THE HOME EDUCATION OF THE ELETILE NZEMA TRIBE.

by

J.K. ANUZUAH.
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE GOLD COAST, INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION.

Home Education of the Eletile Nzema Tribe.

(i) by J. K. Amuzuah
M.C.G. Inst. of Educ.

PREFACE

The Eletiles are a section of the Nzema tribe and live between Esiama and Sanzule in the Eastern Nzema State. But for the town of Sangule the place would be an island ten miles in length and some half a mile in width. This peninsular piece of land is bounded on the north by the Fea and Amanzule River, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, on the East by the Bubu Ahoba and Amanzule, and on the west by the Gulf of Guinea and the town of Sanzule.

What a magic land! It has practically all the types of vegetation found in the Gold Coast. It ranges from the type in the Northern Territories to the forest of southern Ashanti; the soil ranges from loose sand to the clayey one as one travels inland from the coast to the interior. It is no wonder then that crops like groundnuts and coconut, cassava, yams, plantains and cocoa are cultivated to some extent.

Hemmed in practically in almost all sides by water, the Eletiles are fishermen and teach their children the art in addition to farming. To enable the children to do this successfully, newly-born babes are dipped into the river three times immediately they have been washed. The belief is that the practice has the healthy, magical, effect of making the child take to swimming with little difficulty at the right time, and that, the child thus introduced to the river god, will not drown easily in subsequent mishaps in the river.

But what is this home education of the Eletile Nzema Tribe? It is not the high philosophy of Europe, Asia and America that

deals with the enigmas of human existence, the wonderful discoveries which are the result of the highest scientific training. It is simply the gradual acquisition of all that goes to make for normal living as has been the practice handed down from the ancestors. It is restricted in intent and the word is here used to denote the acquisition and development of such mental and physical qualities as will fit the growing child for his activities and life pursuits. It is a form of practical education concerned directly with the urgent necessity of obtaining food and clothing as well as the advicability of avoiding danger and these have been strong inducements for the acquisition of knowledge at the most receptive time of the child's life. The importance of this practical school can easily be realised, and probably the young Eletile will by far outrival the trained scout boy or girl guide of today in the essential elements of observation and vision, woodcraft and housecraft. In fact, the life of the tribe, with its daily and seasonal task, its initiation ceremonies and other rituals, is the School.

The plan of the essay falls under

(a) Historical Background

(b) Incidental Teaching, and

(c) Formal Training.

Clear-cut divisions in age groups, as regards training, has been difficult, for all ages in the essay have had to be guessed on account of the gross illiteracy of this community. On the other hand, it has been an advantage as the training given to an age group, merges and dovetails imperceptibly into the next. This, being true to life, has been adopted in writing this essay.

PART I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 1. EARLY HISTORY OF ELETILE NZEMA

The Nzemas are a section of the main Akan tribal emigration wave that reached the "Gold Coast" from East Africa via the Sudan. The story of their wanderings is not unlike that of the Ashantis, Akwapims, and Fantes, with whom, it is believed, they once formed and intergral section of the Ghana Kingdom. The determining factor has been the pattern of culture evidenced in their customary observances with regard to religion, marriages, funerals, festivals and farming methods.

At one time they had the Gymans and Brongs as their immediate neighbours, and many words in these languages still bear testimony to the fact. When the Nzemas had decided to travel towards the coast after the fall of the Ghana Kingdom, they came by what is now known as the Ivory Coast.

The journey took many years, for the sick, aged, and children had to be reckoned with; they had to fight most of their way through many unfriendly territories, and they had to see that they never ran short of food. On the march, the wounded, the sick, the children, and old men and women were kept in the centre for protection. Being many, they were forced by circumstance to call frequent halts, in order to make farms and nurse the sick and wounded. At one such station they spent from a year to about ten years. During these periods farms were made, paths were established wells were sunk where there were no springs or streams from which they could get water, and, there practicable, other necessaries

were found. On the next move whole families from every clan were left behind, so that, when faced with famine or defeat, they could fall back upon the old station for supplies or shelter and proctection.

The Eletiles, the section directly concerned with religious observances, covered the rear of the main body of the Nzemas during the exodus from the north. By their contact with the state gods as priests, they had indulged in the simultaneous pursuits of farming and fishing as a pattern of life. In time of war they had led the state army for the same reason. The Eletiles had consequently habituated themselves to the school of hazardous living and hard knocks.

