastmilk brings about weaning. From these reasons, it may be seen that there is no generally accepted time after which children are to be weaned. The only reason which precipitates the weaning is the expectation of a second baby. It is held that a child who suckles from the breast of a pregnant mother gets a disease called 'Asono' (Literally: 'The Elephant') It is characterised by paleness of the skin and the swelling of the stomach and the limbs of the baby. The disease is akin to nephritis and proves often very fatal. It is believed that the heat of the pregnant woman causes this disease in the child if she still continues to suckle him. It appears malnutrition is the cause of the disease. Women who have not conceived after a first child are generally in no hurry to wean their babies and it is common to see babies aged twenty months still suckling in addition to solid food they take regularly. The last child of a family is usually oversuckled in this way. Amongst more enlightened educated mothers, weaning takes place earlier often beginning ^{after} the first year. The change over from breast ^{feeding} to solid food is done gradually. Maize porridge provides the link from breast-milk to solid food.

When a mother decides to wean her baby, she sets about it gradually. It is said that sudden weaning upsets the child's health and may cause illness. It is also said that the breasts when sudd stopped from discharging the milk can become painful to the mother. The times of breast-feeding are reduced to

about twice a day. Whenever the baby reaches for the breasts, it is told that the milk in it is bad and is given some solid food to eat. This the child may refuse at first, but if the mother persists, the baby gets used to the new routine and gradually breast-feeding is stopped without further trouble. The majority of children however are not so co-operative. In such cases, whenever the child reaches for the breasts, he is frightened with bogey men, wild animals, policemen or ghosts who would take him away if he touches the breasts. If this does not succeed, in deterring the baby from suckling, the bitter juice from some special herbs is smeared on the nipples. Liquid quinine is now often used in the same way. When the child tastes the bitter nipples, he may cry a lot and any time he attempts to suckle, he is carefully reminded of the bitter taste and is given some solid food such as a piece of boiled yam or plantain to eat. In due course, the process of weaning is completed. If a child still persists to suckle, he is treated more severely. The leaves of wild tobacco are squeezed between the palms of the hands and the juice from them is dropped into his nostrils. It is said that this treatment creates in the child a nausea against breast-milk. This last treatment is fast losing popularity especially among the educated and more enlightened mothers. More attractive feeds containing sugar, milk or honey are making the process of weaning less difficult than it used to be.

Some of my informants held that weaning had the following effects on a child, temporary loss of weight or sometimes illness and increased thumbsucking. Most mothers try to prevent the loss of weight by preparing food for the child so that

it can be fed any time it asks for food. It is common to see newly-weaned children eating something on waking up late in the night. Thumbsucking is considered the more grave of the two effects of weaning on the child. In fact, it is considered a taboo. No parent appeared to know exactly why it is a taboo. "It is not done," a mother said. It is considered a bad habit and scolding and spanking are resorted to, to break the habit in the baby.

Solid food: Long before a child is weaned, most mothers begin to introduce solid food into their babies' diet. A piece of yam, kenkey or plantain is given to the child to nibble at. This practice is begun when the child is only about six months old. Very often bits of the food are swallowed whole and it causes much intestinal discomfort and illness. But it is a taboo to forbid a child eating solid food especially if he picks it from the ground himself. It is believed that if you take away food picked from the ground by a crawling baby, he will die because the soul, conscious that the parents want to starve him would leave the world. As most compounds are full of dirt and filth, the amount of unwholesome food and dirt eaten by crawling children is considerable. Diarrhoea, and worm ^{diseases} are common ailments of nearly all children in Bompata, and many children die annually from ^{them} ~~it~~. This attitude to the crawling child picking up and eating pieces of food uninterrupted is encouraged by the local juju men who would often explain any illness of a baby-patient sent to them as ~~the~~ ^{due to} ~~the~~ ^{cause} of the repression ^{by parents} of the child's desire to eat. ~~by the~~ parents. There were many mothers, some of them trained at school, who still held this unhealthy view that the child should be allowed to eat even



A meal of 'ampesie' is shared by these siblings.

ordinary soil.

As soon as a child is completely weaned and placed on solid food, it is fed by the mother by hand. Some mothers prechew the food before giving it to the child. To many others, this is a dirty habit and a sure way of spreading toothache. Porridge and other liquid foods are served to the child with the family spoon, which is usually one for the whole household and used by all members of the family.

When a child is healthy and eats heartily, it is a joy to the mother. Loss of appetite whether temporary or permanent is a cause of much anxiety. The child is coaxed to eat and is promised all sorts of pleasant things if he takes a morsel more. Meat and fish are favourite delicacies for children and they are promised bits of it if they ^{would} eat well. A well-known mother kept all the meat somewhere and gave some to her unwilling child only after he had eaten what the mother thought was a good quantity of the meal. In a few homes, I saw mothers feeding their young babies by force. Porridge was poured into the child's mouth. The nose was held tightly and while gasping for breath, the poor child involuntarily swallowed the food. This cruel practice, I learnt was common some time ago. It is said that at present only Northern Territories mothers still use it as a means of feeding a child. Other native women resort to the method only when they are giving a dose of medicine to an unwilling baby.

As soon as a child is old enough to feed himself, he takes his meals from a communal dish with siblings of the same age group. Children, I learnt, eat more heartily in company of other

children. In most homes, if a child does not eat well the food given to his group, he may have to go hungry for some time and this is a great incentive. Some mothers however reserve food for their children if they find out that the children have not eaten as heartily as is desirable. In a few homes, children eat from individual dishes but the communal meal is the general rule.

Table Manners: Perhaps this sub-heading had better been entitled "eating manners" because no children in Bompata eat from tables. An only child may be seen dining with the father from a low table at a very early age, but as soon as another child joins the meal, the children eat from their own dish placed on the ground for them. Before the beginning of any meal in which the child will take part, he is asked to wash the right hand which is the hand for eating or holding food. It is considered very bad manners and a taboo to eat with the left hand and such a tendency is very seriously discouraged.

In good homes children always take their meals near the parents so that their manners at meals can be supervised and desirable practices and attitudes inculcated. The first and most important observance at table is that no talking must go on during meals. The proverb is: "Obi mfa adidie ne kasa" (Literally "one does not eat and talk at the same time") Talking while swallowing may make ^{bits of} the food enter the wind pipe and cause coughing. The second most important rule is to take as much food only as can be comfortably held in the mouth at a time. When chewing food, the lips

are to be kept tightly together to prevent bits of food from falling out of the mouth. When eating, a child is encouraged to allow some time between ^{to} taking a morsel from the dish and the next one. It is a sign of greed and selfishness to keep your hand almost always in the dish. The warning words are: "Twen wo nsa" (Literally: "Wait a bit with your hand") When eating 'fufu' it is bad manners to get one's whole hand besmeared with the soup. Only the tips of the fingers to about the third knuckle are to touch the soup.

If meat is served with the meal, the oldest child takes his share first, then the other diners take theirs in descending order of seniority. It is considered very selfish and bad manners to take more than is one's fair share. In all homes in Bompata, the quantity of meat consumed is inadequate and the children's share is even more so. Meat being such a rare treat, the temptation to take the lion's share ~~is~~ is great and many children are noted for their selfishness in sharing the meat. It is believed that if one takes a meal of fufu and one does not eat even a little bit of meat along with it, one will become deaf. Most mothers therefore share out the little meat available to the children among them before the food is given out. This ensures fairness to all the children and safeguards deafness.

Where children eat from a communal dish, it is the youngest child's duty to wash the dish at the end of the meal and to take it to the kitchen. Any child who shirks this duty is severely reprimanded by his parents. Very few of

a child's daily activities in Bompata are calculated to show more clearly the quality and thoroughness of a child's good breeding than his eating habits and manners. Parents therefore spare no effort to train their children in the right ways of eating.

At the age of about ten, the male child stops taking meals with his co-evals and joins his father at table. Girls dine with their mothers at an earlier age. All that was learnt in childhood is more strictly observed. The proverb is: "Atwadaa hunu ne nsa hohoro a, one mpanyin didi" (Literally: 'When a child has learnt how to wash his hands, he dines with his elders). This implies that when the child has mastered his table manners, he may dine with his elders. Much better and accurate behaviour at meals ~~is~~^{is} expected of the older child than the younger. After meals, he has to wash his father's dish (which is also the dish from which the child dines with his father) and to keep the table clean. Many boys consider it a strain to dine with their fathers. The strict observance of table manners under the father's supervision, I learnt from many boys, takes the pleasure out of the meal. Many fathers therefore dine with their children when they are much older say about eighteen or nineteen. Among the fathers of the older generations where communal meals was the order ~~of~~ during their youth, their children are compelled to dine with the elders of the family.

Elimination: All mothers in Bompata realise the importance of regular elimination in the maintenance of the health of children. The child's first elimination of faeces is called 'the soul's faeces' It is

to be
said, light and whitish in colour and it is watery. As soon as the child begins to be fed, it is expected to defecate at least once a day. The actual number of times of defecation may exceed this number without causing much alarm. Inability to defecate however, causes much concern and there are many ways of helping him to get normal bowel motions. The bark of some trees are known to be able to act as laxatives. A piece of it is put in the baby's drinking water and this when drunk is said to be able to stimulate the bowels. The bone of a chimpanzee is sometimes put into the bath-water of the child. It is believed that when the baby is bathed with the water, he becomes as strong as the chimpanzee and also free from constant constipation. When constipation appears to be unamenable to treatment by any of these traditional methods, simple enemas of soap and warm water or of some well known herbs are given to make the bowels free.

A little infant is not expected to conform to any standards with regard to defecation and bladder elimination. He may urinate or defecate in bed without causing any concern. The mother merely wipes the buttocks and changes the bedding. A few informants said that they had observed their children well enough to find out that children show marked signs of discomfort when they want to urinate or defecate. Such mothers take the children up and hold them over chamber pots. This early training they said, made the children clean in later years. Bedwetting in the children of the informants referred to, I learnt, is very rare. But it appears the number of such observant mothers is very small.



This child is made to sit on a chamber pot
every time she wants to defecate.

in Bompata.

At the age of about twelve months, most healthy children are expected to be able to express the wish to defecate or to urinate. The child may then be put on a chamber pot. Some mothers however improvise a chamber pot with their feet. She sits on a low stool and puts the soles of her two feet together. The child is then put on the hollow made by the hollows of the two feet. The child defecates on to the ground sitting on this improvised chamber pot. The anus is carefully wiped with a soft rag and the faeces swept away with a hard broom.

After his second birthday, the child of a good home is shown a special corner in the house where he can put the chamber-pot with a little water in it and ease himself when the need arises. Most children observed during this investigation had learnt to cover the chamber pot until the contents are removed. In many other homes, the children have a corner for eliminating faeces but they ease themselves on to the ground. Some tidy mothers see to it that the faeces is swept regularly but this unhealthy practice has often been the cause of court actions taken by the village sanitary overseer against lazy mothers. No privacy is given to the act of defecation in children until they are about five years old when they are expected to go to the public latrine or to the village dunghill. One important training given to all children is to wipe the anus after every bowel motion, and that ^{is done} strictly with the left hand. Other children will refuse to eat with a child who in any way uses his right hand in wiping the anus. As children wash their hands only

carelessly before meals there is no doubt that this taboo has its practical value.

Most well-trained children, I learnt, stop bed-wetting at the age of about two. Allowance is made for bed-wetting until after the third year. Enuresis in a child of four causes the parents much anxiety and embarrassment. The general attitude towards bed-wetting is that it is due to laziness of the child. Bed-wetters are therefore scolded and subjected to humiliation and ridicule in the hope that it would urge them to make an effort to stop the habit. The enuretic child is the unhappiest child in every household. He is given the worst mat to sleep on and the treatment meted out to him even by his own parents is often unduly severe. It is correct to say that the fear of ill-treatment alone is enough to encourage bed-wetting instead of stopping it in many children. A child, Afua, aged six was a regular betwetter. No amount of scolding had been able to cure her of her trouble and the parents had decided to adopt an old traditional method held to be able to cure betwetting. It was very early in the morning and the weather was comparatively cold. The child's mat had been taken out. It was quite wet and torn in several places. Evidently, the child had been thrashed or severely scolded by the parents for she was sobbing. But the worst part of the treatment was yet to come. She was stripped naked and the leaves of a very irritating plant bound all over her body. Her wet mat was wrapped round her and cold water was poured on her. With teeth chattering, she stood under a tree. All the children in the neighbourhood had collected round her

and in the characteristic lack of sympathy, common to children, they were singing and teasing her. "Dwons, krobo, resi ne kete anadwo" (Literally: 'Enuretic one, she washes her mat in the night'). The poor girl wailed very pathetically and rightly, too, for the slightest touch of the leaves that had been bound all over her body could make one quite uncomfortable. It induces scratching. This, I learnt, is the traditional method of curing children of bedwetting and its efficacy was upheld by nearly all informants on the subject. I am not sure if I can subject my own daughter to such harsh treatment even for lying.

Some informants alleged that they knew special herbs which when boiled and the water was drunk could stop bed-wetting. One man said he possessed some black magic powder which when rubbed into small cuts made in the pubic zone of a bed-wetter could stop the habit. There is no doubt that bed-wetting is a source of much anxiety and embarrassment to many parents, but a real scientific approach to the problem is unknown in Bompata and the emotional disturbances in a child who has undergone the crude methods of treatment tend to fix the habit rather than cure it.

Other forms of elimination are of little importance in the life of the average Bompata child. Belching, through the mouth, is considered a mark of satisfaction with food and no importance is attached to it. In some good homes however, uncontrolled belching in the public especially in the presence of adults is frowned upon. "Why do you belch like a heathen?" a schoolmistress mother asked her five-year old son. The

heathens (the non-christians), by the way are considered uncultured by many christian parents, especially those who have had some education at school. Wind breaking is also considered a mark of health and the louder the noise the child can make the more fun he creates among his friends and the adults. In a child under twelve years, this kind of elimination is normal and is a source of vulgar humour. In an older child or an adult, it is very shameful to break the wind whether noisily or silently - in public. An old informant spoke of a friend of his who committed suicide many years ago because he had broken the wind in the presence of his mother-in-law. If however, after a child has broken the wind, there is a very pungent smell, it is held by mothers that the bowels are dirty. He is given an enema of ground herbs, strained and mixed with the juice of pepper or any other hot ingredient to remove the dirt from the large intestines.

The routine of elimination especially of bowel motions is one that receives the most careful observation and attention from most mothers. "All diseases originate from a dirty stomach", mothers often say. A child who has had no bowel motion for a whole day is a sick child. Several treatments are resorted to, to make the bowels free always. The most widely known is the enema. In most homes, there is always a potion of boiled herbs known to be mild laxatives. The mother makes sure that every child drinks a cupful of this potion every morning before partaking of the first meal of the day.

In all homes where this routine treatment is usually followed, the incidence of serious illness is said to be very rare. Careless mothers often learn this lesson in child training at the cost of sometimes, the life of a child or two, I was told.

CHAPTER FIVE.

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT.

Clothing: When a child is born at Bompata, by the very nature of the climate, he requires very little clothing. During the first few weeks of life when the umbilical wound will not have healed, the baby is covered with only a piece of cloth. No frocks or gowns are worn at this time. At the end of the second week, the girls wear little frocks of fancy cotton prints. The boys wear gowns made of similar material. When the baby is sleeping, he is covered with the usual piece of cloth in addition to the gown or frock to provide extra warmth in the night.

No napkins are worn by babies. Instead of napkins, a string of light beads is put round the baby's waist. A piece of soft cloth, for instance an old silk headkerchief is tucked into the stringed beads in front immediately above the pubic zone. This is passed between the legs and the other end tucked into the beads at the back directly on the coccyx bone. This prevents the soiling of bed-clothes during bowel motions. It provides a covering for



The correct way to carry a three month old baby.
If she were below six weeks of age, her hands
should have been inside the cloth.

the genital organs also. It is held that if the genitals of a girl are not covered in this way always, air may enter the cavity. This causes inflammation in the vagina, I was told. This simple underwear remains an important part of the females' dressing all through life. At the end of the ninth month, boys are not made to wear this underclothing again.

The dress of the baby being so simple, there is plenty of freedom of movement of the limbs in healthy exercise. At the end of the first or second week of life the ears of the female baby are pierced with a sharp needle in the lobes. When the wounds heal, she begins to wear light ear-rings which remain the only pieces of ornament she can wear until she is able to walk about.

Carrying of children: A newly-born baby is carried about as little as possible during the first few weeks of life. If, however, for any reason, such as when he is going to have a bath or going to be fed, he has to be picked, it was observed that both hands are held together and he is lifted up by the hands, the mother supporting the head and the rest of the body with the free hand. It is believed that if a child is picked up by holding one arm only, an inflammation of the ear-drum occurs with consequent discharge of pus. It appears apart from the discomfort to the baby of placing the weight of the whole body on one tender shoulder, this belief is groundless. Not a single informant could cite any reliable instance of such an inflammation having followed such picking of the baby.

Very few fathers have anything to do with their babies in the first few weeks of his life. Most informants confessed that they dislike the sight of the poor, weak, helpless infant. A few fathers however do carry their babies about even before the end of the first month after birth. Fathers are so interested in their babies when they happen to be the first they have ever had. The child is picked up by the father in the way described above. He carefully puts the baby on one of the shoulders, the baby's chin resting on the top of the particular shoulder blade. The head is carefully supported and kept in place with one hand while the other arm supports the body at the baby's buttocks. In this way the baby is often taken out into the open for fresh air.

As soon as the mother begins to resume her normal household duties, the baby is carried about a great deal and this time always on the mother's back. No regular nurses are employed to look after babies in Bompata. The child is put on the mother's back with legs astride. He is kept in place by a piece of cloth passed round the middle of the mother and supporting the baby's head at the nape. The two ends of the cloth are ingeniously twisted together to form a knot in front on the mother's chest immediately above the breasts. If the baby is ^{under} three months, the hands are tucked into this 'bag' in which he rides at his mother's back. This position appears to offer much comfort to the baby perhaps because of the feeling of nearness to the mother and the extra warmth which he receives from her body. It is common to see babies sleeping snugly at the mother's back while

she goes about her normal duties. The jilts and jolts of the mother's movement and activity as when she is stamping corn or beating fufu does not seem to disturb the baby's comfort. This pick-a-back position appears to be so comfortable to babies in general that it is common to see children who have long outgrown that stage of being carried about, waiting to be picked-a-back by their mothers. A child is expected to be able to move about ^{to} any normal distance, without being carried, after his third birthday. The emotional value to the child of a few hours' ride on a mother's back is of course, quite considerable.

Friends of a family, older female siblings or other relatives of the child may be seen carrying a new-born baby at the back in order to help the mother. It is said that if a woman gives birth to a bonny fat baby, she has always people to help her to look after it. When a child reaches his third month, he is expected to be able to hold up his head. The usual cloth support for the neck when he is picked-a-back is moved downwards towards the middle of the child. His hands are also left free from the cloth 'bag' in which he rides at the mother's back. At this time, when he is picked up for short periods, he is lifted by the armpits. The increased weight of the body makes pickichg up by the hands very uncomfortable to the child.

Muscular Co-ordination: All mothers in Bompata showed a remarkable knowledge of the routine of normal muscular development of babies. The stages of development and co-ordination are well-known



An older child is made to sit behind
the baby to help him to maintain his
balance.

and in most of the activities, not much allowance is made for individual differences. This leads to much unfair treatment to babies who show any departure from the normal traditional stages and rates of development.

At birth, little muscular activity is expected of the baby apart from the ability to cry, suckle and to wave the limbs about. At the end of the third month, the baby is expected to be able to hold his head up, to wave the limbs about more vigorously, to be able to follow a bright object with the eyes and to be able to smile at people playing with him. After the fourth or the fifth month, it is considered subnormal if a baby cannot sit by himself. The child is not allowed to develop this skill of sitting erect spontaneously. He is helped often long before he is ready, to learn to sit up. The mother begins by seating the baby on the ground. An older child is made to sit behind him to help the baby to maintain his balance. Sometimes, props of pillows and soft rags are piled round him to prevent any injury if he loses his balance and falls. Children never learn to sit on a mat nor on anything. The bare floor or ground must be his first seat. It is believed that if he sits on a mat or on rags, his rate of walking will be retarded. Crawling is expected to have begun by the time the child is six months old. Not much concern however is shown over late crawling. "Some children begin to walk without crawling" my chief informant said. All babies after they have learnt to sit by themselves are encouraged to crawl as a step to making them stand erect and walk. A toy or a piece of food is placed out of

of his reach and is encouraged by the mother to crawl out to get at it. The first successful attempt is cheered by all and as the process is repeated often and often the activity is learnt.

Walking is the next and most important stage from the mother's point of view, in a child's motor development. It is the child's only early motor activity in which individual differences are known to exist. Even there, very little allowance is made for such individual differences. Out of a sample of twenty mothers interviewed, five were mothers of children who were said to be able to walk after the eighth month. Seven others alleged that their babies could only begin walking after the fifteenth month. The rest had children who reached the stage of erect walking between the eighteenth and the twenty fourth month. It is held that early or late walking is controlled by heredity and by the result of certain practices of the mother during her pregnancy. If a child has parents one of whom was a 'bafan' (literally: late walker), during his or her own childhood, the chances are that the child will also walk late. A ^{pregnant} mother who remains long after having taken her meal without washing her cooking utensils but sits down lazily, is increasing her chances of giving birth to a child who will walk late.

Perhaps because a toddler leaves his mother more often for her to go about her household duties than a crawler, late walking is always a source of much anxiety to mothers. Several methods are employed to encourage or even force a child to walk as early as possible. A child's first successful attempt at standing erect unsupported and the first steps he takes are praised

with words of encouragement by all other members of the family. All children in Bompata are very fond of playing with objects with wheels. A game of 'lorries' or 'cars' is enjoyed by every child. Many parents therefore make or borrow a special three-wheeled contrivance and give it to their babies to play with. By pushing this object about, most children unconsciously begin to take their first steps in walking. Sometimes, one of the parents or any of the older members of the family may be seen kindly encouraging a child to walk. "Taataa, tuutu" (Meaningless Twi words signifying: "Yes, one step, then the other foot"), they would chant to the baby. As soon as a baby is able to take his first real steps in walking, it is customary for his paternal aunt to send him some fresh eggs as a mark of her appreciation of his success. Other members of the parents' families may also send some 'eggs of congratulation'. All these eggs are boiled and given to the child to eat in due course. The nutritive value of such an extra treat at a time when he has begun to spend much energy in moving about is quite appreciable. A similar customary presentation of eggs is also made to the baby when he cuts his first teeth.

If a baby remains unable to walk after his second birthday, he is considered to be an extremely weak or lazy child. Sometimes the child's inability is attributed to the evil powers of a witch over him.

Nearly every elderly woman interviewed during this investigation professed to possess special medicines which could help weak children to gain strength and be able to walk. These medicines are jealously kept secret from all outsiders. Even in the same

household, the knowledge of the actual herbs and roots used in preparing the medicine is the secret of the most senior woman who would pass it on to the next in order of seniority when she finds that she is ageing. It is interesting to note that a little investigation into the preparation of these medicines reveal that very similar roots and herbs are used in nearly all the households for the preparations. The ability of the owners to hold any proprietary rights is based on superstition, because though a woman may know the herbs, it is believed that if she does not pay the appropriate fees to the rightful owner of the medicine, the efficacy will be impaired. The medicine usually consists of the roots of certain well known trees, a herb and some pepper and three or four guinea grains. These are ground into a rough mass and pushed with the little finger into the child's anus. The potency of these preparations in strengthening the muscles of the thighs and waist is acknowledged by all informants. A second or third application was enough to make a weak child walk. No informant agreed to the suggestion that the unpleasant memories of the treatment may have contributed to greater effort being made by the child to learn to walk.

When it is considered that a child's inability to walk is due to sheer laziness, he is subjected to hard and cruel treatment to force him to be active. Sometimes pieces of a thorny shrub are tied to his knees and the buttocks. The child is pricked whenever he tries to crawl on all fours or to sit down. He is therefore compelled to stand up and walk. This, I learnt, has helped many children to walk. This treatment is of course, unduly severe. Its practice does not appear to be popular in

many homes even though it was known by all informants as an alternative treatment for late walkers.

If after having tried all these treatments, the child still remains unable to walk, the juju man is usually consulted for his opinion. His divinations tinged with the usual impressive magical rites almost always centre round the witch and her evil intentions. An informant told ^{me} of his own experience when he took his two and a half year old daughter to Opanyin Tebe, a very well-known juju herbalist in Bompata. "Your child's bones have been taken out by the witches in her mother's family and sold to another society of witches." Tebe is reported to have said. He promised to be able to reclaim the bones and replace them in the girl if the father would bring a pure white fowl and three eggs. Before the father had been able to collect these things, the child had begun to walk by herself. Special magic powders are possessed by some of the juju men which ~~is~~ they allege, when mixed with the child's food can restore vitality. The traditional role of the juju man in this aspect of curing a child's weakness in Bompata is fast losing its importance. Most mothers prefer to take their babies to the clinic for better informed opinion than the juju man's.

Crawling children and toddlers are a source of constant anxiety to mothers. There are no spatial limits to a child's motor activities and regular nurses are unknown in Bompata. The danger therefore to children of fires, knives and other sharp-edged instruments is great. Often, an older sibling is placed in charge of a child's activities but as he himself may also be playing with his own friends, the supervision is almost always not good enough.

It is customary for a mother who allows her baby to burn himself to pay a fine of about twelve eggs to the father of the child. With the usual high cost of eggs, this custom tends to make mothers more vigilant over the child's activities - a task which is not ^avery easy one.

To almost all informants, the ideal child is one who sits still and keeps out of mischief. A common proverb is: "Sekantia gye ne ho abofra noam!" (Literally: "The short knife is thrown away voluntarily by a child", i.e. when he cuts himself; or more idiomatically: "Once bitten, twice shy"), but most mothers prefer an accident to their children to allowing them to learn by an experience from which in any case, they cannot benefit. "Hye no! hye no!" ("Burn him! burn him") a mother will warn a child who comes too near to a fire or ^{any} hot object. If a child keeps going near dangerous objects mothers scold, threaten or spank them to deter them from coming near danger.

Children are actively discouraged from indulging in any motor activity which in the parents' opinion is fraught with danger. Even ordinary running about is discouraged for fear of grazed knees and elbows. "Sit still, or the policeman will come to take you away," mothers often threaten their active children to keep them in order. Some impatient mothers punish children who fall and sustain slight bruises. Two little boys aged about four were stanzding on an open space between two houses. One had a new tennis ball which he was kicking heartily about. "Come and let us play my ball, Kofi", the owner of the ball said to his

friend. "Let me go to see if mammy is not at home" Kofi replied, "for if he sees me playing and I hurt myself, he will push red pepper into my anus." Perhaps in a society where ^{the} medicine chest as part of ^{the} household equipment, is unknown, and minor bruises can sometimes develop into ulcers, this over-protective attitude to children is understandable. But the effects of this repression of energy and initiative in the child on his mental and moral development are harmful.

Nearly all informants held that girls can be more easily controlled and kept out of danger than boys. Apart from a few clapping and jumping games, a girl's activity generally centres round the home - they play at cooking, sweeping or selling things. "My boy climbs stools, walls, rocks and wants to play football even though he can hardly walk confidently. We have nicknamed him 'Lazarus' for he is always full of sores," an exasperated mother said. Boys are generally more active in their games than girls. One kind of motor play which is most commonly indulged in and enjoyed by all children in Bompata is the game of 'lorry'. Perhaps the feeling of movement without making any muscular effort makes this game so enjoyable. In a game of 'lorry' the object called lorry need not bear any resemblance to a real lorry at all. Any contrivance that can be wheeled or glided along the ground is enough. Packing cases or the broad base of the leaf of the royal palm often serves as a lorry. The 'passengers' sit inside the lorry and the 'driver' often the strongest child in the group pulls the lorry and its load of happy passengers along



The object called lorry need not bear any resemblance to an actual lorry Driver Kofi will soon collect the fares but he will take only stones which in his and the world of the passengers are legal tender.

the ground. Children's imagination and imitativeness are clearly demonstrated when they are playing this game. The driver imitates the humming of the engines and blows his horn to warn pedestrians. The driver's mate collects passengers' baggage and collects fares at the end of the journeys. It is exceedingly interesting to watch a game of 'lorry' in progress. The power of observation and imitation of very young children becomes astonishing.

This game being comparatively free from injuries is encouraged by all parents. It continues to be played by children until they are about to become adolescents. To the older child, the lorry is made to provide a game and also a means of carrying water ^{home} with less effort from the village well.

CHAPTER SIX.

HEALTH DEVELOPMENT.

One of the chief sources of anxiety to parents in most African villages including Bompata, is the health of their children. The usual enquiry about the health of the children of the household is not merely a formal part of the customary Akan words of greeting. It is an expression of sincere concern about the children's health which unhappily, is very often not of a high quality. An informant said that she had two and a half children. "What do you mean by half a child?" says I. "You see," she continued, "Yaw and Afua (aged about seven and five respectively) are now past the 'death stage'. But who knows but God, if Akosua (aged about eighteen months) will continue to be mine. Surely, she is half a child."

Illhealth and infantile mortality though on the decline during recent years, are still comparatively high in Bompata. The general attitude of parents towards illness and death of children is tinged with a great deal of superstition. The words of a common dirge sung at the funeral of a young child are as follows: "Anafranaku nsore brɔɛɛ ase na odwɛnini nwo ahenasa" ('Anafranaku' is a shrub which grows on new food farms especially under plantain trees. The eating of this shrub by sheep causes instant death to the animal). The words literally mean: "May the 'anafranaku' stop growing in the feeding grounds of sheep so that the ram may give birth to triplets." In undisguised words, it means: "May witches cease to exist so that poor mothers may stop losing their children". The fear of witchcraft is very great.

Sleep: All newly born babies share the same bed with their mothers. The general practice in the great majority of homes and families interviewed is that a mother during her confinement does not share her husband's bed. She sleeps on the floor in a bed of a single mat spread with a few blankets or rags. This she shares with her baby, the little infant's pillow being placed in line with the mother's breasts to facilitate suckling in the night without giving the mother the trouble of having to sit up while the baby is fed. Cots and separate for babies are not generally known. In the few homes where there are cots, they are used only during the day. "If I keep my baby in a cot all by himself, how can I know if he suddenly falls ill in his sleep. He may die before I become aware of it," a mother said.

A very young baby is expected to be asleep for most of the time when he is not being fed or having a bath. Sleep, it is held, makes children grow fat and it is considered abnormal if a young baby does not sleep much. When children reach the age of about two, parents pay very little attention to their sleep. Opinions differ in Bompata with regard to the sleeping habits of older children. To some parents a child who sleeps much is a budding lazy adult. To others, a good sleep for a child is appreciated and continued sleeplessness causes much anxiety for it is known to be a cause of weakness and illhealth. In some homes, a mid-day rest for babies and older children is encouraged. In others, it is discouraged because it is said that children who have slept well during the day tend to remain awake longer in the nights and create much disturbance for tired drowsy parents.

There is no regular routine nor fixed times for putting babies to bed. The child goes to bed when he feels like doing so. Owing to frequent threats with ghosts and bogey men to deter children from undesirable activities, most children fear to go to bed when none of the parents are in bed. A sleepy child dozes off in the laps of one of the parents and is carried to bed when he is not conscious of it. Late sleepers are a source of much disturbance to sleepy parents especially they have had a hard day's work on the farm. "Cover your head and sleep lest the policeman, (or sheep, or the cow) comes right now to take you away and eat you up" mothers may be heard frightening their children to sleep.

A child continues to share the mother's bed until the arrival of the next baby or until he reaches the age of about four or five. Then he sleeps in the company of older siblings generally in a corner of the parents' bedroom or very rarely in another room. A few fathers, I learnt, share their beds with their male children of about three or four years if they are not bed-wetters. Wives who continue to bear children, I learnt, hardly ever share their husbands' beds continuously. Their beds continue to be made on the floor in front of the family bedstead which only the husband uses.

The relation between sound restful sleep and good health is generally well understood and most parents approve of it if their children sleep as soundly and as long as possible.

Health: The whole question of good physical health and the maintenance of it are looked upon by nearly all parents interviewed in Bompata with a



In many of the homes of literate parents children are clothed. The daily wear of girls is a cotton frock of simple design.

great deal of superstition. The scientific interpretation of illness is on the whole unknown. Because, for instance, a child does not complain about bodily discomforts, it is assumed by many parents that he is incapable of feeling uncomfortable. It is common to see in many homes, on a cool day after rain, children running about naked while parents are wrapped up in extra cloths to keep warm. Chronic head and chest colds are therefore very common amongst children in Bompata.

The connection between dirt and disease is not clear to most parents. From the time a child begins to sit up and crawl about, he is not discouraged from dirtying himself; in fact, he is allowed to eat the soil. Most children grow up with such dirty habits. When a second or third baby arrives, very little attention is paid to the bath of the older ones and many children can be really dirty. Overgrown finger-nails full of dirt, overgrown hair, and dirty teeth are the common lot of many children in Bompata. The hand is invariably used in taking all meals, the amount of dirt from unkempt finger-nails that is swallowed with food is enough to cause real intestinal discomfort.

In a few of the homes where one of the parents may have received some advanced school education, and also where the families are small, there is better attention to children's appearance and they are generally clean and attractive. "Why do you allow your child to run about naked and dirty like a heathen child?" is a common friendly reminder amongst familiar parents to anyone who shows slackness about the proper appearance of a child. The Tivi equivalent of 'heathen' is used here in a

special sense for an illiterate person.

It is strange how soon many parents in Bompata forget about the effect of regular feeding upon their children's health and physical development. On working days when nearly all the villagers go to their farms, one notices a very sad neglect of children. It is very common to see little children aged between three and five whose parents have left them at home without any proper arrangements having been made for their feeding. Such children make do with whatever food, however unwholesome it may be, until the parents' arrival in the evening. Sometimes, children have to be roused from sleep for them to partake of the evening meal. A greater part of the year is devoted to hard work on the farms. It is clear therefore that the effect ^{on children's health} of such unsatisfactory feeding, for the greater part of the year can be harmful.

Food given to children is very often not of the highest quality. Unlike English parents who would see that his child receives the best part of every meal, the average parent in Bompata is indifferent to the proper feeding of his child simply because a child will not complain of bad food. Very little of the nourishing part of the meal goes to children. Their supply of meat is very scanty, it is thought that they do not require as much soup for taking their fufu as do adults. Amongst some of the educated parents, while a father drinks milk with his tea, his children must be content with plain tea and bread. A female co-traveller summed up the whole attitude of parents to the feeding of their children when she said that she was taking ^{to her children} some loaves of kenkey which she had bought with the original intention of eating them herself because the oil which had been used in preparing the kenkey tasted bad.

The common saying about food is: "Pintinn kiara ye smee" (Literally: Every feeling of fullness is satisfaction) It appears this is the attitude towards children's food for the food which a parent considers ^{too} plain to be taken by himself, he will readily give to his inarticulate little child.

Sickness amongst children is much dreaded by all parents and they resort to many kinds of superstitious practices to safeguard the health of their children. The cuts that are made on the newly-born baby's joints and smeared with black magic powder are meant to offer immunity to fretting, malaria, convulsions and a lot of other children's diseases, generally classified as 'Asram'. The wearing of charms though generally attributed to Muslims and the Northern Territory immigrants, is more widespread than can be noted by the casual observer. Christians are not free from this practice of making use of magic and charms to safeguard the children from the evils of witchcraft. Most Christians keep the charms under pillows or in boxes.

In spite of all these and other elaborate precautions to avoid disease, many, in fact nearly all children at one time or another, do fall ill. The period of a child's illness is a very trying and anxious one for all parents especially the mother. At present, the superiority of European treatment of many diseases to the traditional forms of treatment is widely acknowledged. Many parents take their sick children to hospitals and clinics for treatment when they are ill. The itinerant drug pedlar and 'self made' 'dispenser' also finds a lot of illegal business. Perhaps owing to

the effectiveness of the B.S.T. injections against yaws, an injection is considered a panacea. A mother may ask for an injection of some sort for a sick child suffering from diseases ranging from ordinary scabies to a cold in the head. This, I learnt, is a cause of much annoyance to doctors and health attendants who man the hospitals and clinics.

"Not all diseases are amenable to treatment by the white man's medicine," parents often say. For this reason, the herbalists, jujumen, witch doctors and the fetish priest still command an enormous clientele. Almost always, their treatment is preceded by a series of very impressive magical rites for it is said before the body can be cured of a disease, the soul must be healthy and happy. For professional reasons, knowledge of the herbs used in curing most of the diseases is kept very secret. Some knowledge of medicinal herbs can sometimes be acquired by the payment of a small fee, usually in eggs. There is therefore hardly any man or woman of middle age or above that who does not possess the knowledge of a few herbs known to be cures for certain diseases. It is upon the confidences of such amateurs that it has been possible to compile this list of some common traditional treatments for some very common children's diseases:

Malaria - (Twi: 'Huraye') is by far the commonest children's disease in Bompata. In many cases, it is chronic. Three out of every four pupils examined in the three lower classes of the two local Primary Schools had enlarged spleens - a mark of long standing malaria. It is held that all diseases originate

from the stomach. The first treatment for a feverish child is to give him something to open the bowels. European purgatives and laxatives are now widely used but the most common and most easily applied bowel-opener is the enema. This is made of the herbs of special trees ground and mixed with a little pepper, ginger and guinea grains. The mass is mixed with water and strained with a piece of cloth. Mothers generally give the enemas. Another means of stimulating the bowels into motion is by pushing a preparation of ground pepper and other hot ingredients not mixed with water into the rectum as far as the mother's little finger will go. This second method of bowel stimulation is also a common form of punishment for disobedience and sexual offences amongst children. Its place in the cure of diseases raises emotional problems. Many children fail to realise why they should be punished because they are ill. The treatment is therefore given to the child only under compulsion, for no child willingly subjects himself willingly to the treatment. All the herbs used in stimulating the bowels by the lower canal are said to possess some purging power. Sometimes, special potions of boiled herbs are made. The leaves of the nim tree and of the lime are most commonly used. The sick child is bathed many times daily with the cool water of the mixture. This has the tendency of reducing high temperatures. Sometimes, the child is given some of the water to drink.

Convulsions: This is a complication which ^{usually} follows a long standing attack of malaria. The disease is feared by all parents in Bompata, for it is said that it death of many more children annually than all other children's diseases put together.