The story goes that the Eletiles and lived by the great rivers and lakes in East Africa, and wherever the Nzamas journeyed they had chosen to live by rivers and lakes. Consequently, when the Nzemas reached the Ivory Coast, the King settled them by the rivers Bea and Yano, and by the Juan Lagoon, while he travelled eastwards. By his residence was discovered a river, the colour and flow of which, so took the fancy of both the king and his advisers that they decided to regard it as the state river. They accordingly named it Aman-nzule (State River) As such it became necessary to get people who know something about rivers and lakes and could interpret the taboos and likes of the river gods.

Once again word was sent to the wise men, for Eletile (ELE TILE) means literally 'you have head (brains), or 'you are intelligent', but they had settled down. They had made farms

built more or less permanet houses; they had intermarried; they had built canoes, and had made other peices of fishing apparatus, too heavy to be easily transferable on a journey of about a hundred miles. They had made contacts with the people they had found there, which they were not prepared to break. Besides all this, they had discovered that the Amanzule River was not as rich in fish as any of the others by which they were then living in the west.

Consequently, the council of the Eletiles under their chief, who was incidentally the State priest, and was himself too old to travel, decided to sent a few Eletiles selected from every family. Thus the larger section of the people are found by the Juen, Bea, and Tano up to this day.

The roll they have since played in the life of the Nzemas, as those exercising religious authority in all national matters and their valour in time of war, have earned for them an important place in the state. They are very proud of their past about which they teach their children directly and indirectly at any opportune moment. It is sometimes done in the evenings after meals by the elders, and at play time, by older children. These children, on occasions, vie with one another in narrating these exploits and national deeds in the presence of a grandfather, or grandmother, who corrects mistakes and inaccuracies of facts as well as exaggerations.

From these favourite stories it appears the Nzemas were fierce in battle, daring and bold in planning and execution, and showed rare and sterling qualities in contracting friendship with outlying tribes.

The methods of employed to make it possible to live at peace continually with apparently warlike and warring tribes, surrounding the Nzemas, are interesting in themselves. The Eletiles say that they were most influential in evolving those tactical means.

The time appeared to be soon after the fall of the Ghana Kingdom, when the farmer component tribes, that had travelled southward, were busily vying with one another, trying to found another kingdom. In trying to achieve this end, the Eletiles persuaded the Nzemas to adopt the following three techniques:-

CHAPTER 2 GIFTS AND PRESENTS

Any budding, power-seeking tribe was first offered gifts of friendship, cloth, prepared from the bark of trees, and another type, woven from a mixture of wool and cotton; salt, distilled from sea water, gold, both dust and nuggets; some preserved meat and fish; some peppers, firewood and foodstuffs like yams, plantains, and cocoyams, and some specially trained boys and girls about the age of puberty. These gifts I am told, were usually shared amongst the chiefs of the state, who almost invariably were the leaders in time of war.

The boys and girls in course of their ministrations pieced together story stories told during feasts and funerals. The stories, in the end, led to unravelling of state secrets about the state's art of warfare, and taboos connected with religious and ancestral worship. These adolescents also had opportunities for studying the country, as they often left the house for work on the farms, to gather snails and firewood, and to help and

accompany the men on hunting expeditions. Thus armed, they found it easy to pass on to their people in Nzema their discovery when they made occasional visits home, or when they were visited by relatives. It is in this way that the Nzemas came out victorious in most of their battles against other tribes.

CHAPTER 3 WARFARE

It is said that when the people to whom gifts had been made waged war on the Nzemas, the Nzemas first act was to emply special people to go to defile the state sacred places. They did this by clearing the vegetation, farming the grove, by killing say, a goat at the spot, or any other object, detestable to the State deity. In the second place, the knowledge they had gained by their scouts was very carefully used to the disadvantage and discomfiture of the other state; for they would attack them at the most difficult paint of defence. This action almost invariably led to a win, and thereby confirmed the popular opinion held of them that they were practisers of witchcraft and magic of the first order. This opinion incidentally made most tribes afraid to wage wars upon them, but they did, and a truce was reached, the terms were, more often than not in favour of the Nzemas.

In order to maintain this standard of invincibility, the Nzemas child was subjected to a rigorous, and almost brutal training in which a few, not infrequently, lost their lives. For instance, children between the ages of ten and thirteen were taught a type of wrestling, similar of that of Japanese jujitsu. When they had qualified, they were matched against boys of twenty to do it in earnest before a selected gathering. Accidents were a regular feature of these exhibitions.