So great is the fear of this disease that people have been unwilling to call it by its real Akan name. The real name has therefore been lost and people refer to it by signs and disguised terms. It is called: "Ntwadaa wura" ('Children's Master') Instead of finding a name for it parents will only point to the sky and say: "Yei" ('The sky disease') for it is believed that the disease comes from the sky. At the same time, it is thought to be hereditary and while some parents can transmit it to their children, others who have not got it in their blood cannot do so. The disease is believed to be beyond the white man's power to cure. No parent allow an amateur to treat his convulsive child. The disease, I learnt can only be fully cured by a good professional herbalist.

The magical rites which attend the treatment of this disease is more elaborate than at all other scenes of curing. During one such emergency, I had the luck to be present in the house where the herbalist was to give the treatment. The rigid body of the sick child was laid in a wooden fufu beating mortar. A hard yard-broom was placed under his head. The child was put under the eaves of the tin roof of the house. Cold water in which certain herbs had been steeped was thrown on the roof and as the water ran down onto the child it cried loudly. He was removed from the mortar. A piece of the cloth which forms the mother's basic underwear described in a previous chapter was asked to be brought and this was tied round the head above the eyes. Meanwhile, no woman was allowed to hold the child. The father or in his absence, any male adult holds the patient on such occasions.

At the scene under description, all the women present were so upset and afraid for the child's life that I was inclined to think that this simple precaution of allowing only a man to handle the sick child is not merely superstitious but ^{is} of practical significance in such an emergency.

The next stage was the giving of a draught of water mixed with black magic powder to the child to drink. It appeared the potion contained some strong laxative for shortly afterwards, the child had a good bowel motion which clearly relieved him for he looked much better after that. An incense of some special leaves and some more magic powder was burnt and the child was held over the smoke amid the fervent incantations of the herbalist. This I learnt was to drive away evil spirits. By this time, the child had gained full consciousness.

To prevent further attacks, a cut of about a third of an inch in length was made on the right cheek. Some black magic powder mixed with gin was rubbed into the cut. A charm of some special black beads, three cowry shells and a piece of navy blue cotton yarn was made. This was smeared with the yolk of one of three eggs, which the father of the child had been asked to procure, and put round the child's neck. The remaining two eggs were fried and after adding some more magic powder, it was given to the child and the father to eat. This was to purify their souls. Rules about the proper keeping of the charm were given to the child's parents. The most important was that neither the child nor any of the parents was to eat

directly from a cooking or a soup pot. The breaking of that rule the herbalist said would impair the potency of the charm and bring a more serious attack of the disease.

In this instance, the 'doctor' did not divine any marital offence against the husband's soul by the mother of the child. This, I learnt often forms the concluding part of the drama of healing such diseases. Harmony and goodwill however were enjoined on the parents of the child and the party broke off. This I was told by an old member of the party at this scene is the general pattern of the treatment given by all herbalists.

Mumps: (Twi: Agyemirekutu): This disease occasionally attacks a large number of children at the same time in Bompata. It is characterised by swelling of the salivary glands. This gives the face an amusing bovine appearance. It is not considered any serious illness. A death from it has never been known by any informant. It is held that the more fun that is made of the mumps patient, the quicker he recovers. Treatment consists mainly of ^{making} the patient as funny as possible. Spots of different colours of earth are made on the swollen parts. Sometimes the stuff used in making the spots is mixed with some ground pepper or other hot ingredient. It is said that the heat reduces the swelling. When the patient is thus painted he looks every inch like a clown. Children in the neighbourhood have a good time making fun of their unfortunate friend. "Hee" they would chant together, "Agyemirekutu, wosere a eye wo, wosansere a eye wo fanyinam saa sere." (Literally: 'Hail, mumps! if you laugh you get it, if you don't, you get it,

better laugh heartily?). They enjoy this diversion heartily knowing full well that on the following morning any of them could be the object of fun.

Colds in the head (Twi: Papun): This is a very common children's complaint. Except in a few homes it does not receive any attention at all. Most children have running noses almost all the year round. Children in Bompata wear little or no clothing at all and head and chest colds tend to increase during the cool wet seasons. When a cold becomes unusually troublesome, it is accompanied by a cough or mild fever. The leaves of certain plants including the ordinary tomato are squeezed in the palms of the hands. The liquid from it is dropped into the nostrils. This encourages constant sneezing and much expectoration of phlegm. Some mothers apply hot compresses to the head, chest and nostrils. After that mentholatum or any other patent ointment is rubbed on the chest and into the nostrils and the child is made to inhale. The relief got after such treatment is only temporary as the main cause — that of ^{bodily} exposure in cold weather — is often not removed.

Whooping Cough (Nkonkon) is also a common epidemic amongst children and deaths occur from it. All parents know that it is infectious and they warn their children not to associate with sufferers. The main attitude of parents is to allow the disease run its full course, i.e. to allow the child to cough until the cough ends in the usual Whoop. Treatment consists mainly of nasal drops of special herbs to relieve congestion in the air passages. Sometimes during an epidemic, parents hang small keys on strings and put them round the necks of children. This is held to be

both preventive and curative. Children with long standing whooping cough are given roasted mice to eat. This is believed to cure the cough. Mice are not eaten normally in Bompata and it is only out of desperation that a parent will give them to his child to eat because next to convulsions, whooping cough is known to be very fatal to children.

European patent drugs are known to be very effective against whooping cough. May and Baker sulphur drugs 693 and 760, I gathered, are said to be very good as cures for the cough and they are now more frequently used in the treatment than the traditional herbs.

Measles (Twi: Ntenkyem or Ntobro): This disease is known to be a killing one. It is believed that all children get it sooner or later before they become adults. The traditional treatment consists of rubbing the rashes with sand or dust which has been heated over a fire. This relieves the itching from the rashes. This is followed by an embrocation of the whole body with melted shea butter. Now, instead of the shea butter embrocation, locally distilled gin is smeared all over the body. The patient is given little quantities of the gin to drink from time to time. Palmwine is also often used instead of the gin. It is said that both have the power of curing the disease very quickly.

A more recent mode of treatment which may have spread from the hospitals and clinics is the giving of a good dose of epsom salts or any other aperient. This conforms to the traditional theory of all diseases originating from the bowels and as such has gained very quick acceptance in all homes. The purge is followed by one or the other of the

well-known embrocations.

It is held that sometimes, the rashes may appear in the mouth, rectum or in a girl's genitals or even on the eyeballs. All these parts of the body therefore receive attention in the course of treatment. Special mouth washes of boiled herbs (wild tobacco) are used to prevent inflammation of the gums and tongue. The usual hot suppositories of ground pepper, ginger and special herbs are regularly pushed into the rectum or into the girl's genitals. Eye drops of the juices of special herbs - the bryophyllum - (Twi: Egors) are put into the eyes to relieve inflammation and to prevent cataracts forming on the eyeballs.

Death from measles is common. This is probably due to later complications such as pneumonia because in the great majority of homes in Bompata, sick children ^{generally} _{are} not better clothed than their healthy siblings.

Vaginal Inflammation (Twi: Odeepuaa): This disease is a girl's disease and it is difficult to tell what it really is. It is said to be very fatal to little girls as it can be the cause of other diseases such as fever, headache or general lassitude. Mothers therefore pay periodic attention to the genitals of their little daughters to prevent any insidious onset of the disease. Hot suppositories are placed in the genitals periodically. This is supplemented with a preparation of burnt 'negro head' tobacco and some special medicinal seeds. This is also made into black powder and smeared into the genitals. The efficacy of these preventive and curative measures is acknowledged by all women. Though the treatment is said to be painful, no woman

in Bompata ever stops treating her children or herself in that way in life.

THE BAGYINA CUSTOM.

The rate of infantile mortality at Bompata is still high. Of a sample of twenty mothers interviewed the average of live-births ^{per woman} was seven but the average number of children alive per mother was only a little above four. There were two extreme cases of two mothers of eight and ten children born to each. The first had only two children living and the second only one. It is believed that such high rates of infantile mortality is hereditary, i.e. some families have certain uterine disorders which makes the women bear weaker children than others. But the most common attitude to such misfortunes is to place the blame at the door of an evil relative — a witch — who as is often said, develops a strong taste for the spiritual flesh of the children.

When a mother loses her children in rapid succession, there are many customs and practices which are performed to coax or compel the children not to leave the world so soon. The most brutal and inhuman of these is the deliberate mutilation of the corpse of a dead baby. The limbs, I learnt are sometimes intentionally fractured and the body is put into a coffin strewn with thorns or broken bottles. This practice originates from the belief that the same children who die re-incarnate to be born again. They are given such poor and cruel burial in order to frighten and deter them from returning to such angry parents to deceive them.

There is an interesting case of a young letter carrier of a village near Bompata. He has

very unusual arms — twisted and shorter than normal ones. It is alleged that he was born after four male siblings all of whom had died before him. The body of the latest one before this letter carrier was treated cruelly as has been described above. When he was born this boy, it is said, bore all the marks of his unfortunate sibling's mutilation. No doubt this is a strong case of the effect of vivid mental images of a pregnant woman on her unborn child but it is strongly held by many informants that the boy in question lived because he feared a repetition of the parents' former cruelty to him.

The usual place to go to for help against the condition commonly called "Awomawit" (Literally: 'Death of children') is the fetish priests. As soon as such an unfortunate woman becomes pregnant again after the death of a previous child, she finds a 'strong' fetish and 'puts herself in the fetish's hands'. The child that is born, if the fetish agrees to look after the woman and her unborn child is a 'Bagyina' (Literally: 'A child that has been granted by a deity'). It is said that some women start this treatment for a successful birth long before they become pregnant again.

At the fetish priest's the woman undergoes an elaborate ceremony of purification and sanctification. If she is pregnant already, she is made to observe an intricate system of taboos to safeguard her and her foetus from the evil one. She continues her visits and receives spiritual and physical treatment until her child is born. As soon as possible after the child's birth and in any case at the end of the



The parents of this girl had her from a fetish near Konongo after the death of two older siblings. Afua Donko's hair will never be cut until she is over twelve and even then only after the parents have 'bought' her hair by paying certain sums to the fetish.

second week the child is taken to his guardian fetish for further instructions in his upbringing. The most common instructions of nearly all fetishes is that the child's hair is never to be cut until he reaches adolescence. Pennies, halfpennies, cowry shells, special beads and some charms are to be hung in the child's matted hair. Sometimes special ankle rings and waist charms are given by the fetish to be worn by the child. The child's face is cut to give it the appearance of a Northern Territory tribesman. Such children are often named after the guardian fetish.

Where a child is not named after his guardian fetish, there are a lot of unusual names one of which may be given him. His real name is kept secret. Mosi, (A Moshiman); Donkor (a slave); Pepe (a Northern Territory man) 'Si mu nne' (You may leave i.e. die today), 'Beyee den?' (What is your mission?) 'Shos' (a stranger) 'Oyinka' (May this one remain) are a few of the unusual names given to 'Bagyina' children. The cutting of the child's face and the giving of the unusual name are meant to make the child both physically and spiritually unattractive to witches who may be tempted to 'Eat him up'.

The marking of the face of children is becoming unfashionable and instead of the many ^{deep} cuts that were formerly made, a single small one is now considered enough.

Whenever a 'bagyina' child falls ill, the first place he is sent to is of course to his guardian fetish. He is forbidden to eat certain kinds of food and the flesh of certain animals

and birds. Yellow yam, the flesh of a hawk, a goat, snails and of the white antelope are not to be eaten by all children of the fetish "Ntoa" from whom a few women in Bompata have asked for and obtained children. 'Bagyina' children pay annual visits to the guardian fetish to pay respects and to offer sacrifices until they become adults.

SEX KNOWLEDGE.

Children in Bompata get interested in their sexual organs at a very early age. In a society where children go about almost continuously in the nude, this early knowledge is not strange. Most children between the age of three and five know the names of their own sexual organs and those of the opposite sex. Many adults deplore the unusual precocity of little children in sex and sought an explanation of the situation from the fact that adults discuss and name the sexual organs in the presence of children. But that cannot be the whole truth for children learn more about sex from older siblings and friends than from any other source. Even in the Christians homes where sex is viewed with the Victorian attitude of shame and silence, the knowledge of children in sex matters and sexual relations is startling. Children at first invent their own terms for the sexual organs. "Why has my sister Amma not got a 'lizard' (penis) like mine?" I heard a boy of four ask his mother. Later, through contact with older children, the younger ones learn the real names of and not infrequently, the uses of the organs.

Masturbation: Only in five homes were parents aware that some of their children sometimes handle their sexual organs for apparent pleasure. It cannot be

a correct indication of the extent to which children indulge in masturbation. Manipulation of the sexual organs, if detected by parents is severely punished. Girls receive the usual hot suppositories in their genitals and with some more severe parents, pepper may be put into the eyes. Boys are whipped and scolded. It is therefore likely that masturbation is indulged in by many children out of the sight of parents. Many children (15 out of the twenty interviewed) between the ages of five and eight knew of other playmates who occasionally played with their own or other friends' genitals and ^{a few} sometimes attempted actual sexual intercourse. Healthier games and other activities at school have tended to reduce these clandestine practices but non-school-going children practise masturbation especially in the evenings when they play their games.

The cruel punishments given to precocious children are still upheld by many parents in Bompata because a child who gets interested in sex at an unusually early age is considered a budding social menace. Traditional codes of sexual behaviour though generally relaxed through the conflict of cultures are still held to be ideal and all parents, however bad their own sexual lives may be, uphold the inculcation of good sexual conduct in their children.

Clothing and self-exposure: The virtual, almost perpetual nakedness of almost all children between the ages of two and six has been discussed under a previous sub-heading. Most children possess at most two changes of a double yard ^{each} of cotton print. One is for the daily wear and one is the proverbial Sunday best. As a piece

of cloth gets in the way of a really active child, at play, it is often discarded during the day and used only at night. In addition to the usual two yards of cloth, girls have 'shirts' of the same material as the cloth, but they also go about naked. The only article of clothing without which it is considered immodest to appear in public is the girls' genital cloth described in a previous chapter. In a few homes however, it is becoming increasingly fashionable and a source of parental pride to have decently clothed children. Girls wear pretty cotton frocks and boys have gowns or a shirt and a pair of knickers for daily wear.

Attendance at school brings a child into a new environment and to a social unit where certain standards of decency are expected to be maintained. Both children and parents realise this fact and strive to maintain those standards. My own daughter Margaret in her first year at school, was running about quite naked at home even though she had her frocks hanging on the line. When no amount of threats could induce her to clothe herself, I decided to send her on an errand to the house in which her teacher lives. She dressed immediately. "Why do you dress up now?" I asked her. "Because if my teacher sees me naked she will think that I am a naughty girl" she replied. Parents understand that they should provide their school going children with extra clothes to let them appear like children receiving training.

Children who do not go to school continue to go about naked until they are about ten years old when they are expected to feel ashamed of general nakedness. Girls generally become conscious of being naked earlier than boys and while boys of ten or

twelve may be seen having their baths outside, girls of ten would prefer the bathroom and some privacy for having a bath.

All parents consider it very bad to undress in the presence of their children. To show one's genitals to one's children is unheard of. It is held that when a child often sees a parent in the nude, he loses respect for the parent.

Sex Distinctions: During the first four years of life, though most children are aware of the physical differences in their sex, boys and girls play together irrespective of their sex. Girls may be seen together with their male siblings playing with dolls or at cooking, at hunting, driving the car, at being soldiers or even at a game of football.

A boy's masculinity is set before him always by casual remarks about his general behaviour and his attitude to situations. For example, he is expected to exhibit superior physical and mental feats to those of his female co-evals. He is encouraged to be brave and fearless. When he falls, or is hurt in any way, he is expected not to cry as long as a girl would. "Dbarima nzu." (Literally: "A man does not cry"), he is often told.

Perhaps this parental attitude to sexual distinctions coupled with the boy's love of a more vigorous and active life than ^{what} his sister would have is the cause of the quick and spontaneous segregation of the sexes which immediately comes after children have passed their fourth year. Boys and girls of five and above can hardly be seen playing together. Even at mealtimes, boys would prefer to eat with members of their own sex. A boy must eat quickly like a man. By

At the end of the fifth year, the separation is often quite complete and a boy who continues to play with girls is teased not by the girls only but by the parents. Some boys assault a 'tomboy' who insists on following them in their more vigorous daily activities.

Of course, in homes and neighbourhoods dominated by one or the other of the sexes, mixed play groups tend to last longer. Adult discouragement of long association of the sexes is not diminished in such circumstances and it places emotional hardships on only sons or only daughters in some homes. A boy who always goes about in the company of girls including his own female siblings is called names: "ɔbennokurobo" (a feminine boy), or "ɔbenksahwee" ('A man who goes fishing) — [fishing is almost exclusively an occasional female activity in Bompata]. Girls are expected to help their mothers in their domestic work and one who continues to romp about only with his male siblings is an "ɔbaabarima" [literally: 'a masculine girl']

PLAY.

Many parents do not realise the relationship between play and the healthy physical and intellectual development of children. Children's play, though providing a source of amusement to parents who care to watch them, is considered sheer waste of time. When play involves any vigorous activity likely to cause bruises, it is positively discouraged. It is likely that it is this attitude of parents to children's games and adventures that makes many young men in Bompata non-adventurous and

sedentary in later life.

Imitative games: In his book, Child Study, Mr. W. M. Beveridge states that if one went round the world one would see ^{all} children playing at almost the same kinds of things. This is true of children in Bompata. In the early years, imitation and make-belief feature prominently in all children's games. The lorry driver with his full load of passengers arrested by the police, a father with his wife and children making a farm, a mother washing his baby and putting him to bed, a schoolmaster teaching his pupils and punishing them, the army sergeant drilling his soldiers, the minister conducting a service with his congregation singing from old magazines, the cowherd driving his cattle home, the vociferous trader loudly crying out her wares and the doleful event of celebrating a funeral with women singing dirges or singing christian hymns, the band conductor and his group of musicians were some of the usual daily activities of adults which I saw being mimicked by different play groups in different parts of Bompata during this investigation.

As the separation of boys and girls in their daily activities becomes complete, imitative games give way to more active ones. Team games ^{too} are sometimes played but at this early age, the team spirit is not fully developed and the tendency is for each member to play for himself.

Some common games:

Ahyehye aba: This game can be played by both boys and girls. It is generally a mixed group game played almost always indoors or in the yard of the house in the cool evenings. The players arrange themselves

in two competing teams. The captain of each team is called the 'mother' irrespective of his or her sex. The two teams sit in two lines facing each other with a distance of about five yards between them. Each player covers himself well with his cloth. The 'mother' of the side to start the game takes a small stone and pretends to put it into each player's cloth. Quietly, she slips it into the hands of one of the players. All the players including the one who has been given the stone assume blank attitudes. It is theirs not to give the 'mother' of the opposing team any clue to the player who has the stone. When all is ready in Team 'A' the 'mother' of team 'B' is invited to come to find the stone. When he arrives he makes humorous remarks and gestures and tries to let the possessor of the stone betray himself by some facial expression or an unusual attitude. When mother B thinks he knows the player who has the stone he begins by saying: "Meore, mesre, meore; mesre X se ma me aba" (Literally: "I ask, I ask etc. I ask X to give me the stone) If player X has not got the stone he blows wind into his palm and all the players in Team 'A' shout at 'mother' 'B' for her failure. Mother 'A' is then said to have become 'pregnant' with the real possessor of the stone. If mother B's surmise had been correct she would have been pregnant with player X. The process is repeated with team 'B' hiding the stone and mother A going there to find it in a similar way and under similar rules.

If in the second ^{or subsequent} round, mother 'A' is

able to give the stone a second time to player X with whom she is pregnant and mother B is unable to find out the possessor of the stone, player X is said to have been born by the mother of team A. After receiving a hard thump in the back from her new child, mother A puts X in a corner. If mother B's second guess proves correct a second time she is also said to have given birth to X and after the usual thump she takes and puts him in her own corner. The game goes on until all the players have been 'born' either in their own team or into the opposing team.

At the end of the game a stupid mother who has not been clever enough to give birth to any child is made fun of by the opposing team. He is shoved about by the opposing team while they chant: "Bonin anwo ba, bonin twann" (Literally: "Barren one without a ^{some of} child, unattractive woman!") Sometimes if $x \times$ the members of a team have friends or siblings in the opposing team, they may let their own team down by giving secret signs to show the identity of the possessor of the stone. If they have the stone themselves their job as quislings is made easier. This often leads to quarrels.

Asekammere: The name of this game means literally, a red knife or idiomatically a bloody knife. It dates from the time when the wise men or fetish priests were beheaded if they failed to give an explanation to strange dreams and unusual natural phenomena. The game is of the nature of an intellectual exercise where the players show

Their knowledge of the names of objects and places. It is often played by mixed groups but is not very popular with girls. What really matters is for the players to belong to the same age group. Great differences in age may be a handicap to some of the team-members.

Two equal teams are formed by the players and they take their positions about eight yards apart facing each other. The two captains to the hearing of their teams decide on the type of names they are going to play on. If for example, the captains decide to play on the names of rivers, each captain proceeds to whisper to his players names of rivers by which they are to be known. Sometimes the players may suggest their own names. — The more obscure the name, the better value it has. When all is ready, captain A walks to the camp of Captain B and proceeds to ask the players their names. If a name is the same as one which the visiting captain has given to one of his players he calls his player with the similar name: "Kofi ee, what did I say was your name?" he asks. If the two names are really identical, captain 'A' carries his prisoner away. If captain 'A' has made a mistake by thinking that the two names are identical while they are not, he is hooted at and he runs home.

The process is repeated with a different type of names for captain 'B' to make a return trip to Camp A. He may either carry a prisoner away or get hooted at. Sometimes some captains make fictitious names. The

opposing captain at the risk of losing a player may challenge the name. An adult is often found to declare whether the name is genuine or not. If the challenge is upheld, the side which gave the fictitious name loses a player but if it is a false challenge, the challenger loses one.

The game is continued until one side loses all ~~to~~ members. Sometimes, the game is timed to an agreed number of visits for each captain. The group with the larger number of players wins the game. A variation in the game is for older children to make the classification of the names more difficult, for example instead of giving merely the names of trees it may be tied down to the names of edible trees or of 'timber' trees.

The value of this game is great. Non-school-going children of eight or nine can really surprise any university professor of botany or zoology by the number of the names of local plants and animals which they can hold in their heads and identify them. It is strange that no teachers interviewed seemed to have realised the value of this game in language work at school.

Ampe :- is strictly a girls' game. The male version of it — 'ntosa' — is unknown in Bompata. It can be played by any number of girls more than one either as individuals or in teams. One girl stands facing the other. They start making little hops and clapping in a certain rhythm peculiar to the game. After a few hops each child places a foot forward. If the feet cross (i.e. if



These girls are enjoying a game of 'Ampe'.

a left foot is met with the opponent's left foot), the player on whose side the count is gains a point. She counts all her points. The opponent begins to count her points too when the count comes to her side (i.e. when her left foot meets the right foot of the opponent on two successive jumps. Thus the game goes on until one player scores ten points and wins the game.

This game is very widely known and enjoyed by all classes of girls - those in school and those out of school. Occasionally, women above thirty may be seen heartily enjoying it on moonlit nights.

Football: is a very common popular boys' game. Amongst young children, the quality of team work is poor and play tends to be selfish. It is the pleasure of kicking something about that starts many games. Some fathers provide their male children with old tennis balls for games. Other less fortunate boys play with oranges or any soft round object. Some parents definitely discourage their children from playing the game because the children might get hurt. In spite of this it remains the most popular source of activity for boys.

"Fa wo nsa beto me kon mu >ds ee!" ('Put your hand in my neck, my love'): This is a sex game.

It is played by mixed teams. Two teams of the different sexes are made. The teams stand about ten or twelve yards apart facing each other. Both teams begin to sing: "Fa wo nsa beto me kon mu, >ds ee," clapping very vigorously at the same time. A player from the male team

dances or hops (according to the rhythm of the song) to the female side and there puts his arm round the neck of one of the girls with whom he dances back to the male line. A female dancer dances to the male line and brings her lover to her own line.

Some adult informants were of the opinion that these games gave an indication of the children's partners in their clandestine sexual adventures. It is difficult for any one who has carefully observed children playing this game to subscribe to this opinion. During the game, no player has the monopoly of the partnership of a member of the opposite sex. Homosexual partners are common during the dances. The complete absence of embarrassment which is often discernible amongst adolescent players gives one the impression that the game is a healthy one. It would be bad to discourage the playing of this game which offers opportunity for the coming together of the sexes because of perhaps the misbehaviour of a few ill-bred children.

The last few sub-headings are a description of a few of the indigenous games (excepting football) which all healthy children enjoy in Bompata. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Only the most common and some of those which provide some physical and mental activity have been described. Schools have increased the number of games which children can play. Games like 'hide and seek', 'hunting the slipper' and 'blind man's buff' have their local versions but they are now nearly always played at school.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

The general idea of an "ɔmamma" (Literally: 'son of the state' — idiomatically: "A cultured person) in Bompata is of a person who is familiar with the customs and usages of the village. He knows of his social relationships to all members of the society, of his obligations to other people and of theirs to him. Thus a man who fails to salute politely, a group of people under a shade tree, who fails to respond correctly to other people's greetings, or who when there is a funeral in the village does not attend it to sympathise with the bereaved family or to give them a donation is a 'fool' simply because he does not know the customs.

There is an intricate system of relationships and obligations to be observed daily towards one's parents, siblings, neighbours and even strangers. Ignorance of these obligations is a mark of ill breeding. A stranger who stands before the chief in his sandals or without baring his left shoulder of his cloth is looked upon with sympathy for his bad upbringing. A citizen who overlooks these observances excites critical comment and may be punished. An adult who mumbles his greetings or does not often greet neighbours or is ignorant of the proper responses to others' greetings is an "atetekwaa" (Literally: an uncultured person)

The most derogatory comment on one's social behaviour is for another to say that one is not a good neighbour — "ɔmpɛ nnipa" (Literally: He is selfish). All parents therefore do their best to bring up their children to be good neighbours in Bompata.

Relationships with parents: A child's first relations with any human being is of course, with his mother. A mother's influence on the training of her children is acknowledged by all informants to be great. A dirty slovenly, lazy mother, it is often said, brings up dirty careless children. Most bachelors take this point into careful consideration in the choice of a wife.

The child's first physical contact is with his mother. To observe a proud mother playing with her young baby who may be hardly conscious of his surroundings is a very interesting pastime. A mother rocking her baby in her arms to lull him into sleep, or singing to him or trying to talk to him presents an interesting scene. A few of songs which mothers usually sing to their babies is included in the appendix to this essay.

One of the most widely known mother and child physical contacts apart from lying in her arms and suckling is the embrace. From the child's point of view, it appears to be very pleasurable. It is indulged in by children until they are quite old. It is common for a ten year old child to rush to be embraced by a parent on the parent's arrival after a period of absence. Very few mothers ever kiss their babies and these stop doing so as soon as the baby begins to cut teeth. It is believed that kissing is a sure way of transmitting toothache to a child.

The pick-a-back method of carrying children about also appears to offer the child another very pleasurable physical contact first with the mother and later with his older siblings and other more distant relations. Children desire to be

picked-a-back even at ages when it is normally expected that they have outgrown that stage of being carried about. A healthy four-year old child on the back of another person is not only amusing but it is considered that he is being spoiled by his carrier. Some ^{maternal} grandmothers spoil their children in this way by continuing to carry them on their backs when they are old and past that stage.

As a child grows older and begins to recognise people, his father and older siblings begin to assume a more important place in his life as playmates. A father may be seen proudly carrying his child in his arms. By such pleasurable physical contacts, the child begins to recognise him and feel happy in his ^{father's} company. A father's lap offers a place of safety for all children. "If the policeman wants to take me away, I shall run and sit in my father's lap." children often say. It is held that children of monogamous marriages in which husband and wife live together in the same house tend to recognise and love their fathers earlier than those of polygamists whose wives live away from them.

Parental preferences of children according to sex: All informants said that they had equal love and affection for all their children irrespective of their sex. Owing to the social and economic value of children, it is clear that this cannot be the whole truth. There are evidences to prove that parents place different values on children according to their sex.

In a society in which lineage is traced strictly through the mothers, it is unduly sentimental for a mother to say that she places equal value on

her sons and daughters. The more daughters a woman has, the better are chances of perpetuating her lineage for a very long time. All her sons belong to her family but the grandchildren through the sons will be members of other families.

A son is not ordinarily entitled to his mother's property on her death. A woman who dies without having given birth to a single daughter has as is commonly said: 'toiled for nothing' for she has no direct heirs. It is said that daughters mature more quickly than sons and they are a potential source of help in the home when they are not married or they offer the mother sincere companionship if they get married. This preference of daughters to sons by mothers in Bompata is borne out by another fact. A mother of daughters only may ^{only} complain casually of her lack of sons to her acquaintances but a woman who has given birth to sons only is depressed. Most mothers of male children only, I learnt, ask their husbands to take them, during an early pregnancy, to a fetish for him to change the sex of the unborn child to a female. Many fetish priests are said to be able to perform this biological feat.

Fathers generally prefer sons to daughters. The reasons for this preference are social and economic. In times of danger to the family or to the entire village, men will face the danger realistically while the women merely stand about waiting. A father of many sons has therefore added to the potential defenders of his family and of the village in times of danger. Male adult children become the companions of their father and help him in solving his problems.

If he has been a good father to his sons, he can count on their labour and financial support when he is old and unable to work. Finally, a good number of healthy well-trained sons means a good coffin and an elaborate funeral on the father's death. No man in Bompata however poor he may be, ever forgets this last duty to his father and all fathers expect such last honour as an inalienable parental right.

This preference of sons to daughters by the men in Bompata is not necessarily expressed in any softness to the children in their training. However hard a father may be to his sons, it is always clear that his aim is to make them good useful men in future. Mothers show their preference of daughters to sons by being soft to the girls.

Children, it was observed, tend to prefer parents of the opposite sex as companions. This attitude begins to be clear when the child is about six or seven years old and lasts well into adolescence. Mothers are generally soft in dealing with their children. Boys in order to avoid the more strict control of the father tend to be more closely attached to their mothers to whom they can sometimes show disobedience with impunity. On the other hand, a mother, anxious to bring up her daughters in the best way to fit them for their future duties, tends to be very exacting in her demands for work in the house. Young daughters are therefore often seen not in the kitchen but in the company of the father while he performs a masculine task in which they cannot be expected to take part. All adolescents interviewed during this investigation were of the opinion

that parents of the opposite sex were more sympathetic and considerate with them over their difficulties. This attachment to parents of the opposite sex lasts therefore into adolescence and it is when children become adults and assume adult status and obligations that things fall in their proper places.

In many homes, there is a great deal of co-operation between parents for the best training of their children. Mothers are generally in charge of the children's early training but as they grow older, a father assumes an important role in the process. When a child misconducts himself, the general saying in Bompata is: "DSE ose" (Literally: 'He is like the father') This remark made about a misbehaved child is resented by all fathers and they do their best to make their children 'like them' in desirable ways. Almost all mothers co-operate in this training of the children. They have good reason to be so co-operative. A good child is a good member of HER (the mother's) family. When a father returns home after a period of absence, grave misconduct of children is reported to him by the mother. Fathers generally punish sons and leave the punishment of daughters to the wife. Disagreements about a father's disciplinary measures to his own children are said to be uncommon except when the punishment has tended to be unduly severe and harmful. It is held that a father's efforts to train his children are made in the interest of the mother's family and a wife who stands in his way in disciplining his children may so offend her husband that he may show indifference towards his children's

conduct. Such a mother would surely be cutting her nose to spite her face.

This unity and harmony between parents for the training of their children is generally possible only in monogamous marriages in which the couples live together in the same house. In polygamous marriages, the children live in the mother's family compound and they hardly ever see the father except during his evening visits to his wives. Such children are therefore free from any serious systematic training in behaviour, and if they are boys they become easily spoilt. It is not easy for a father to bring all his male children to live with him in his own compound. A petty quarrel between two non-uterine brothers can bring about a major quarrel between their respective mothers. Wives of a polygamous marriage always have petty jealousies and hidden quarrels to which they give vent at the slightest provocation.

To conclude this sub-heading on parent-child relationships it may be of interest to add that of a sample of thirty children of both sexes with ages ranging from six to eighteen, all expressed that their first loyalty was to their mothers. In an emergency, a mother would have first claim to their help. This is not strange for while a mother is a member of one's 'abusua' (maternal family), the father is not and direct interest of his family in the welfare of his children usually ceases upon his death.

Relationships with siblings: Next to his mother, a child's closest companions are his own siblings. To older children, the arrival of a new baby is the source of much joy. There is increased activity in the home and meals tend to be more regular and



"Young siblings generally show no preferences in their attachment to one another with regard to sex" Afua aged $3\frac{3}{4}$ yrs. and Yaw aged five are regular playmates.



At a later age, girls prefer to play with girls and Afua aged six and Akosua aged $7\frac{1}{2}$. hardly ever part company.

delightful during the mother's confinement that at other times. The pleasure of having a new playmate in the house is also great. Children are often seen squatting near a new baby admiring his lighter skin and clear eyes. "My mother has brought us a little 'white man', (Twi: 'Oburoni'), a young year old girl was heard informing a friend of a new brother's arrival. To a younger child of about eighteen or twenty months, the arrival of a new baby is not a pleasant happening. Many children show hostility to their newly born siblings. It is likely that the sudden transference of maternal affection to the new infant causes emotional insecurity in the young child. Such children cry a lot during the first few months of the new baby's arrival. A mother said that her two year old child actually attempted to kill his two weeks old baby sibling by holding the baby's nose and mouth and choking him. "Put her down and pick me up", another young daughter is said to have told her mother. When the older baby is still comparatively young, mothers pay heed to such requests to prevent the child from crying but if he is older, he is ignored or even scolded.

Young siblings generally show no special preferences in their attachment to one another with regard to their sexes. As they grow older, the tendency is for siblings of the same sex to be more attached in both work and play. Loyalty to play groups sometimes reveal itself in hostility of one sex to the other. Girls in a play group may scold or fight a male sibling who insists on joining their group and vice

versa. After the age of six or seven, quarrels between siblings of the opposite sex become rare. Children of the same sex who are near in age continue to quarrel over possessions, food, games and other things until they become adolescents. Except when a quarrel ends in a fight and bad bruises parents merely shout for peace and the quarrel ends. But sometimes when the result of a fight has been bad for one of the participants, it is investigated and the offending sibling is punished accordingly for starting the quarrel.

Siblings whose age difference is great hardly ever quarrel or fight. perhaps because of the comparative emotional maturity of the older ones or because of the differences of interests between the age groups. Many informants were of the opinion that the position is so because younger children are taught to be respectful to older ones. Probably, because of their superior mental and physical development, many older siblings enjoy a great deal of respect from younger ones. Kofi, aged four had so much respect and admiration for his elder brother Kwasi, aged eight, that he always respected Kwasi's opinion on all matters better than he did.

^{for example,} ~~for~~ his parents'. If _{he} his mother tells Kofi not to climb a wall lest he falls, he would run to ask Kwasi if that is true.

Paternal siblings of an early age hardly ever meet one another. As adults, most informants held that paternal siblings were more fond of each other than full siblings. No explanation could be given to this general attitude but it appears the absence of excessive familiarity which

is the lot of uterine siblings living under the same roof contributes to this almost perpetual fondness of paternal siblings for one another because 'absence makes the heart grow fonder.'

Relationships with adults other than parents: A child's next group of closest acquaintances are the relatives of his parents. Depending on which of the parents' compounds a child lives in he soon recognises that other people than his parents are kind to him and their presence adds to his pleasure and feeling of security. The influence of the relatives and friends of a child's parents on his training is great. It is for instance customary for every member of the household to share his food with the children there and where there are many married women who cook their own meals in a house, most parents complain that their children get involuntarily overfed. Habits and usages of close relatives affect the child's own habits however hard the parents may try to train him in their own way.

A knowledge of who is or who is not one's parents' relatives and of one's obligations to them is an important part of a child's training in Bompata. As soon therefore as a child has acquired speech and some understanding, of what is said to him, he is carefully taught all the classificatory terms for all the relatives of both parents for they are also the child's relatives. Most children are more familiar with their maternal relatives than with their paternal ones. The best known maternal relative to many children is the grandmother. She is associated with kindness, food, comfort and soft treatment. Aunts and uncles, if they live in the same family house with the child are also well

known. But where they live in different houses they may remain unimportant to the child until he is much older. Children are taught to respect all these relatives and to be obedient to them especially if he is sent on an errand by any of them. The time when the maternal uncle was more important to a child than the father is gone and in spite of the fact that the child is expected to be polite and courteous to his maternal relatives, the father has the first claim upon his services and obedience.

To all other adults, a child is trained to show respect, politeness and courtesy. "I prefer to suffer disrespect from my children to their showing it to outsiders", a parent would say. Regular friends and visitors of the family are well known and loved by the children. When visitors arrive children must give up their seats and quit the scene of conversation or remain very quiet. Children are taught to prefix the words 'Ena' (mother) and 'Agya' (father) to the names of female and male adults, respectively, who are the co-evals of their own parents.

Many adult informants regretted that nowadays people were only interested in their own children and also that children generally show no respect for their elders. They blame the schools for this situation. It is true that schooling offers little time at home for children to get acquainted with people outside the immediate family circle. The young literate has a tendency to regard the illiterate as inferior. Economic and social change contribute greatly to this attitude.

SPEECH.

The development of intelligible speech is the one

single factor which brings to perfection a child's awareness of his relations with his social group.

All parents in Bompata are aware that a child's cries are his earliest attempts at drawing attention to himself. Children are known to be able to express their feelings by cries of varying loudness and length. Some ^{female} informants said that they can trace rudiments of words expressing feeling in their babies' cries at a very early age. The great majority of mothers interviewed are able to differentiate cries from pain, physical discomfort and hunger for all other kinds of children's cries. To the former they pay quick heed and take their time over the latter kind of cries. Cries of pain etc. are said to be characterised by loudness and tearfulness. Suckling the baby is every mother's first reaction to her baby's cry. It is only when the child refuses the breasts that other causes are investigated and removed. Other children's cries I learnt, are out of anger, frustration, fear or loneliness, and are said to be tearless and not sorrowful. Mothers are generally not in a hurry to pay heed to their babies when they cry for any of these reasons. Some even believe that it does the child's voice and throat some good to cry.