Nevertheless, the joy of being able to hold their own before an appreciative gathering so encouraged and emboldered the youth that they came to think of failure to hold one's ground an unparalleled act of cowardice, disgrace, and unmanliness. The right use of the bow and arrow, the club, and the spear with the iron or wooden head was carefully taught to the children. Included in this teaching were how these implements of war should be thrown in particular situations and how they might be avoided. They were then taught how the evil effected of these deadly weapons to be counteracted, by the use of particular herbs and charms. They were also taught to believe that dying on active service in the interest of the state was to become sinless, and was, secondly, a sure passport to the above of the ancestors and gods. This was more so, if one fought one's hardest.

It was therefore a comparatively easy job for the Nzemas to subjugate, and hold their own against, all comers in time of war.

CHAPTER 4 INTERMARRIAGES.

The last potent weapon of achieving neighbourliness and friendliness then, as it is to a degree at the present time, was through intermarriage. Men and women from the royal houses, from the homes of the captains and other war chiefs of the two states, were married to one another as a sign of a new way of life, as far as the two tribes or states were concerned. On account of this fact, particularly, the two peoples subsequently loathed to fight each other, as they had mutual interests.

Resulting from this fact, what rather obtained was a more or less regular exchange of gifts from the in-laws. In the process of time it developed into visits during festivals funerals and other observances. It therefore encouraged the common people to follow the custom of intermarriages, started by their chiefs. What then ensued was the sympathetic feeling for each other, as far as the two states were concerned. It was therefore, not to be wondered at in the case of either of them getting into the grip of war with another tribe that we find the other going to her aid with materials, or manpower, both together.

This bond of intermarriages so strengthened and cemented the relations between the Nzemas, on the one hand, and their one time foes, on the other, that wars rarely ever repeated themselves. The extent, to which these old Nzemas fought and carried out their plans successfully, may be guessed from the fact that it is only in about eight out of the tribes of the Gold Coast that any Nzema is punishable by law or custom for a trespass. On the Ivory Coast he enjoys the rights and duties of a citizen.

An instance of his privileges may be inferred from his relationship with the Ashanti. From the Asantehene right down to the main in the street the Nzema enjoys special right, honours, and privileges. Whereas no member of any other tribe may abuse an Ashanti chief without being killed (as was the case in the olden days), or made to slaughter a number of sheep or cows, as befitted his rand and office, the Nzema will go scotfree. He has the right of even abusing the Asantehene, and,

for that matter, any other Ashanti chief, without being punished at all. He can go to an ahenfie (chief's palace) without either taking off his sandals, or without baring his left shoulder. They dared not touched the hair an Nzema, in the days when Asnanti funerals meant execution of people indiscriminately. An Ashanti, by custom and law, was under obligation to give him satisfaction about food and lodging, before considering his own needs. This being reciprocal, it is equally binding on the Nzema to discharge the same duties, by any Ashanti.

The Nzema shares similar customes with many tribes. These practical examples the Eletile Nzema uses in pressing home more forcibly to his children the lesson of his importance in the tribe. The children, taking their parents at their word and witnessing almost daily what happens between their parents and members of these other tribes, take their training so earnestly that they go about their ordinary work in the farms, or in the rivers and seas, with apparent pleasure. They go on long hazardous journeys as a matter of course, braving the attendant dangers and hardships with ease and astounding fortitude and calmness.

The last fact is in agreement with most of the stories told about their ancestors and ancestresses. For, when and where necessary, they made wars with such grim determination that they either drove the enemy back in fefeat, or that the group of warriors, in sticking to its ground, would be wiped out fighting. To them defeat menat certain death to those directly concerned, and unbearable disgrace to their relations

ever afterwards. On the contrary, however, a good display of fighting prowess was highly and widely commended and even rewarded. Names of heroes were household words; they passed into songs, and were sung during great national gatherings and crises, when the "asafo" display was called for. This throws further light on why their warriors fought so ferociously and valiantly that neighbouring tribes came to call them "The invincible war wizards."

It was then a practice that when a warrior died the army was summoned to a meeting, where the dead man's fighting exploits were recounted for the emulation of the others present. He was then given a military burial, and prayers were offered that he should continue to give help from the spiritual world in the states then and future hostilities. This service should be gone through in spite of all going on about them. On the battlefield it would be performed though the enemy might be throwing missiles at them, or even shooting them. It was all the same. The ceremony was observed according to established custom and order.