Some mothers lavish so much love on their children and attend so promptly to the slightest cry that children later find in crying a weapon for obtaining all wishes. Sitting with a friend one evening his two and a half year old daughter walked to him and asked to be picked into the father's laps. "But, I am tired and cannot pick you up. You are so heavy!" the father replied. "If you do not pick me up, I shall cry."

The little girl burst into disturbing loud yells and soon, she got her wish.

After children have reached the age of three, parents consider crying unnecessary and expect them to express their wishes in speech. A fall, extreme hunger, fright or illness remain legitimate reasons for crying even up till the age of six or seven. Boys are expected to stop crying earlier than girls. A baby's first attempt at making vocal sounds resembling speech pleases all parents. Noises which bear the slightest resemblance to actual words are given meaning. The baby's first real words receive encouraging comment. Badly formed words and sentences provide amusement to all members of the family and sometimes fond nicknames are given to children from the improper names they give to objects. In one home, a three-year old girl, Abena was nicknamed 'Nkena' because that was what she called 'ntama' (a cover cloth).

A baby learning to talk is so amusing that all members of the family try to talk to him for fun whenever they have the time. The mother of course is his first and most regular collocutor and her influence on the child's early speech habits is great. Later on, when the child begins to run about with his siblings at first and with other children in the neighbourhood later, he learns his speech from them and their influence on his speech is even greater than the mother's. The quick rate of increase of a child's vocabulary when he begins to run about surprises many parents. It is common knowledge that first born children tend to be inarticulate for a longer time than subsequent babies because the first born child has no regular older companion.

to learn his speech from.

A report by a mother to a father on his return after an absence from home, of a child's newest language achievement is received with amusement and pride for it shows that the child is gradually becoming a companion. Very few fathers take more than an occasional casual interest in their children's early speech development. Fathers claim that they are too busy with other family or state affairs to take any part in this aspect of the child's training.

Good speech habits receive much social approval in Bompata. The common saying is: "N'ano ate" (Literally: 'His mouth is open' or 'he is very articulate'). A person who mumbles his words or swallows parts of his sentences, or talks too loudly is considered an ill-bred fellow. Most parents therefore undertake systematically to bring up their children in good speech habits. Stuttering is discouraged but often by methods that rather tend to increase the difficulty. A few informants said they knew some physical treatment for stuttering. It is said that if a stammerer stood in a river at a point where the flow is rapid and talked very loudly with his lips in the water, the rapids will carry the defect away. Lipping is also discouraged and so are all other speech defects. Vulgarity in speech receives more severe check than all the other functional speech defects. Christian parents are ^{generally} _{more} concerned about vulgar speech than the pagans. The use by a child of vulgar language in public is embarrassing to many parents. Teachers in the Primary schools have much difficulty in the early part of the school year trying to help pagan children to discard words and expressions unworthy of the schoolroom.

Much score is set on truthfulness in children.

But methods of inculcating this ^{are} often so faulty that ^{lying is} rather encouraged ~~lying~~. Where a parent makes no difference between the punishment of an offending child who spontaneously confesses his guilt and that of another who tells a lie first for the truth to be discovered afterwards, it is clear that many children will lie not because they are inherently mendacious, but because truthfulness has no better value than ^a lie.

POSSESSIONS:

A common Twi proverb says: "Ena dea, merefa, agya dea, merefa, eno na ede korzo no ba" (literally: 'This is my mother's let me take it, that is my father's I shall take it, brings about the habit of stealing'). Taking what belongs to others without their consent is considered to be training in stealing. Stealing is considered so shameful a habit that all kinds of methods, some unduly severe, are used by all parents in Bompata to discourage their children from acquiring such ^{an} undesirable habit. As early as a child can understand what is said to him, it is brought home to him that there are things that he can take because they are his and there are others which he must not take because they are other people's. Siblings are expected to share their property and undue selfishness is discouraged. If an older child tries to seize anything belonging to a younger one without mutual agreement, the older one is scolded and asked to return the object immediately. If he persists, he is called names. "Woye ayinosuu" (literally: 'you delight in making others unhappy'). If he still persists, the article is seized from him and restored to its rightful owner. A great deal of childish quarrels and fights between siblings arise over the ^{unallowed} taking of one another's



Victoria's baby (the doll) receives a morning bath. . . . To her, it is a real doll even though three days before she was her toilet with powder from it.

property.

The average child in Bompata, it was found out, has very few personal possessions. Some children possess only one or generally two changes of cloth. In the large families sleeping mats are possessed communally, and not all children use pillows when they sleep. In smaller families, individual mats are owned by children. Older children of wealthier parents possess a few extra clothes and of course a school child's textbooks are his. Only in very few homes do children possess imported toys. For dolls, girls generally use a finger of the large plantain, an old empty powder tin, a piece of stick or occasionally the traditional 'Akuaba' or carved doll. Most male children possess in addition to the articles of clothing an old tennis ball, a few rusty nails, and a two-wheeled wooden contrivance which they push about and call a 'car'. The children's toys being so simple, there is no desire to take them to pieces as European children do.

It is strange how little the training given in the keeping of personal property is in all homes. The child's few possessions including his cloths are thrown about the compound and I saw some few really good imported dolls abandoned in the rain for long periods. Even amongst older children of ten years or above, this lack of respect for ones own property is evident and school books and materials are not better treated than the toys and clothes. This no doubt, is due to the fact that rooms are shared by a large number of siblings and their parents. Private rooms or boxes for children are unknown and it must be really difficult to take care of property in a communal room which is so often disorderly.

In spite of the very strict measures parents take to deter children from taking other people's possessions, there is a general sanction for one to possess whatever one finds in the street, on the road or in any place which is not a dwelling house. Losers of articles themselves share this attitude to 'found' property, and are often quite willing to compensate a person who finds an article they have lost especially if he is a child. They do this before claiming the lost article. It is clear that this attitude to found property can and does tend to defeat the end of the careful training in respect for other people's property and in honesty. Another common proverb is: "Yenkyere kromfo kwan mu" (Literally: 'A thief is not caught on the way'). The amount of petty thieving especially by school children under the excuse of having 'found' the articles may be considerable. Some parents realise this and discourage or even punish as severely as they would a proven thief a child who frequently brings home 'found' articles.



These children are learning to carry
water home from the well through
their games.



Playing at making a farm.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

WORK AND SCHOOLING.

In all systems of education, whether formal or informal, the relative importance of vocational training is acknowledged. In the training of a child in Bompata this part of education is not overlooked. A common saying is: "Ahofo ntua ka" (Literally: "Handsome is as handsome does. This does not refer to moral excellence only but also to industry, resourcefulness and hard work. Many young men fail to find suitable wives because they are lazy. "What work does he do?" parents often ask of a would be son in law. A lazy woman is not considered a suitable wife and many women go through life and ^{ever} remain mistresses of men because they are lazy. "I shall not let you have your own way with work, for when you go to your husband indolent and untidy, I shall be blamed for having neglected that part of your training", mothers often tell daughters who are inclined to be lazy. All parents agree that an industrious child is a source of pride and an asset to the family.

A child's earliest acquaintance with work is generally through his play. Girls at the age of three or four play at cooking, sweeping, cleaning the cooking utensils, going to the farm and at all other activities that generally form the normal daily duties of the housewife. At this stage, boys join freely in the games and play the part of fathers, felling trees on the farm, hunting animals or carrying loads of foodstuffs. There is hardly any interference from parents in these activities of their children. Children simply enjoy themselves



Being a trader means more than merely crying out your wares but these girls are counting one before two. If they cannot change money, they are at least learning the art of shouting to attract customers.



These boys work while they play. Water in buckets being sent home on their 'lorries'

and the urge for activity and occasionally of adult encouraging comment are the only incentives.

At a later stage, when children reach the age of about six and a certain degree of muscular co-ordination has been achieved, the systematic training for work begins. This is always connected with the performance of light domestic duties. Girls are taught to sweep, to smear the traditional cooking stove and hearth with red clay, to fetch water from the village stream in utensils suited to their strength. In many homes, they begin to learn how to turn fufu in the wooden mortar or to beat it themselves. In the Zongo where the staple food of the Northern Territory immigrants is maize, their young girls learn how to stamp the corn and to grind the dough on stones. This remains the normal routine^{of} work for the girls until they reach the age of about eight. With increased capacity for walking long distances, they begin to accompany their mothers to the food-farms. On the farm, very little work is expected of these young girls as a rule. While the mother does some serious weeding or planting, the girls are given small pieces of ground to keep free from weeds by picking with the empty hands.

A boy's early training for work follows almost the same line as that for the girl. Between the age of six and nine years, he shares the household work except that in many homes visited during the investigation, parents strictly exempt boys from smearing of floors and cooking stoves with red clay. Sweeping the yard is almost exclusively a female task. All this time, the boy's work is supervised by the mother who occasionally makes reports to the father. If the



This boy hunts birds with his catapult
on his way to the farm.

boy has been very lazy, disciplinary measures are taken. Before the age of ten, boys usually go to farm in company of the mother and share the same kind of work with the sisters - on the farm. Meanwhile, all boys are taught the art of beating fufu, a task which according to many parents is very much resented by them. All children learn to carry on the head, articles of food or firewood from the farms. The intensity and heaviness of work is made to suit the strength of children in all homes. An overworked child, it is said, becomes disobedient, unwilling to work and may even fall ill. All children, especially the girls play the nurse to the younger siblings at one time or another in their free time.

As children grow older and approach early adolescence, the division of work according to sex becomes more and more clear. For practical reasons, girls remain household workers and remain with their mothers. Boys assume more masculine duties. The father's bedroom (usually also the bedroom of the younger members of the family) is swept daily by the boy. He has to keep his father's dining table clean, and occasionally he accompanies the father to the bush to hunt, to set traps or he may be required to help the father in putting up fences or in making minor repairs to the family house. He is given a cutlass of his own and he takes an increasingly serious part in the weeding that has so often to be done on the farms. During the cocoa season, whenever the boy is free, he helps the father on the farm in plucking the pods, weeding, carrying the beans home or in any of the several pieces



School children working to keep the
school compound clean.

of work connected with the cocoa industry and that are normally done by men.

All these activities, as may be clear, are calculated to make the average child in Bompata an industrious self-supporting person in the future. It is a common practice for fathers who still have large pieces of forest land to make gifts of bits of it to their male children. On the land thus acquired, the boy makes his own little farm under the father's guidance and help. It is said that such small beginnings have been the nucleus of larger farms for many boys when they become adults. All this early labour by children of a family is of course, free, and is done as a family obligation. Except among the Northern Territory immigrants who hire their children's labour to farmers for money, child labour for hire with financial returns to the family is unknown in Bompata.

It would be incorrect to imagine that the early training for work in all homes is as smooth as has been described here. In some homes much friction between parents and children (especially adolescent ones) arises out of the unwillingness of children to work heartily. To their own cost, such children grow to realise the serious defect which their own unwillingness makes to their training.

Schools in Bompata give a rural bias to their training but it appears the work done is only superficial. They have tended to upset much of the traditional training in farm work especially and in spite of constant work by pupils in keeping the compounds and school farms clean

there are very few school-leavers in Bompata who can wield a cutlass with any appreciable result on a virgin forest land. This is often regretted by many parents.

APPRENTICESHIP.

One of the main problems of development in Bompata is the almost complete lack of artisans like carpenters, masons and blacksmiths. Trade apprenticeship is relatively unknown. In a village of about two thousand two hundred and fifty inhabitants, with between a hundred and fifty and two hundred adolescents, there are only six boys regularly apprenticed to these trades. Two carpenters, three masons and a blacksmith are receiving training. Building is therefore unusually expensive because of the dearth of artisans in that trade. A great deal of money leaves the village in the pockets of strangers for almost all the few artisans of this class in the village are non-natives. Tailoring, shoemaking, and motor driving perhaps because of the clean nature of the work involved, are more patronised trades than the others.

The conditions of apprenticeship, I learnt is as follows: When a boy or girl with the consent of his parents or guardians decides to follow a certain trade, the father informs the head of the maternal family of the boy or girl. If the proposal proves acceptable to the family head, (this is determined by the general conduct and industry of the apprentice before the suggestion was made) a delegation of a few maternal relatives including the head, the mother, the father and one or two neutral friends approach the master-tradesman to discuss with him his terms of tuition in his

particular trade. The most common arrangement is for the 'master' to take the apprentice into his household. He is to feed him, clothe him occasionally, give him medical attention for minor ailments and what is more important, to teach him his trade over a certain period of time, usually between three and four years. Some apprentices prefer to remain with their masters until they feel they have effectively acquired their respective trades. This may mean a longer or shorter period of apprenticeship according to the general ability of the learner. In consideration of these services to the apprentice, the master expects his apprentice to give him some household services such as helping the wife in some of her domestic duties. In addition, the parents or guardians of the learner agree to pay a sum of money varying between £8 and £16 to the master on the successful completion of the period of apprenticeship by the pupil. In the event of the pupil terminating the agreement before it has run its normal course, out of indolence, disobedience or gross immorality, some masters it is said, insist and take the ^{full} agreed fee from the guardians and may sue them for recovering it if they are unwilling to pay him. The apprenticeship fee is said to be lower if the pupil continues to live with his parents and only goes to learn his trade during working hours. That is an alternative arrangement to the 'boarding and lodging' system. In actual practice, the sum paid at the successful termination of the agreement is usually lower than that fixed at the beginning. This largely depends on the learner's conduct and the quality of the services rendered to the master.

during the period of apprenticeship. The rebate is made in appreciation of the learner's good qualities and cannot be claimed as a right. In these days, a document embodying the terms of the agreement is caused to be drawn by the village letter-writer. A stamping fee of four shillings or more is made to be paid by the pupil's guardians. This is called "tiri nsa" (head rum) and it is shared by all people present as witnesses to the agreement. Sometimes a bottle of gin is provided and drunk instead of the cash "tiri nsa". It is the traditional seal for all agreements.

Relations between apprentices and their tutors are said to be reasonably cordial generally; ~~and~~ untimely and unhappy terminations of agreements are rare. This probably is due to changing economic conditions which compel every sensible growing child to try to equip himself for a decent self-supporting existence in future. This training for the future ~~was~~ seldom out of the minds of apprentices interviewed.

On completion of the course of training, the families combine to provide their wards with the necessary tools and equipment for their trade and set them on their feet in life. Grants of substantial capital are sometimes ^{made to} _{A.A.} new tradesmen in such trades as shoemaking and tailoring which require many expensive tools and machines, for the purchase of equipment for starting.

SCHOOLING.

It is a very common saying in Bompata that the fashion of the times for the proper training of a child for life is to send him to school. All parents

therefore, if they can afford it, send as many of their children as possible to school. This attitude towards schooling is now no more exclusively christian. The pagans and other non-christians have realised the value of formal education and the schools have on their rolls a few Muslim children of Northern Territory parents resident in Bompata — this was not the case a few years ago. The inability of a father in Bompata to send at least two or three of his children to school may involve him in a suit for divorce from the wife with unpleasant results to the man however desirable as a husband he may be in other respects.

As large families are the rule rather than the exception, the financial burden of the children's schooling on the father is often quite considerable. A solution to the problem is sometimes found by giving a shortened basic six-year course of schooling to most of the children and then to remove the girls for the promising boys to complete the full ten-year elementary course. The elementary stage is the general standard reached by most school children in Bompata. Some fathers seek the help of ^{the wife's} maternal relatives in educating the children. Where it is realised that the family is unusually large and where the maternal relatives are willing, this help is got. The general tendency however, is for most fathers to be solely responsible for their children's elementary education and to seek this help from the wife's relatives when any of the children is proceeding to a higher institution — such as to a secondary school or to the university. The time when a father could bear children and escape

the direct responsibility for his formal education is fast passing. Of the hundred and sixty children in the Local Authority School over eighty per cent were maintained by one or the other or both parents. Only ^{about} twenty percent were the wards of ^{maternal} uncles and other maternal relatives. This has the happy turn of making marriages with children more stable for it is realised by many female informants that not many men whom they can marry after a first or second marriage will be willing to look after the children of the first or second marriage. Most men when divorced by their wives refuse to send their children to school out of money which a new wife is helping them to make. Polygamy is fast becoming a luxury for only the rich in Bompata for, according to many male informants, it involves the expense of having many children to send to school.

Why do people send their children to school in Bompata? All informants were quite clear in their aims and they are mainly economic and social. A pagan female informant said: "The ability of my husband to educate the children for me is the only point in my continuing to live with him. I have no share in his property if I survive him, neither have my children. But if they are sent to school by him, they will be able to support me in my old age." This view of the economic value of formal education is held by the men also. Men claim that now that there is not much forest land for cocoa farming, the best way to equip a child for life is to train him to be able to do a 'white man's' work to support himself

and, if necessary, the parents when they are old.

The social value of education to parents is also great. It is perhaps, the main motive for the education of girls. It is generally acknowledged that the economic value of an educated girl is negligible, but the presence of many 'ladies' (school-educated women) in a family has some social value. One meets all the best people if one has desirable educated girls to give in proper marriage to hardworking men. Watching a man walking home from church one Sunday during this investigation, with his two sons on leave from some civil service jobs in Kumasi, one could not help noticing from his general comportment and 'the workings on his face' that he felt happier than a King. Praise of neighbours for a parent's self-sacrifice in order to give his children a good education excites much pleasurable feeling in all parents.

Perhaps, the advice of a woman to her truuant schoolboy son to return to school in order to become literate and to avoid the village communal labour as an adult, may shock many modern educationists but it is a clear indication of the specially privileged social position which educated men and women have held and continue to hold in Bompata. This exemption of literates from communal labour is slowly disappearing due to citizenship training in the schools.

The third motive for sending children to school in Bompata is religious. The baptismal rites of the Presbyterian Church which has the largest following in

Bompata enjoins on the parents and sponsors of the child, the obligation of giving him a christian training in due course and a formal education preferably in the Mission school is considered the ideal way of executing this obligation. At the annual Midnight New Year service, a roll of the children who have reached the school going age is called out of the baptismal register. Parents are solemnly reminded of their baptismal promises made in respect of their children. These secular reasons backed by the religious feeling and the public opinion of his co-worshippers never fail to make a parent send his child at the re-opening of the schools.

To the young child, the joy of sharing the company of many friends at school where he can play games and be free from running errands at home is the earliest incentive for remaining at school. Kofi, aged five was told when he went to school that he was below the school going age. He cried a lot and forced the head teacher to admit him because all his male siblings and play-mates were at school. As children grow older, the real advantages of a school education unfold more clearly before them. The commonest reason which children in the lower primary classes give for being at school is that they are learning in order that when they grow, they can wear shoes and clothes and not be made to go to farm. As the basic skills of writing and reading are acquired, the ability to express themselves in new ways excite pleasure and keeps many children at school. The love of writing on walls and on the ground of simple sentences, though not a very good habit, indicate the general feeling of pride of achievement which

many of the children exhibit.

In the Middle school, pupils share similar attitudes to schooling with the parents. Social distinction in a largely illiterate society, the hope for a 'white collared' employment in which light work can be done for much money are the incentives to the self discipline and obedience to school rules and regulations. To some of the pupils, who are relatively old (for the school serves a rural community), these rules must be really unpleasant.