The Blemgbunli (the state chief), after each major battle, summoned all his subjects to a meeting. At this meeting cowards were disgraced and condemned. They were usually hanged and left tied at the outskirts of the town. The warriors, on the contrary, were accorded due honours and encomiums. They and their exploits were put into songs composed on the spur of the moment by the womenfolk. They were given posts in the state, and these entitled them to the overlordship of parcel of land and the villages thereon.

The cumulative effect of all these customs and traditions, and the established way of educating the progency, created a pattern of life, which the Eletile child of today displays in the same way as his brother of yesterday.

PART II.

INCIDENTAL TEACHING

Chapter 5. ELETILE SOCIETY AND GENERAL OCCUPATIONS

The society of the Eletile is on the border line of a primitive society and civilized one. He himself believes his society belongs to the second group and classifies readily all others as primitive, when their views are different from his own.

The Eletile is a farmer and fisherman at the same time. As a farmer he grows yams, plantains, cocoyams, cassava, groundnuts and vegetables, while sugar cane, rice, pine apples, oranges, cocoa, cocoanut plantations receive the attention of a great number of people.

At the season these villages and towns are practically empty, save for old men and women, and children below the age of five as well as those who may be ill.

The men leave early in the morning for their respective farms. These sites are usually granted by fathers to sons and grandsons for life. The chosen spot is marked by hardly recognizable paths (boundaries) called EWENE agreed upon by as many as eight. They use the cutlass in first clearing the undergrowth. After about a fortnight the trees are felled more often than not by communal labour in which the children over five share.

The women prepare food the previous night, or very early in the morning of that particular day, and convey it, assisted principally by the daughers. Meantime the men, numbering usually about twenty, are neighbours who, on this day are going to

work freely for a farmer. They work at felling the big trees with axes, which boys with files and whetstones regularly sharpen. The work men sing songs which echo through the area and beyond. The host calls a halt for the men to eat when the women have set the food ready. They eat in groups of about six, with the food spread over a peice of cloth spread on the gound with the men sitting in a circle, while the boys stand behind ready for service. As they eat they talk about current affairs about funerals, marriages, the expected fish catches for the coming seasons, according as these topics are raised by a member in the g roup. They many discuss the changes in weather and by them forecast the events of the future. At times they invite the children to tell stories about phases of their history, which they allow the other boys to comment upon first before they do so. Other than this the boys are to hold their peace while the elders converse.

Resting for some thirty minutes, they continue the work up to about four when they break for the day. On the return journey, they continue their singing in which the children join lustily. Others, who have finished the day's work, join in the captivating melodies until they reach their village.

This cooperative or communal effort is not restricted to the men. The women too have their turn during the sowing and harvesting seasons. Unfortunately, the men do not help the women in the same way (as they do to them). Nevertheless, the man concerned bears all expenses connected with the atribue (the name of this communal labour) and may go to see them at work

for a short while to express appreciation of, and gratitude for, the work done. Other than this and the fact that girls work with the g roup instead of boys, the pattern is the same as for the men. The women also do not sing when going back to the village. Instead they return, each carrying a lead of foodstuffs, or firewood.

Many more women than men form the band, called "atubue" The aim of this is to see that the sowing takes from a day to four days to complete. This is primarily to prevent force flowing which leads to poor harvests. It also prevents digging out of seeds by birds and small animals, when germination of seeds in a farm takes place about the same time.

These occasions provide a great opportunities for the girls to practise on a large scale their cooking technique. They are so strictly supervised in their cooking that, in general the product is very delicious, and is enjoyed by the team.

There is continual merry making at this season as the neighbourly services of "Atubue" pass from compound to compound To the casual observer these periods signify desertion and "lack" of life and activity in these Eletile towns and villages. But it is otherwise for the women to whom these offer healthy diversion.

The result of all this continual movement and activity is that the Eletile Nzema woman is generally lean. She believes the ideal woman rises at four every morning and goes to bed at ten in the night. This ideology makes her overwork herself and her girls. For instance, she only returns from the farm between five and six in the evening to cook the last meal for

Chapter 6. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Eletile, like any other Nzema, has no tribal marks on the body. He is, on the whole, dark in colour, though by the nature of his surroundings he willy-nilly bathes several times each day in the course of his work. He is very hospitable, particularly, to the stranger. His love for a large family has something to do with the hospitality to strangers. He believes treating strangers kindly is a sure means of appeasing the gods who will then grnat his wife a number of children. He also knows from experience that well treated strangers may live there as their home to which they may return.

He is tolerant, but does not brood cheating. He is generally reticent and unassuming, but can be very eloquent on occasions when wit and eloquence are called for. He believes tacitly that he is born unconquerable, possibly as a result of his descent from his invincible forebears. This makes him persevere in the face of difficulties of apparently unsurmountable nature, his main reason being contred on the belief that the spirits of his dead relatives will help him to rise superior to and victorious over, the situation. For this same reason the Eletile teaches his child to pour libation to dead ancestors before he takes any alcoholic drink. He observes the same custom on the eve of making journeys, in undertaking an important venture, and as a prelude to all observances connected with funerals, launching of canoes, boats and fishing nets; sowing and reaping; marriages and births, and all other rites connected with state festivals. He is in this wise superstitions, despite

the fact that he is usually a communicant of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Eletile is ostensibly very proud of his way of life which he regards as the best. This notion has a historical background. From the religious aspect he believes Nzemaland has been saved, through his faithful service to the god of the River Amanzule, on behalf of the State. Secondly, that the respect Nzema commands among tribes inside and outside the Gold Coast is the result of her ingenuity and display of valaur in the most outstanding of the major wars waged against the fatherland. As a testimony of this he will point to the rust eaten peices of cannon, the hat and sword given to them by Queen Victoria for bravery after their last encounter with the powerful army of Ashanti.

As will be portrayed in the following pages, he trains himself and his children by a rigorous discipline to fit them for the tough life they live. As fisherman he trains them to work in all kinds of weathee to which they will be exposed in the open seas, rivers, and lakes. In the same way too they are trained to take their rightful places as the farmers and fishermen of tomorrow. This stern Spartan training does not discriminate between the sexes. The argument is that both are more or less equally exposed to the dangers and must need be subjected to the same treatment.

The Eletile Nzema, being highly industrous and hard-working is not curpulent. This is particularly so with the women folk who practically have no stated times of rest apart from what they may snatch during sleep in the night and during illness,

funeral obsequies, Sundays and on special occasions. The women start the day's work early in the morning, and stopping it late in the evening with the cooking and serving of the last meal of the day. Girls are given special training in this form of life by mothers, aunts and grandmothers. Those girls not possessing this trait of character will not be married into decent houses. They are both a disgrace to their relations and to themselves. These girls are shunned by both adults, and their equals of both sexes. They point fingers of scorn at these ne'er-do-wells of girls, who are approbriously termed 'MGBOVOLE' (lazy)

The man, as a farmer and fisherman at the same time, is an adept in his own way about the love concerning each. For instance, he can tell by the stars when sowing or fishing should be done, and can foretell with a degree of accuracy what may be expected as a result of experience and observation. The Eletile boy especially is taught directly how to read this. He does this on starry nights by observation and gives the result to his father or elder brother, who then goes to check up. Miscalculations are explained further there and then to prevent recurrence. In the same way, too, they are taught the effect of the moon upon the tides and upon fishing during the different phases, for very high tides do not angur well for a catch.

Fishing is held in very high honour as is done with the family parcel of land. The canoe is rightly a prized family possession. For wherever one goes away to fetch water, food, firewood or herbs, the canoe is indispensable. The young

Ehetile is early taught to care for it; for the father as a trader travels a lot in going to dispose of either the products from the farm or fishing. On his return after an absence of a month or two, he buys commodities particularly needed by the locality. The sale of these articles, unless the man has a shop, is undertaken by the woman assisted by the girls and on occasions by the boys.

Chapter 7. ATTITUDE TO OUTSIDERS

The frequent travels of the Nzema as a trader colour deeply his attitude to strangers. Believing that what he does to others in inexplicably but truly repeated to him in another form, the Ehetile by practical and concrete examples teaches his children to be kind and hospitable to strangers of the same tribe or any other tribe. In this way and for that reason he has superficially learnt to be a good mixer to a fault. Thus for instance to make the visitor feel at home and at his ease, he practises mannerisms and ways of life he has observed in the visitor's state during one of his journeys. This acting has gone on for generations with the result that they now most readily absorb custom and ways of life of other tribes and practise them very well before outsiders who may not be able to distinguish between customs foreign and otherwise.