There are three schools in Bompata, a Presbyterian and a Local Authority Primary School, and the Presbyterian Middle School. All of them have mixed classes. Children therefore have plenty of vacancies in the village schools and very few indeed ever leave the village to attend schools elsewhere. There are very few non-native children in the schools because many of the surrounding villages have their own schools. The teachers are predominantly male with only four females between the three schools. Pupil-teacher relations are said to be quite cordial. During this investigation, it was observed one Saturday evening that a school boy of eight on seeing his teacher walked briskly to him saluted smartly and enquired informally after his teacher's health. This provided a striking contrast to the school days of a couple of decades ago when the teacher was identified with the cane, pain and displeasure and was an object to be run away from whenever there was the chance of doing so. There are very few cases of truancy and unwillingness of pupils to come to school. In the few cases, the headteach-

ers are of the opinion that the cause is due to poor and unhappy home conditions. Children resent coming to school without ^{the} necessary school materials or in tattered clothes there to be laughed at by their more fortunate fellows.

All inhabitants of Bompata acknowledge that the only justification of their continuing to stay at their present site away from the main Accra Kumasi trunk road and railway line lies in the fact that they have spent much money building their schools which cannot be removed to a new site - without much hardship. Everybody is therefore proud of the local schools and there is a positive effort to make them better. Parent-Teacher relations are generally cordial. Public opinion gives the schools and the teachers a free hand in the training of the children. Disputes over school decisions and disciplinary measures are very rare. "If you can teach your own child, take him out of the school and do so," an elder of the chief's court told a man who could not understand why his child had been punished by being made to weed the school compound for habitual lateness. In fact, some parents, realising the general effectiveness of school discipline, sometimes take their offending children to receive the school's disciplinary measures. The general respect shown by the adult inhabitants and the children in Bompata for school property including farm crops has impressed many teachers in the school and has excited favourable comment for a long time.

School-mate relations are said to be

quite cordial. Rows and fights between boys are very rare. Girls on the other hand, tend to be very quarrelsome especially in the upper classes of the Middle School. The cause of these quarrels, I learnt, is almost always jealousy over boy-friends which ^{nearly} every girl above the age of puberty possesses. The ~~boys~~ ^{friends} were in a few cases school boys or adult males in the village.

Amongst the boys, there are intense friendships all through the school course. These are temporary in the Primary School but in the Middle school they tend to last long. Heterosexual friendships are very few and often sexual adventures are involved in such friendships. The traditional separation of of the sexes long before schooling starts, makes such friendships uncommon for public opinion does not favour them however healthy their aims may be.

Boys' groups and gangs are common and interesting to observe carefully. One group interviewed included among their usual activities, hunting for rats to sell to people who eat them. This is a source of pocket money to the members. The second activity is said to be group study at night; ^{they do} doing their home work. ^{They make} and occasional escapades to dances in the evenings when the village brass band is playing. Parents and the school authorities prohibit the last activity because of its demoralising influence.

One other common activity of these bands of boy friends is the hiring of their labour to cocoa farmers during parts of the school holidays - when the cocoa season is on. They weed the farms and do odd jobs. When at the end of a four week



To a group of six-year olds at school, football is not strictly a boys' game. A mixed group is about to begin kicking the ball about.

holidays a group of six boys in the Middle School made an amount of eight pounds from their own labour, each could make himself a new school uniform and pay for the end-of-year picnic and school treat without asking for money from their parents. Such friendships last after school days and references of some adults to the proverbial 'good old days' at school centre chiefly on happy memories of the days when the undertook such tasks to earn little sums, perhaps the first real earnings of their lives.

It is only at the school with its wide and airy grass lawns and playgrounds that the average child in Bompata gets real activity out of his games. In the absence of the overprotective attitude of parents, games are enjoyed to the full. Running, jumping and team games are much enjoyed. Football which ~~with~~^{to} infants, means kicking a ball about is a very favourite game. Volley ball, American tennis and croquet are some of the games provided by some of the schools. Girls play netball and the traditional games become more vigorous sources of activity. Athletics are popular during their season. The desire to excel in athletics is general because it excites favourable comments from parents and guardians who come to watch the school meetings. After such a meeting, it is common to see jumping pits and racing tracks crudely constructed in lanes by younger children, and boys seriously practising in imitation of what they saw. Swimming is unknown by many children because all the rivers are too shallow for it. The hilly nature of the site on which Bompata stands makes riding much too tedious and there

are practically no bicycles in the village.

Traditional games continue to be played.

Boys play games requiring skill and accuracy of observation and close attention. It is remarkable that boys begin to show cruel treatment to beaten opponents in their games at this stage.

"Srama" is a traditional game requiring much skill and attentiveness and is popular amongst school children of the upper elementary stage. The leaves of the oil-palm tree are collected and tied together at one end. The leaves hang loose at the other end. It looks like a shuttlecock used in badminton. The game is played by two teams of about eight or nine players each. Each member of the team provides himself with a thin strong rope with a noose at one end and they line up in ranks facing each other with about ten or twelve yards space between the two teams. The serving side shouts: "Srama ee!" to call the attention of the opposing team which also replies "Yee!" to signify preparedness. The captain of the serving side then throws the "shuttlecock" high into the air towards the opposing side and each member tries to catch it as it descends with the heavy knob at one end downwards. The catching is done only with the noose of the players' ropes. If one is successful, a point is won for the side, if not, the throw is made to the other side by the captain of the unfortunate team for the same effort at catching to be made by the players. The first side to gain ten points wins the game and they are rewarded by chasing the beaten side and hitting the players with their hands or the shuttlecock until the

'A'



'B'



Enjoying a game of 'Ass' are these
two groups of girls. 'A' - Girls of the Middle School.
'B' - Some illiterate adolescent
girls on a Sunday afternoon.

fugitives reach a point previously decided upon by both teams as the safety line or 'home'

Another popular boys' game usually played out of school in the evenings is the 'Anofom' game. This requires much attention. The leader begins to chant a rhyme which has a response which all the other players make. At a time when none of the other players is suspecting, the leader makes a change in his chant. The player who is not attentive enough and does not change his response to suit the new change is the odd man out. He is mercilessly beaten by all the players until he recites a long chant of apology. A few of the chants for this game are included in the appendix to this essay.

A popular girls' game in Bompata is the 'Aso' and it is played by all girls whether they go to school or not. The name of the game literally means: 'Catching'. Any number of players can join in the game, but a dozen or fifteen is said to be ideal. The players stand in a semi-circle with one girl standing inside it. They then begin to clap and sing special 'Aso' songs. The girl in the horseshoe dances according to the rhythm of the song throwing herself backwards to be caught and thrown forward again by the other players at certain parts of the song. Each player takes her turn of standing in the semi-circle and dancing too. The game is played by all girls above the age of about six. As it requires some sense of rhythm, younger ones cannot play it effectively. The songs are mainly love ones. A few of them have been included in the appendix.

The health development of a child when he enters school in Bompata is remarkable and no parent fails to notice it. Scabies and other skin diseases are rare amongst school children and many of the children are full of activity. Most parents express great surprise when a school child dies for it is held that school children rarely die from disease. Regular baths, regular meals instead of eating at ^{any} ~~at~~ times, healthy exercises and other healthy habits inculcated at school contribute to make the school child generally healthier and more attractive than his non-school-going brother.

Language development of children when they enter school is acknowledged by all teachers to be spectacular. While he is 'to be seen, not heard' at home by his parents, the school child is encouraged at school to talk. After the shyness of the first few weeks at school has been overcome, it is surprising what stock of stories, riddles and other language activities the child can take part in and enjoy. Children's stories are almost always 'ananse' stories and long fantasy ones and children have a large stock of them before they come to school.

The only books which children ever read at Bompata are their school textbooks, and it appears ^{that} it is only in school that ~~children~~ ^{they are} read. There is little opportunity or encouragement in the homes for reading. Lighting is always poor and parents monopolise ^{at night,} the use of the lamps. There are no other books apart from the school textbooks and reading for pleasure or being read to, is unknown to children in all homes.

It is paradoxical that in spite of the average parents strong desire to get his child educated at school and of his passive co-operation with the teachers for the proper disciplining of the child, he shows no interest whatsoever in the child's school work. Parents' only contact with their children's performances at school is made at the schools' athletic meetings or at football matches. If their children excell in any of the activities, the parents feel proud and happy but in all other matters of his child's schooling, the attitude is ^{of} 'the teachers know best' ~~one~~. It was surprising during this investigation to find out that there were many literate parents who ^{did} ~~were~~ not ^{know} ~~aware~~ of which of the ^{two} primary schools their children attended, much less did they the classes in which their own children were.

still remains the criterion for considering a boy as fit to partake of adult activities, such as attendance at communal labour. The culminating point in a girl's process of maturity is more unmistakable than that of a boy. The fully developed breasts and the onset of menstruation determine her having entered upon womanhood. "Wako mmaa mu" (Literally, 'she has gone among women') is the polite way of referring to a girl's first menstruation.

In the light of more modern ideas on this period of child growth, it is clear that these methods of determining a child's maturity and his consequent readiness to adopt strictly adult standards of behaviour is very faulty. This brings about a lot of difficulty in parent-child relations during the period of adolescence. Physiological and psychological research has revealed a wide variety of individual differences in these and other aspects of human development. A girl may begin to menstruate at the age of thirteen or as late as at the age of eighteen. Similar individual differences exist among boys in the growth of pubic hair, muscular development or the breaking of the voice. It is therefore unfair to expect adult standards of emotional stability and behaviour from a girl simply because she has begun to menstruate at fourteen or earlier or from a boy because being naturally hairy, he may have begun to grow even a beard at the age of sixteen. But such is the general attitude of nearly all parents to adolescents.

All the emotional and physical disturbances peculiar to adolescents are known to many parents.

Moodiness, extreme shyness in company especially of the opposite sex, frequent tiredness, oversensitiveness to ordinary criticism are known to be characteristic of adolescence. The adolescent, however, receives little or no sympathy at all from his parents for these states of the body or mind for which he is not any more responsible than he is for cutting his first teeth at the age of six months. Unkind remarks and jokes are made about the awkwardness of movement, the adolescent is scolded for minor faults, All these and many other indiscreet attitudes towards the child cause estrangements between parents and their adolescent children with unhappy results.

Parental control especially of girls tend to be unduly rigid and often thoughtless. Freedom of action and movement is virtually denied the girls. The slightest acquaintance with boys is viewed with misgiving. Even friendship with other girls is sometimes discouraged. Formal solemn advice on what is and what is not proper to be done coupled with frequent scolding for disobedience bewilders and frustrates the girls. Some parents deny their adolescent girls even the ordinary amusements of life, on the pretext of keeping them from getting into trouble. A girl in her desperation once decided to allow any boy friend who approaches her to gain carnal knowledge of her in order to spite her over-protective mother. "If all that they forbid me to do were as bad as all that, I should never have been born to them," she said. For these reasons, sexual difficulties and unusual experiences are never discussed with parents. Sexual knowledge is usually picked up from

questionable sources and mistakes which are much regretted later, are made by a large number of girls some of whom become unmarried mothers.

Boy-Girl Romances: Boys generally pass through adolescence with much less difficulty than girls. That there are no puberty rites for boys in Bompata shows that no serious beliefs or expectations of difficulty are attached to their maturity.

It is said that early in the ^{period of} ~~adolescence~~ ^{adolescence} ~~period~~ ^{intense} homosexual friendships are made by boys. Friendships are formed for several kinds of activities. Many parents resent this increased interest of their sons in many friends and where they think some of the boy's new acquaintances and friends are of questionable character likely to lead him into trouble, they make no secret of their objection to the friendship. As usual, the approach to the problem often lacks sympathy and the boy may be grossly alienated by being scolded or being unduly oppressed. Many boys under such feelings tend to stay out longer from the home. Where a boy has got completely out of hand, he begins to sleep out of the family house and to sleep in other places in company of his friends. Such troubles over the choice of friends are the most common difficulties of adolescent boys. Careers have been ruined by careless ^{by the} handling by parents of such situations ^{and of} lack of understanding of the boys. A boy Kusi, aged fifteen ^{and a half}, was seen by the mother in the company of a much older boy aged about eighteen. The mother felt that the older boy had certain bad habits which he may pass on to her schoolboy son. She therefore ordered his son not to play with the older

boy again. The advice did not please Kusi and so in order to spite his mother, he began to play ^{the} truant at school. In the end it became necessary to remove his name from the ^{class} register. No amount of advice could let him give up his friends in favour of continuing his schooling. Of course, in a village, such problem-children are rare but it is an indication of the constant frictions that arise between parents and sons in the latter's choice of friends and play groups.

It is from such adolescent play groups made up of children of varying ages that boys acquire most of their knowledge about sex. Confessions of homosexual activity amongst such groups are not easy to obtain but it appears masturbation, at least is almost generally practised. This is said to relieve the intense sexual excitement which follow undesirable lessons on sex and vivid descriptions of sexual experiences from the older members of the groups.

In due course, heterosexual friendships, ^{sometimes} are made between adolescents in particular neighbourhoods. Sexual attraction and satisfaction of ~~the~~ ^{sexual} urge through occasional sexual intercourse, ^{and end} are the main incentive ^{to be} for this kind of romance. The girls appear extremely serious about such friendships, the general desire being that of possessing the boy-friend. Boys do not appear to be so serious and though there may be quarrels over the possession of a particular girl, the general tendency is for them to know as many ^{girls} as possible. Girls express their love during the usual evening games where they sing heartily, love songs in praise of their lovers. Sometimes little gifts of fruit and

other kinds of food are made in secret to the lovers. Boys also give presents of some money if they have any, or of sweets and other uncommon delicacies such as bread, cakes, ^{and} toffees. Such friendships are said to be short lived. As the girls grow older, other qualities in men other than the ability to satisfy the sex urge begin to appeal to them. For practical purposes, they realise that the friendship of an older or working man who can clothe ^{her} and give her substantial presents is better than one of her own co-evals who may still be supported by their parents. "What can these "knickers" boys (implying that the boys' possessions consist of only a pair of knickers) give you if you 'deal' with them?" girls are often reminded of the inability of younger adolescents to support them if the girls continued to befriend the boys.

Separations of lovers for such purely economic reasons are said to bring about bitterness and are the cause of petty private quarrels. Boys call their old friends prostitutes ^{when} later, the girl friend begins to show indifference and non-co-operation. "If a boy beats a girl for what appears to be a very trivial cause, then know that broken friendship or rejected love is the reason," a parent said.

Puberty and Puberty Rites: Girls when they reach the age of puberty, undergo a simple rite conducted by the maternal grandmother or in her absence, the girl's mother. The ceremony is calculated to ensure the girl's fertility and happiness in later life. It is said that about thirty years ago, these rites were as elaborate as they still are in other parts of Ashanti. It entailed a great deal of

expenditure for providing the girl with clothes, ornaments and other personal effects normally required by women. If the girl had been dutiful, obedient and respectful as a child, it is said that after the purely mystical part of the rite had been performed at home, she was taken out and adorned and placed on a stool where amidst drumming and merry-making, she received monetary gifts from friends and relatives. These gifts sometimes amounted to quite a handsome sum and it became the girl's capital out of which she bought her equipment for life.

The influence of christianity in Bompata and its outlying villages has been so great that it has not merely shorn the rites of all their heathenish tinge but ~~all~~ ^{they} people have ^{been} lost them. What is now left, I learnt, is a very simple private ceremony of which only the closest relatives hear anything. Nevertheless, the importance of the girl's puberty rite is still great in the minds of all parents both christian and pagan. A girl who became a mother, in the olden days, before she had been publicly declared a woman by the performance of the puberty rites was severely punished. She and her lover were banished from the village for the rest of their lives. In addition, her parents were fined heavily by the chief in order to purify the stools and to pacify the gods and the ancestral spirits. Such severe punishments are no more administered on the 'Kyiri bra' (Literally: one who 'conceives without having menstruated') but public opinion against her is still strong. It is believed that motherhood before this simple rite has been performed brings with it danger

and ill-luck for the young woman in particular and to the whole state in general.

All girls interviewed in the village or in the upper classes of the Middle School held that they had heard of menstruation before they began to menstruate. None had got the knowledge from their parents. Older friends and siblings are their chief informants on this topic. From the written answers to a questionnaire given to the Middle school girls, it appears that this previous knowledge does not reduce the excitement and fear of girls at their first experience of menstruation. The first appearance of menstrual flow is said to upset all girls. Friends and older siblings are the first people pubescent girls generally inform about their menstruation. Parents and older relatives are kept as long as possible in the dark about this change in the lives of their daughters. It is considered immodest and shameful to go about informing parents and other adults about one's menstruation. Mothers have many shrewd ways of observing their girls to find out if they have menstruated for it is a mark of pride to have given birth to a girl who lives long enough to become a woman. General behaviour of the menstruating girl, the frequency of her baths (some ^{girls} have three or four baths a day during menstruation) physical signs of blood in the bath room are indicators to the fact of a girl having menstruated. Most girls admit this condition by merely nodding their heads in the affirmative when asked by their mothers. A few shy ones may refuse to say anything. The regularity of periods after the first flow

varies from one girl to another. Mothers watch the periods very closely to detect any irregularity and to act immediately to avoid a "kyiri bra" in the family. Nine months is the normal period of time after the first menses that the periods become strictly regular. Very few girls have regular periods right from the beginning. Many girls are said to miss the menses for a few months at a time before they begin to be regular.

As soon as possible after a mother is convinced that her daughter has 'become a woman' she buys some eggs and gets ready to perform the simple puberty rite. Early in the morning, it is said, the girl takes a thorough bath and is smeared thickly with melted shea butter. Meanwhile she prepares a meal of mashed yam or plantains soaked with red palm oil. The eggs are boiled hard and got ready for serving. The girl is wrapped in a spotless white cloth and is placed on a clean white carved Ashanti stool. Whoever is officiating at the ceremony takes some of the mashed yam, sprinkles it about the yard and informs the ancestral spirits by special incantations of the fact that their granddaughter had by their help and that of the gods and the sky god (Nyame) 'become a woman' and that her 'mouth was being touched' (i.e. she was being purified for health, happiness and abundant fertility) on that day. "May you X, you Y, you Z, (she mentions the names of some important ancestors) come and partake of her mashed yam, bless her with long life, health, and abundant fertility; let her give birth to thirty children," she concludes. One of the eggs is then given to the girl to eat. The

The woman performing the rites keeps warning her: "Wōka mu a, wōaka wo ba mu, wōwes a a wōawe wo ba" (literally: 'If you bite it you bite your child, if you chew it you chew your child'). The first three eggs are swallowed whole by the girl. The remaining eggs are eaten in the normal way. The ceremony is performed privately in the presence of only the adult women of the immediate household.

Amongst the pagans, the fact of the girl's puberty is reported to the queen-mother — the head of the women-folk. Normally, she sends a present to the pubescent girl. It is now common for her to send words of congratulation to the girl and to her mother for having added a woman to the female population of the village. The girl is congratulated for having remained chaste until the gods and the ancestors have recognised her maturity.

Chastity before marriage is considered ideal but in practice, it is rare amongst girls in Bompata once they have undergone this simple puberty rite. It is said that some mothers realising the ^{unusual} sexual weakness of daughters perform this rite for the daughters before the actual menstruation starts. This is done to preclude the unhappy situation called "kyiri bra". Public opinion against unmarried motherhood after the puberty rites have been performed in respect of a girl is not as serious as it is before their performance.

One important factor which keeps most girls, especially the christian ones, in check over sexual lapses is the confirmation into full membership of the church. The Presbyterian Church requires every adolescent member to undergo

that christian rite. For the girls, it follows as early as possible after the traditional puberty rites have been performed. This church ceremony has become so fashionable that some pagan girls sometimes attach themselves to the church in order to be confirmed. The confirmation service is normally held once a year preferably towards christmas and in the height of the cocoa season. It is attended with a great display of finery. Parents provide their daughters and occasionally sons with plenty of personal effects for display on the occasion and afterwards. Gold ornaments and beautiful cloths and shoes are purchased for the confirmation candidates. In the week following the Sunday on which the ceremony is held those who have been confirmed enjoy a period of feasting and many receive valuable presents from friends and relatives. Financial gain to the confirmees is considerable. The average amount realised, by ten girls, during the ^{most} recent confirmation, was fifteen pounds; the highest figure for one girl was twenty two pounds. The confirmation, as may be seen, has therefore adequately replaced the public part of the former elaborate puberty rites without any element of heathenism. The chief function of that part of the ^{former} traditional rites was to provide a means of raising money to equip the young woman with personal effects with which to start adult life. Girls who do not avoid becoming pregnant before they are confirmed regret it bitterly and their parents consider it as disgraceful as if their daughters had been "Kyiribra"

As soon as possible after these simple

puberty rites, most parents are anxious to get their daughters off their hands by marrying them to desirable young men or to any other type of suitors. The main criterion for judging a man's suitability as a husband is his ability to support the woman coupled with his capacity to procreate. Love-matches are ^{considered} ideal beginnings of marriage but arranged marriages are also common in Bompata. Boys, because of economic conditions have to postpone marriage till a much later age than their female co-evals. They do so in order to mature economically and emotionally for the responsibilities of being a husband. Many adult males therefore remain bachelors when their own female friends during adolescence are married and have three or four children.

CONCLUSION.

In writing a conclusion (in which one may express some opinion on the beliefs and practices) to an essay on Child Training in a largely illiterate and conservative Society, the temptation to be overcritical and prescriptive is great. It is made more so after one has been introduced through some of the best books and well-informed lectures to the most modern trends of thought on the subject. The writer makes no pretence that he may not be led into the temptation. The effort made here is to give an objective criticism of some of the traditional methods of child training in the light of modern knowledge in so far as they are practicable in the conditions obtaining in Bompata.

When in discussions with parents in Bompata anyone tried to criticise certain practices and beliefs about child welfare, one is met with the retort: "That was how all of you were brought up, and yet you did not die". But the reply: "Yes, but perhaps that is why we are less healthy and are not better in our achievements than what we are now", often leads to a more useful discussion and exchange of ideas with hopeful results for improvement. This is intended to be a brief discussion of some of these traditional methods of child training which mercifully spared some of us lucky adults in childhood with special reference for good or ill, to their influence on three main aspects of a human being's health — namely physical, mental and moral health.

In the chapter on Health Development, it was indicated that the whole attitude of parents to disease

and illhealth is mainly superstitious. Witches cause almost all diseases and infantile mortality from natural causes is not widely accepted. This attitude leads to a sad state of indifference to the health needs of children. Feeding is irregular and children receive the most undesirable parts of meals. Side by side with this superstitious attitude to disease and death is the idea that school children are healthier and do not often die from disease. The connection between good habits and health will not be difficult to make clear by a sympathetic leader of a discussion group. Such sympathetic discussions between parents and social workers can bring about a good deal of improvement on traditional methods even if only very slowly. It appears also that some improvement in health can be made by the provision of more clinics within easier reach of parents than they are at present. By constant proofs of the relative effectiveness and lasting results of scientific treatment alone can the 'juju man be ousted from the still important position he occupies in the lives of people in Bompata. He lives by preying upon the superstition of parents and the longer people remain so the better it is for him.

Preventive health measures are of course more important than curative ones, and they are inadequate in Bompata. This is, of course, the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide. But a clear idea of the connection between say filth and ill-health will encourage more self-help than is at present available in the village. A person who understands why he does something co-operates and works better than an ignorant one. The apathy of parents due to

general attitudes to illness defeats the end of the training children receive at school. The traditional dunghill which breeds flies, the traditional pit latrine which spreads diseases continue to be used generation after generation because diarrhoea, dysentery and other fly-borne diseases are believed to be carried, not by infected flies but by a malevolent witch. Under such ideas of parents, some children may escape death and become adults but it is doubtful if they have been brought up to enjoy the maximum good health which ought to have been theirs.

Many factors in the traditional system of child training combine to retard the attainment of good mental health. The importance of protecting little children from accidents by parents can never be over-emphasised. But the over-protective attitude of parents to children's normal activities is of positive harm. It causes certain emotional states in children which do not contribute to progressive living in later life. Some form of healthy adventure at one time or another is of training value for a child. Life is a game of trial and error and of learning from past experiences. Freedom of activity which leads to individual self-realization is denied most children by parents. This has the apparently good effect of making school discipline relatively easy to maintain in the local schools as teachers will readily bear out. But faced with a class of conforming pupils who have been trained to be seen and not heard and who have no inclination to explore nor to ask adults questions, nor to do anything not ordered by the teacher, the progressive educator sees before him

not good pupils but the beginnings of a non-progressive adult community. This fear is confirmed by present conditions in Bompata. Leadership is poor and there has been very little progress and general development during the past quarter of a century. This overprotective attitude lasts well into adult life of the children and many parents choose careers for their children. Their choice is not based on what appeals to the children, but on what will offer the most peaceful sedentary life. It is true that no country ever progresses whose people are all pensionable employees and this is demonstrated in Bompata. Over eighty percent of school leavers become teachers because it is held that it is a safe non-adventurous employment requiring the exercise of very little initiative. Sad failures in other fields of employment are common.

This tendency to be inactive, 'good' and uninitiative affects the intellectual attainments of children. It is sad to note that after about sixty years of being the centre of learning in Ashanti Akim, Bompata has not been able to produce even one graduate. No doubt, other factors may have contributed to make this so but it is also true that some freedom of children for healthy activity, freedom for adventure and exploration, can surely enhance success in intellectual pursuits and make out of her future citizens some men with guts in them. According to orthodox parents, the children of polygamous parents at first appear to be wayward. But it appears that with their comparative freedom from paternal domination they develop more naturally than christian children and also get on well in life.

The general morality of most people in Bompata is normal. This is not strange in a small homogenous community where public opinion can easily control the individual and where social approval of one's conduct carries much weight. Sexual morality however is relatively low. Three things appear to contribute towards this state of affairs. Communal bedrooms for parents and older children are common. Many children simulate sleep in the nights and watch parents' sexual activities. There are good reasons to believe that girls indulge in this practice. Parents are inclined to share their bedrooms with daughters even when they are adolescents in order to prevent them from indulging in sexual activities. The demoralising influences of such situations can be very grave for the girls in later life. The second reason for the low morality in sexual matters appears to be due to the early separation of boys and girls and to the almost attitude towards sexual matters. These arouse in children an unhealthy curiosity in the opposite sex and mistakes are made with unpleasant results to the girls especially.

The traditional relegation of girls to an inferior position has hampered the general progress of girls in intellectual pursuits. Girls resign themselves very readily to their lot. Where they have had equal and sometimes better opportunities than the boys for education in school, it is strange how to observe how very quickly girls degenerate into almost complete illiteracy once they get married. Very few girls indeed think of a career in life when they leave school. Rashity is not better in school girls than among the illiterates because the feeling

is that whatever she becomes, the kitchen is her place and the earlier she throws herself into the arms of a suitor the better. Many girls soon regret that they had this attitude to their own positions in life.

The ^{mere} onset of menstruation as a signal of readiness for marriage tends to encourage very early marriages for girls. Such marriages are generally unstable due to emotional immaturity. Divorces are common especially if the difference in the ages of the couple is great and also if children are not born of the union. The relatively large number of divorced women encourages sexual immorality. Many people are of the opinion that such early marriages make the women look old in a short time and also that the children they give birth to are stunted and mentally backward. They imagine that this is due to the general immaturity of the women before marriage.

There are, no doubt, many other beliefs and practices in connection with child-training in Bompata that have stood the test of the times in upholding the ideals of the life of the community. It would be wrong to abandon them simply because they appear to be old-fashioned. It is more important that they serve a useful purpose than that they are modern. What has been done here is to indicate the decreasing importance and value of certain practices in child-training in their relation to the changing social pattern. This change is bound to affect not only methods of child training but other aspects of the social life of the entire village.

APPENDICES.

I.

CHILDREN'S FAVOURITE STORIES.

1. ANANSE AND THE GOURD OF WISDOM.

Once, Ananse collected all the wisdom in the world and put it in a gourd. His intention was to climb with it into a tall tree so that there will be no wisdom left in the world. He did so in order that all people may come to him for their problems to be solved by him.

Ananse put a rope around the neck of the gourd and hung the gourd around his own neck with the gourd of wisdom on his chest. But when he began to climb the tree he saw that he could not do it. He tried it once, twice and for the third time but he could not go even a few feet up the tree. Meanwhile, his son Ntikuma was standing by watch his father. When Ntikuma saw Ananse's difficulty, he advised him to put the gourd on his back for that would make the climbing easier. Ananse did so and the climbing was easy indeed. But before he reached the first branch he looked down and said: "I thought I had collected all the wisdom on earth, and now here is my own little son telling me what to do." ~~So~~

So saying, he let go the gourd which fell on the ground and was broken. Thus wisdom spread again. Those who went early to the place where the gourd was broken got plenty of it and are called wise men. The late comers got very little wisdom and are the fools of this world.

2. Why the Dog is a Thief.

Once there lived the Dog, the great great grand father of all dogs. He was so fond of stealing that no woman would agree to marry him. In due course, he found a wife from another village and they were married.

Not long after his marriage, one of his wife's relatives died and as is the custom, he went with his wife to attend the funeral. At the funeral, the Dog saw that his father in law had bought and smoked the thigh of an antelope. This was to be used in preparing a meal for the mourners the following day. The meat was hanging on a rope in the kitchen. In the night when the Dog and his wife went to bed, he stealthily crept out and ate all the meat. Fearing that he would be suspected when the theft was detected the following morning, he ran away at dawn leaving his wife behind.

The Dog went straight to the house of father rabbit who it was said possessed a very powerful 'juju' which could cure kleptomania. "Father rabbit", he said, "I have been a thief ever since I was young and I now want to break that habit. I have heard that you have a juju against stealing. Please, make one for me." Father rabbit agreed to make one for the Dog. He asked for a large piece of pork. This he roasted and treated with pepper and salt to make a very attractive piece of meat. He gave to the Dog to keep so that it might be used in making the juju the next morning. At Midnight the Dog felt so hungry and the nicely smelling

piece of pork attracted him. "Father rabbit," he said, "I hear the noise of mice in the room in which the meat is, may I go to bring it and keep it under my pillow lest the little devils eat it up?" Father rabbit consented to let him do that. Soon, the Dog asked to be allowed to put the mouth in his mouth and stand up for he had seen that the mice were almost under his pillow. But when he was allowed to do that with the meat, the temptation proved irresistible and the meat was eaten. "I shall pay for the cost of the pork tomorrow morning," he said to father rabbit. When on the following morning Mr. Dog could not produce the piece of pork, father rabbit refused to make the juju for him. That is why dogs — the descendants of the one who wanted the juju — steal so often.

3. The old lady and the bird:

(A favourite of four to five year olds).

One day an old woman went to farm. When she was ready to come home she could not find anyone to help her to carry her load. Seeing a small bird she asked the bird to help her and the bird agreed to do so on condition that the old woman would not hit it with her walking stick after it has helped her. (Old ladies like to kill birds and take them home to their grand children) The old woman agreed to observe the condition.

But as soon as the load was on her head she hit the bird with her stick. The bird jumped and pecked at her eye breaking the ball.

When she reached home her grandchildren asked her what was the matter with her eyes.

"A bad bird pecked at it" she said. Thereupon, the little bird appeared on the top of the roof and sang: "Nana Kyekye Nana Kyekye

1. story Teller: Woye nkontompo

2. Response: Surogya.

1. Woye Nabraba

2. Surogya.

1. Mekutu madukuro ano

2. Surogya

1. Wose memmesoa wo

2. Surogya

1. Mesoa wo kyerede

2. Surogya

1. Abaa me tiri po.

2. Surogya

1. Mehuru woani so!

2. Surogya

1. So! so! so!

(Literally: Grandmother Kyekye, you are a liar, you are a untruthful, I was in my home in the buttress of the tree, You asked me to help you, Up! the load went on your head, bang! you hit my head with a stick. I pecked at your eyes, peck, peck, peck).

4. The Wild fowl. (A favourite short story of very young children)

Whether the wild fowl went to dig red clay or not she has red legs and feet.

APPENDIX II

CHILDREN'S STORIES AND FACTUAL REPORTS.

A. 1. The story of a bad girl. John Agyei : 7yrs. Cl. 2.

One day, there was a woman. She had one daughter, Afua. The daughter was a bad girl. She was lazy and did not like to beat fufu or to fetch water. But she always ate. One day when she was eating some food went into the wind pipe and she began to cough. She coughed and coughed and vomitted all the food she had eaten. That is the story of a bad girl.

2. The story of a bad girl. Alice Aboagyewa 9yrs. C. 3.

If a bad girl is in a house, it is not good. When she goes out in the night she does not come home quickly for the father to close the door. One day the bad girl went to play and was very late. When she returned, a thief had come to take all her clothes and books away. She cried but she did not get the dresses again.

3. The story of a bad boy. Kwabena Yeboa byrs. Cl. I

One day, there lived a bad boy. He always climbed an old man's pear tree and plucked the pears and ate them alone. When the old man saw him he ran away.

On one occasion he climbed the tree but one of the branches broke and he fell down and broke his leg. He nearly died.

4. The story of a bad boy. Margaret Kyarematen 7½ years
class 3.

A bad boy is a boy who does not want to obey his father if his father sends him on an

errand. One day, his father sent him to go and post a letter but he played with the letter and made it dirty. He ran away from home and hid in the bush because he thought that his father will scold him. But his father did not scold him.

B. WISHES.

1. Adwoa Afi. 6years Class I.

Question : If I decide to give you whatever you ask for what would you want to have?

Answer : A table

Question : Why?

Answer : So that I shall write on it.

2. Amma Absagyewaa 9years. Class Three.

Question : If a magician promises to give you whatever you ask for what would you ask him to give you?

Answer : A new dress, a hat, shoes, fufu and groundnut soup and money.

3. Yaw Taki. 12 years. Class 5.

Question : If you could get anything by merely asking for it what would you like to have?

Answer : A car or lorry, a big storey house a lot of servants, a football

Question : What do you want servants for?

Answer : So that they will do my work for me.

4. Kwame Akoi 13years Class 6

Question : What would you like to get if you could get whatever you asked for?

Answer: A car

Question: What else?

Answer: A bed to sleep on, a new suit of clothes and a cloth.

5. Afua Taa 4½ years. Under school age.

Question: May I give you something?

Answer: Yes!

Question: What do you like?

Answer: I want a penny.

Question: What for?

Answer: I shall buy rice with it.

6. Daniel Asumeng 6½ years. Class I.

Question: Kwaku, what may I give to you as a present?

Answer: A penny.

Question: But if I told you to ask for anything you like best what would you like to have?

Answer: A hen to lay eggs so that I shall kill one for soup on Christmas Day.

C. SELF DESCRIPTION.

1. Akosua Fremu. 8½ years Class 3.

Question: What is your name?

Answer: Akosua Fremu.

Question: Tell me about yourself.

Answer: I am a school girl. I am eight and a half years old.

Question: How did you know your age?

Answer: My father told me.

Question: Yes, tell me about yourself.

Answer: My father and my mother live here in Bompata. I like fufu very much. My mother always scolds me and says I am not a beautiful girl. That is all.

(This girl has squint eyes and she is extremely conscious of it).

2. Kwaku Frempong 13 years Class 6.

Question: Tell me about yourself.

Answer: My name is Kwaku Frempong. I am a native of Amantena. My father comes from Obogu and my mother is from Amantena.

Question: How old are you?

Answer: I am thirteen years old. I am very black. I can play football very well. I am a good and clever boy.

3. Abena Seiwa 10 years Class 4.

Question: Imagine that I am a stranger who wants to befriend you even though I have never met you. You are coming to visit me at Accra. Tell me all about yourself so that I can find you at the Railway Station and take you home.

Answer: I am a tall girl and I am black. I have one nose and two eyes.

Question: Yes, I think many people have those and that will not help me to find you.

Answer: There is a large scar on my left

cheek. I have a red frock. I shall wear it.

4. Victoria Abena Kyerewaa 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ years —

Question: Abena, what is your name?

Answer: Mitoria! (Victoria)

Question: How many heads have you?

Answer: It is here. Mamma says it is big.

Question: Do you cry?

Answer: Yes, if Afua hits me. I am going to take my doll.

D. CHILDREN'S LIFE STORY.

1. Yaa Agyepomaa 13 years Class 6.

My father is Kwadwo Frempong and my mother is Yaa Apeaa. When I was about ten years old, (three years ago), my mother divorced my father because my father married another woman. My father refused to send his children by my mother to school. But my paternal grandmother took me to school again and now I am in Class six. My grandmother is very kind to me but I should prefer to live with my own parents because my little sister Yaa Kwaakyewaa is living with my mother. I want to play with her. My mother has married another husband. He is kind to me when I visit him but he is not kinder than my own father. If I leave school I shall be a teacher in order to get money for my mother.

2. Kwaku Mensah 10 years Class 4.

My name is Kwaku Mensah. My father is a

native of this village but my mother is from a village near Kumasi. I have lived with my father since I was three years old. My father and his wife are very kind to me. I do not think that I have a mother anywhere, because mammy Yaa (the father's wife) is my mother. She gives me good food and she does not scold me. My father is a farmer and he is rich. Last year I fell from a tree and got wounded. My father scolded me but his wife dressed the wound for me until it was healed.

3. Daniel Nkansa aged about 15 yrs Class 6.

My name is Daniel Nkansa, I am in Class six. I was born in Daawereso near Amantena. My father died when I was about six years old. I have stayed with my mother ever since. When I was about eleven years I went to school. I sometimes work on a small cocoa farm given by my maternal grandfather in order to get money to buy my school materials. Some of my mates laugh at me because I am so big; but I am clever. I have spent only four years in the primary school. I study hard always. I shall be a doctor when I leave school.

4. Christiana Oforiwaa 12 yrs Class 5.

My mother has four children and I am the eldest. My father and my mother are at Mangoase where my father is a farmer. My maternal uncle took me to Bompata to stay with him. But he drinks a lot of palmwine and when he is drunk, he treats me unkindly. Last Christmas

he promised to take me to see my parents whom I have not seen for the past three years. If I go to them, I shall not return to Bompata with my uncle again. I have many friends here but my uncle makes me unhappy.

E. IMAGINATIVE PLAY.

Apparatus: Dolls belonging to the child - A finger of plantain, an empty powder tin.

Subject: A young girl Abena Kyerewaa aged three years three months.

Conditions of Presentation:

The girl is in a room with an older sibling Afua aged four and a half. Afua is singing and occasionally talking to herself.

Abena is playing alone with her dolls. Interviewer ^{merely} watches girl without talking. Abena begins to quarrel with her doll.

Abena: I told you to keep yourself clean. You have wetted your bed again and your frock is wet. Look at her face. Do you think I never get tired of washing?