They believe that, hearing one's language spoken, however imperfectly, has the magic effect of assuring one of home relations being near; especially is this idea heightened when one's hosts are generously hospitable with regard to food and clothing. It is therefore not unusual to find in a household almost all the inmates imitating the Ashanti Twi for the first

three to six days, because an Ashanti happens to be their guest. At another time the guest may be a Fante and the whole process is repeated.

The result is interesting indeed. The strnager reacts to this stimulus; he appears apparently happy and moves about freely with one or two, whose ways are remperamentally close to his own. In a nutshell, he is put at his ease and soon apparently feels at home. They may be seen together going about to the farm or to the beach to attend to the fishing nets.

It is funny to hear their conversation, especially when children are on the scene. They, instead of speaking the visitor's language, speak the Nzema language with an intonation and accent which, being peculiar, makes understanding highly difficult for the Nzema and utterly unintelligible to the newcomer.

When honouring an invitation to a dance, funeral, or any other observance of note, the guest accompanies the household who will proudly introduce him to their hosts, relatives and various friends at the other village. To live up to the traditional mark of hospitality of the Eletile Nzema, the stranger will be offered drinks, various dishes and may be entertained to various games. If the visitor came over with a child, the Eletile child is to offer him his best cloth or shorts for the occasion. He is trained to watch the visiting child's interest in such a way that for his sake he will fight other children who may, by word or act, make him unhappy and therefore homesick. On the contrary, if the child is not

above six years of age the probability is that the visitor's child is looked upon as a usurper who must be fought and ejected from the house. In this case the Eletile child will cry to get back whatever of his that is given to the/ior an occasion.

When the visitor is a trader and has things for sale, arrangement is effected whereby members of the family actually undertake to do the selling. The Eletile thinks it beneath a man to sell articles like headkerchiefs, powders and beads. If it is convenient and not indecent in the eyes of custom, women and girls, or men and boys help to do the selling of the stranger's wares. At the end of the day or period, when travelling to neighbouring villages and towns is undertaken, the sales are checked adn added to what he has realized himself. The total is then given to the head of the family for safe keeping.

If the guest is some one in need financially or physically, the host, if unable to help himself usually arranges that help is not refused him. He appeals usually through a member of the village council to the headman for at least part of the financial help needed, after the council has verified that the aid is called for and it is not going to bolster and buttress delinquency. In the case of the one without money, and who, nevertheless, has come to seek medical aid, the host if satisfied, takes himto a physician to undergo treatment, guaranteeing payment in course of, or after, treatment.

Chapter 8. THE CHILD AND MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS

The Eletile child eagerly looks forward to them. Their approach is heralded by a week's busy shopping by a selected

number of women and girls. Their purchases comprise cloths, headkerchiefs, pomades, perfumes, powders, and many other necessaries needed in everyday life by women. The number of each article is usually six, but can be increased, or otherwise decreased, according to the financial status of the bridegroom.

Meanwhile preparations proceed a pace for the occasion. Children become slack in their duties, and parents connive at the act. The reason for this is to enable the children to offer their services freely at the home of the prospective chief bridesmaid, who is usually the bridegroom's cousin. These children are engaged in running errands, in fetching water and food, in splitting the collected firewood, and in doing a thousand and one other things, required by the group of women and girls in charge of affairs. What the children love best about these occasions is the chance of doing things on their own. For instance, the girls do the cooking for both themselves and the boys. And they do this in groups of four or so, under no direct supervision. It is after the cooking that the members of the group taste and pass judgements. In this way the best girls at cooking are selected to help the entertainment group at the appointed time. The selection usually takes from a week to ten days according to the desire of the bridegroom. The girls supply the peppers and other vegetables needed for the preparation of their food from their own gardens. The boys give the girls the meat and fish required. The girls also bring pots and other cooking utensils from their homes. At the end of the day they are examined by the women to see

that they are kept clean and that the correct number is returned. Particular attention is paid to the conduct of individuals, and a report of merits and demerits is given to parents concerned during all this period. The selection is influenced and baised by the industry, conduct and general cleanliness of the individuals.

The boys carry and spread the message about the time for function. The time fixed is when the fish catches have become fewer and the harvesting season is just over. This means that many people will then be free to attend the function. Meantime rumour and gossip about the occasion fast gather momentum and spread. At last, on a dark night at about 9 the popular refrain is heard from the band of the six women, now accompanied by a man and a number of the picked girls carrying the things for the bride. This is what they sing:-

"Osee - - -ee ---yei! yee--ee--yei!(Repeated)

"Yaa..yoa --! yayo ampa ooo!

Bese nwane asili o?

Egya Kofi dee o n.

Atofole oo! Dene wuee

Eko a mmaye awule -oo! Dene wuee!

Eko a mmaye adale-oo! Dene wuee!

Eko a mmagyila gyila oo! Dene wuee!

Eko a mmafa 'ya oo! Dene wuee!"

EXPLANATION

The first two lines are a yell and the equivalent rendering in English of the rest is:

"Whose bride they say she is?
She is for Father Kofi.
Oh bride! 'Dene wuee'! (The same yell of happiness)
Never steal at that place! 'Dene wuee!'
Never stand idle at all! 'Dene wuee!'
Nor ever, in a wayget cross! 'Dene wuee!'"

The children, who have for the past fortnight been awaiting the event, run into the street from various places to join in the singing. Adults too, at varying rates of speed, leave their houses to see the number of parcels for the bride, which correspond to the number of girls carrying them. They too, join in the singing which soon resounds from corner to corner as children and adults in succession fill the streets. The song is more lustily sung, the children working into it sentences in their interest, such as "You should be cool and collected", "You should be kind and generous", "Be free with, and give to, children."

After going through the principal streets in this manner, the procession stops at the husband's home, The heavily veiled bride and train keep standing until the father of the bridegroom represented by one of the bridegroom's paternal uncles, appears, offering the group a bottle of gin preferably. This is used to pour the libation by the only man leading the group. The form used is the following:-

"NZEMA	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
"Belie nza belo	Drink ye all this gin
Kuli ne atofole ngoan zoa	To the bridal pairs' health.

NZEMA	ENGLISH
Ma bewo, beoto be	Let them bear, naming them after
Be sadee zo o	To their good health.
Kpola be muzvle	Keep them from harm
Yedaye yengoane zo o"	And to our won health".

After the gin, the bride, accompaned by two serving maids, is taken to her rooms. From that night the maids and the others, numbering from two to a dozen, are accomodated at another section of the compound. While the two girls minister to the bride and do nothing else, the others help the women and the elderly girls at doing the cooking and other household services.

The most important of these services is the next day's banquet against which preparations in food and meat and fish are made. The cooking is supposed to demonstrate the ability of the new bride, and she is supposed to start it. Consequently early the next morning at bout three she goes to light the fire, being accompanied by her two 'chamber' maids. As soon as they reach the kitchen there is a cheer from the women and the other girls who will hve been working for the past two hours in connection with the bridal banquet. After exchange of greetings, the bride is escorted back to her chamber where she remains till the first part of the course is ready.

The children, who, during the preceding, fortnight been rehearsing the ceremony as it affect them as men and women, now have ample opportunity to watch everything closely. For this sake they rarely leave the place. This morning their chief

business is to take dishes containing food to all the nooks and corners of the village to elderly men and women who cannot stand the strain of coming to sit through all the courses of the banquet.

When the feat begins at between 8 and 9, usually on a Sunday, the children are employed in passing the food. It is their duty to follow outhodox methods. As such, the selected number, besides their own rehearsals, are given practice prior to the sitting and, are, consequently, exempted from the morning errands. They are also shown where particular articles that will be require at the feast are kept.

After the meal and speeches are over the boys take back all borrowed stools, chairs and other things they can conveniently convey without damage. Meantime, plates, glasses, cups and saucers used, are washed by elderly girls leaving the younger ones to do the returning. The boys and girls meet again and this time, crack jokes in imitation of the adults, as they eat the food specially saved for them. Excepting those selected, they break camp and go about their normal duties once again.

One of the interesting features about this occasion is to watch the children at play just before the event. Several of times will they rehearse and practise crefully the art of serving gatherings with drinks. Usually boys and girls of ages 8 - 10 do this, the boys serving the men, and the girls the women. Each child uses two glasses and must so economise the sharing that the rum goes round all the gathering, leaving

a residue of a few drops which the empties into one of the glasses. He holds it up before the gathering and draws their attention by saying "Mmale mma, momfre yie o!" to which the respond "Eyie mmera!" Continuing he says, "Be nza ye abo ehye o!" to which comes the reply "Egya.. oko esanu" After which he has to lead the gathering to give thanks to the donors, to each of whom he has to give a particular geneological appelation. All this is complicated but custom requires that these children do every thing without a hitch. Occasionally, they go wrong and the father, or his brother, cousin, has to buy double the amount of drink the boy has shered. It is regarded a great disgrace so elders and cousins are required to give the drill regularly.