Interviewer: Abena, which of your children is being so bad?

Abena: This one here, with the big head! She wets her bed every night. I shall not let her sleep on a mat near the others. I am going out!

(She leaves the room)

APPENDIX III
CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS.

1. Kojo Tiekü. Age : 11 years. Class 3.



Free Drawing : Trees with leaves.

2. Christiana Ampoasa 9yrs. Class 3.



Free Drawing: Two Lorries, a tree, a bottle,
a palm tree, a church.

3. Kate Ohene

7 years

class 2.

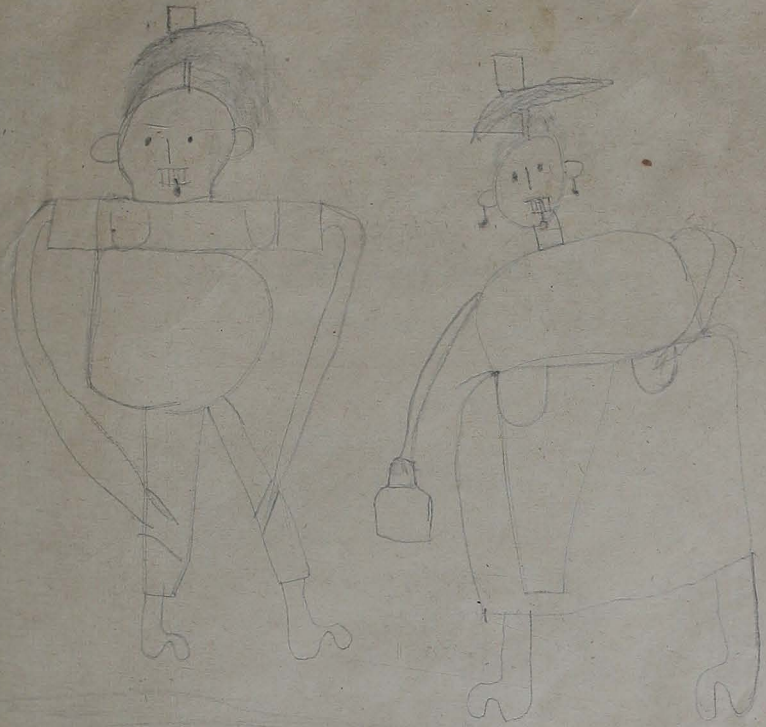


Drawing of a man and woman.

4. Kofi Asamoah

9 yrs.

Class III



Drawing of a man and Woman.

5. Thomas Oduro. 9 years. Class 3.



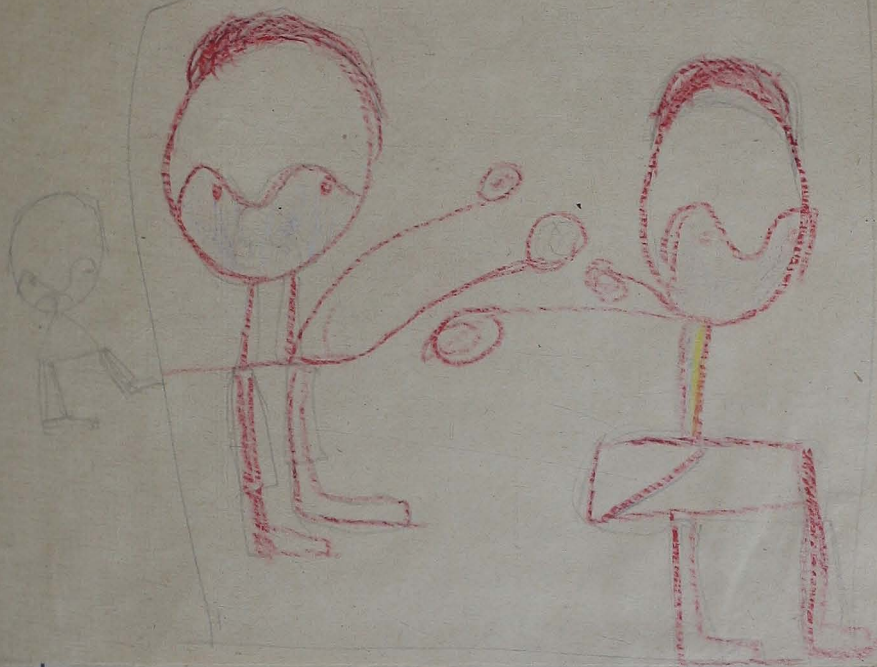
A fight. The Akan proverbial ladder of death - not climbed by one man - has been drawn near. Evidently it signifies a possible consequence of the fight to any of the participants.

6. Kwazi Twum

11 years

class 4.

Kwazi Twum 11 years



A fight! Roy Ankarah!

7.

Salome Kore

8 years

Class 3.



A fight.

193.

8. Margaret Kyerematen

7½ years

Class 3.



The most pleasant thing the child can think of.

Two friends - one at the door of his house conversing with the other standing behind the window.

194.

9. Kofi Wiredu

11 years

Class 3.



The most pleasant thing the child can think of.
A Lorry.

10. Elizabeth Amponaa 9 years Class 3.



The most unpleasant thing the child can think of. Spangin 'A's house, ('A' has the poorest house in the village) with a snake in front of it.

196

11. Kwadwo Kumnipa 9 years Class 3.

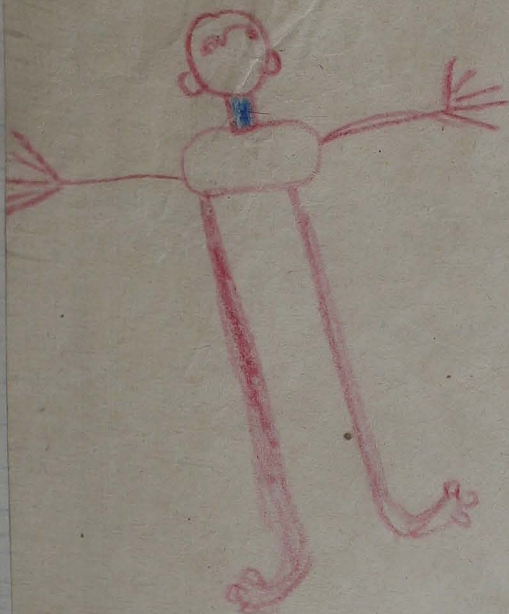


The most unpleasant thing the child can think of.
The head of a man hanging on a tree
in the bush.

12. Selina Paulina Ampomaa

9 years.

Class 3.



A thing the child is afraid of.
A Ghost.

13. Ben Animakwaa.

8 years.

Class 3.



A thing the child is afraid of.
A burning house with a tree behind
it. There is a snake in the tree.

14. Mercy Oppong Nimakoaa

9 years

Class 3.



A Dream.

Two female rivals (wives of the same man)
fighting near a house.

15. Adwoa Korama

9 years

Class 4.



A Dream.

A man and a woman and their children walking on the street.

16. Vivian Abena Kwatemaa

8 years

Class 3.



Inside a house.

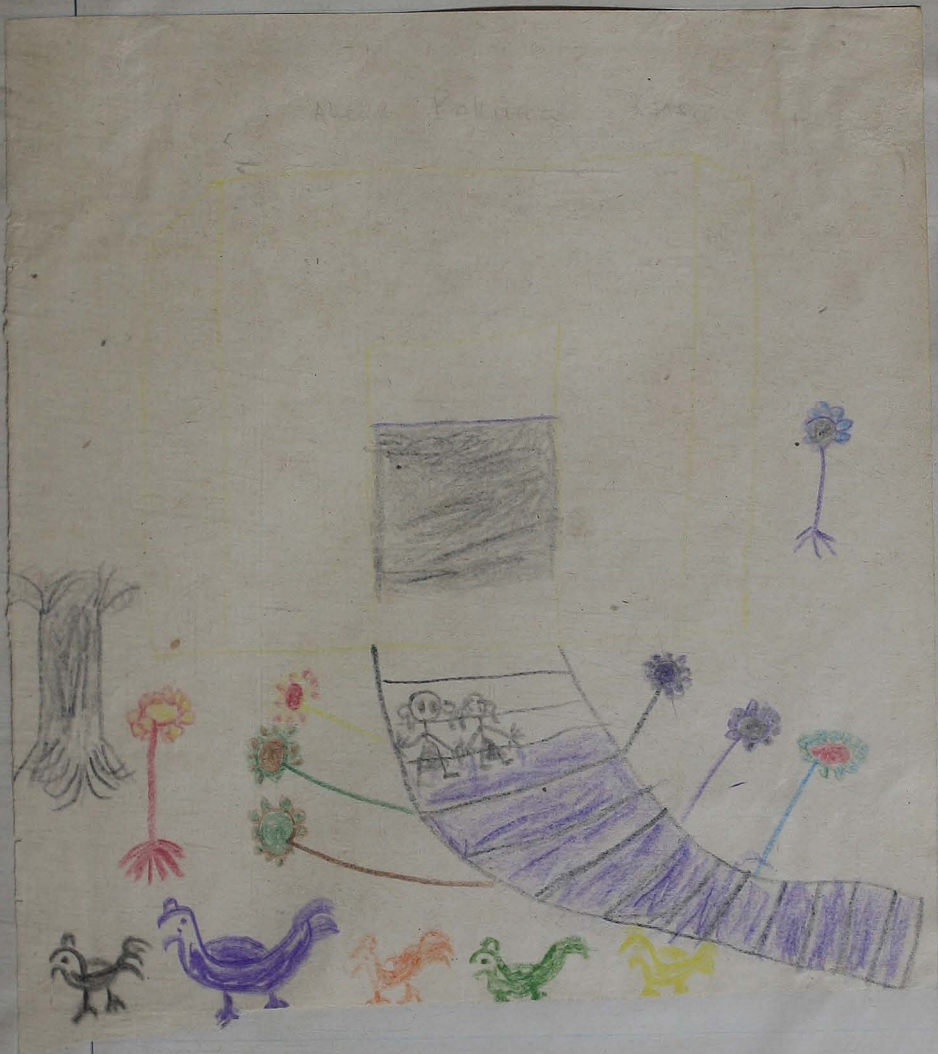
A bucket, a stool and kerosene.

p. 17.

Abena Pokuaa

8 years

Class 3.



Inside a house showing : hens, flowers,
the way to a room and a curtain.

18. Enoch Adomako

9 years

Class 3.



The inside of the child's house showing some children, a chair, a barrel, and the father's dining table ready with food on it.

APPENDIX IV

A. CHILDREN'S RIDDLES.

Riddle and Translation

Interpretation

1. Agya reko baabi, zmaa me akoo bi
se eye a masomasoma no, mesoma no
a onko nso meko baabi a na odi maki;

Sunsum

When my father was leaving, he gave me
a slave to run errands for me. When I
send him, he refuses to go, but when I
go anywhere he follows me.

Shadow.

2. Asuo bi da ho, osuo to a, enjiri,
nso abaa ketekete ku to mu a na
etete so.

Aniwa.

There is a river which does not overflow
its banks when it rains but put in a little
bit of stick and it begins flooding.

The eye.

3. Adee bi wo ho, enye de, nso eka wo
na pe na woretafere.

Ogbasramma

There is an object, it is not sweet but
whenever your fingers touch it, you lick
it off the fingers.

Fire (Cinders)

4. Sogyafos bi wo ho nso won nyinaa
abaso baako.

Praye.

There is a band of soldiers who wear
only one belt.

Native Sweep
broom.

Riddle and translationInterpretation

5. Agya reks omaa me ahoma bi
 se mentwa mu. O san baare na mintimi
 ntwa mu.

Asubonten.

When my father was leaving, he gave
 me a rope to cut into two. When he
 returned I had not been able to do
 so.

A River.

6. Akwakora bi wo ho, se wone no
 te fie a, na me bodwese gu abonten

Egya (ne wisie)

There is an old man whose beard
 can be seen outside the house
 when he himself is inside.

Fire (his beard
 is smoke).

7. Akwakora bi wo ho, onni tuo
 nso on asommen

Kokosaki

There is an old man who has no
 gun but he sells ivory (elephant
 tusks)

The Vulture.

B. CHILDREN'S TONGUE TWISTERS.

1. Ata k> pata k>fa ta bra na yese Agya Ata awu
 da Tafo nkwanta.

Literally: Ata (a male twin) go to the ceiling and
 bring a mash-stick for they say Father
 Ata is lying dead at Tafo junction.

2. Adwoa kɔkɔ kɔ Nkɔkɔ kɔtɔ kɔkɔte kɔkɔ nam
bekyee no kɔ

Literally: Fair coloured Adwoa went to Nkawkaw
to buy the flesh of a red wild pig and came
to fry it brown.

3. Agya Kwaa'Paa kɔ apam kɔhunu mampam
gyaee apam bepamoo mampam.

Literally: Father Kwaa'Paa (Kwame Dapaa) ~~to~~
went to weed but he saw an edible lizard
stopped weeding and came to chase it.

4. Kɔkɔ kɔ Kɔtɔkɔ kɔtɔ kɔtɔkɔ kɔkɔ.

Literally: Kɔkɔ is gone to Kɔtɔkɔ (Ashanti)
to buy a red porcupine.

5. Hwaen na ɔyere enini ne ne yere nwoma yi?
nea ɔyere enini ne ne yere nwoma yi nim
enini ne ne yere nwoma yere.

Literally: Who stretched these skins of a python
and his wife? He who stretched these
skins of the python and his wife knows
how to stretch the skin of the python
and his wife.

6. Akɔa a zrekɔɔ yi hye nwi kyɛ.

Literally: That fellow going is wearing a cap
of hairs.

7. Kohwehwe ahwehwe hwe wo hwene.

Lit. Go to find a mirror and look at your nose.

APPENDIX V

CHILDREN'S SONGS.

A. LULLABIES.

These are generally sung by parents or older siblings to babies to lull them into sleep or to prevent them from crying. Most of them are nonsense words that cannot be translated. Those that lend themselves to translation have been explained.

1. Abena ee (substitute child's real name) gyae oo,
Gyae a mama wo to,
Eto si adanka,
Edeen na wordie,
Eto k>koo na wordie,
Wobenom benom nkwan surodo, gyae oo!

This is ^{sung} to stop children from crying or to put him to bed. The intelligible parts are promises of mashed yam and light soup for the baby if he would stop crying and sleep.

2. This is a chant and is sung to children aged above nine months who can respond to their names. The rest of the words are appellations to names. Every Akan name has its special appellations.

- a) Parent; Kofi e, (substitute real name)
- b) Child ; Hm! (response)
- a) Agyei! (substitute real name of child)
- b) Hm!

- a) Otwenin (appellation of name Agyei)
- b) Hm.
- a) Akaa (another appellation)
- b) Hm.
- a). Wo mame rebo wo?
- b). Hmm!

3. Awo Yaa ee, woba 'su oo,
 Bege no oo, Kwadede.

(This is generally sung by older siblings playing nurse to a younger baby)
 Literally: "Mother Yaa, your child is crying, come for him, Kwadede (nonsense word)

4. Gyina ho na menhwe nea woanyini aduro
 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ aka.

(Fathers often sing this to babies who can stand)
 Literally: Stand up and show me how tall you have grown.

5. Kansikyɛ asem suro, Kansikyɛ asem suro!
 (Nonsense Words).

6. Danteke, danteke, danteke, oburoni agors,
 ✓ ✓ ✓ oburoni agors,
 Hee ————— oburoni agors.
 (Nonsense Words).

7. Akitikrima e, wo ho nsikansika oo, wo
 ho nhwennee nhwennee o, yen'gina yen'gina
 yedea, Taataata b>'mu e, Taataata b>'mu e.
 (This is a song of admiration generally sung by mothers playing with babies)

Literally: "Healthy bonny baby, you are gold, you are precious beads. You belong to all of us. Taataata etc. (nonsense words).

B. LOVE SONGS.

These are exclusively girls' songs. As they play their favourite games especially 'Ass' (see Chapter 8) they sing these heartily.

1. B>>meadee, (substitute real boy friend's name) >do ye wei, naano asem manya 'tumfo bebre.

Literally: "Boomeadee, my love is death, because of the other day's affair I have got many enemies" (evidently, the enemies are her parents who do not like her friendship ^{with} boys).

2. Se nketenkete gyere da mu, se nkete-nkete gyere da mu. >beba daben ni oo? Me nk>mmo na etu awse, se nketenkete gyere da mu.

Literally: "Small teeth with a hole in front (repeat) When will he come? His conversation banishes cold, small teeth with a hole in front (i.e. in the middle of the upper biting teeth).

3. Chorus: Wo se oo, wo se de sen ni, bankyiniye
Soloist: Me se oo, mese Kofi no, bankyiniye.
Chorus: Yeahunu wo se na wo nua de sen ni bankyiniye.

Soloist: Me nua oo, me nua Abena no bankyiniye.

Chorus: Yahunu wo nua na 'jolly' (lover) de sen ni?

Soloist: Jolly oo, jolly Yaw no bankyiniye.

All: ɔsɛ ne ketɛ sɛ ne ketɛ oo bankyiniye
ɔsɛ ne bomo sɛ ne bomo oo bankyiniye.

ɔpɛ besie na me ntama atete oo
bankyiniye!

Osi gɔngɔn! si gɔngɔn!

This is full of nonsense words, but the plan is this. The Chorus ask the soloist the names of ~~the~~ ^{some} members of her family one by one and she tells them in song, their names. Finally, they ask her the name of her lover. With emotion, she mentions his name too. They all join her to praise the lover. The relative part ^{of the praise} literally means:-

All: "He has spread his mat, he has spread his expensive blankets. By the time the harmattan comes, my cloth will be worn out but he will make me warm"
(This is followed by more nonsense words)

c. Songs of 'Anofom' Game (See Chapter 8).

These are chanted more or less.

1. Soloist: Eno wisa abere!

Chorus: Yeete

Soloist: Eno wisa abere!

Chorus: Yeete

Soloist: Kɛte awisa bun!

Chorus: (Must be quiet)

Literally: S. Mother's guinea grains are ripe!

Ch: We are plucking them.

S.: But if they be green?

The underlying principle of the game is that all players must be attentive in order not to chant the wrong response to his questions. In this the soloist asks what should be done if mother's guinea grains are ripe. Of course they must be plucked, but when he changes it while the chorus are not expecting it, and asks 'what, if they are green', an inattentive member instead of keeping quiet may shout "We are plucking" (Yeete). For being absent minded, his friends chase him and beat him until he touches the safety line.

2. Soloist : + Kentennwo,

Chorus : Awoso

Soloist : Kentennwo

Chorus : Awoso

Soloist : † Kenten mono.

Chorus : (Must keep quiet)

This is a trick on the words : "~~New~~ † Old basket" and † New Basket. The response means : "No use"

3. Soloist : Meko > eno afuom kahuu kankabi
apakan

Chorus : Yookringani oo Koo, dee oni
awuo, dee >se awuo yoo prinyani
oo — (Quiet)

The second 'Koo' is not to be pronounced. He who does so is absent minded and is punished accordingly.

A variation to this game is another in which the ~~bee~~ originator stretches out eg. his left hand with the palm facing upwards.

He invites others by ^a special song to come to help him build a wall of hands. The second man is to put his LEFT hand on his stretched hand, the second player's palm facing downwards in opposite direction to the first player's. This goes on until all players' hands are in the wall. Any mistake is punished by beating the ~~abs~~ absent-minded fellow.

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