On the other hand, the child who goes through the ordeal successfully is commended highly before the gathering, who very often give in appreciation gifts in money and kind, which he proudly conveys to his father, or ,in his absence, to a paternal uncle. From him the boy's associates just below him convey these various articles home and announce the success of their play mate. Passing this test means promotion to eating with one's immediate seniors in case of large compounds, or otherwise taking one's meals with the elders directly. It is a great occasion for the child concerned. Praises are lavished upon him, whatever he does is praised for the first four days, during which, apart from sweeping the father's room, he is practically exempted from the morning duties. What is more, the shares the meat with his immediate juniors to whom he showers at will food remains from the high table.

Chapter 9 THE CHILD AND FUNERALS.

On these occasions the Eletile child is provided with the means for service. Custom demands that there should be no fires for cooking on the day of death and the next. This makes a claim upon the adult and the adolescent. Those between the ages of 5 and 12 must eat the food they have prepared, but those below 5 are attended to by mothers, aunts, or grandmothers, as the case may be.

All children in their teens are actively engaged by the adults. It is the girls who are sent to fetch the extra food and firewood among many other duties, while the boys climb coconut trees for the nuts that are used during the first two days after the death. They are sent to neighbouring villages to buy foodstuffs, fish, and any other things likely to be wanted for the ~~third~~ third and eighth days' rites and observances. They go at times as far as eight miles. The foodstuffs carried comprise cocoyams, rice, plantains and maize. The mode of conveyance is by head load as a rule, but on these occasions the boys employ the following variation. For this reason every boy reaching the teens carves from the KAKALE (a plant) a pole about four and a half feet long, with a diameter of one and half inches at the curved round ends. Hook like notches are cut to a depth of half an inch three inches from each end. The middle of the pole is carved flat to a length of nine inches and a depth of about an inch, and to a width of some three inches. The notches provide fastening places for the loads to be held in slings at the ends and the flattened middle comes upon the pad placed on the shoulder.

They can be met in dozens, singing merrily and racing along the shore. They change the position of their loads from shoulder to shoulder frequently. At the agreed upon resting places, occuring at every three miles, they rest from ten to forty minutes discussing topics of common interest. These may range from the life of the dead, personalities likely to respond to the funeral invitation and parts likely to be played by them, to a burning question under discussion before the incident of the death or one just started. The arguments are at times so heated that open fights occur. At times, too, they indulge in wrestling bouts. These are conducted on the knock out system. In this instance the group is matched in pairs to wrestle three times successively. The winner, who has overthrown his opponent at least twice, is matched against another winner. By this means the group champion is chosen.

The champion's load is here shared by the other members of the group to let him, rest sufficiently for the match ahead. Pieces of advice by way of tricks to throw the opponents are given to the champion by the group. By this time the group moves in a knot with the champion in the centre, travelling at a snail like pace towards the rendezvous.

On reaching this sport, the group champions tose for the order in which the wrestling is to take place. The contestants, numbering usually up to six, must wrestle with each other until each has a turn at the other five. In course of all this the supporters give words of encouragement to their candidates and shout out not infrequently what vantage points to make use of to throw the opponent. This, being objected to by the other group

in case of success, results in free fights between the two groups. If this is not stopped early by the umpires and the other groups, most of these get themselves hurt. These competitors are so determined tat it may take up to within three hours to find the day's champion; for unlike the preliminary group elimination wrestling, this is determined by points.

In the absence of these wrestling exercises, they sometimes indulge in sports which they will only do in cold weather. What vies with the wrestling is doing something which may prove adventurous to narrate to others later. As a result, the plan is almost always undertaken by a selected few, fetching for the use of the main groups tigernuts, sugar canes, oranges, or coconuts.

As they are not directly wanted apart from the objects for which they are sent, the girls, like the boys, spend a great deal of their time in playing 'ampe' and other favourite games. It is a mark of great honour for a woman to be able to weep in a particular way. This is to be able to trace the geneological history of the dead, during the funeral gathering. This is an art for the lack of which, the Etetile Nzema woman loses much respect in the society, before both men and women. The woman, performing the act, must be able to blend naturally the facts with the cadences of the voice, without which the whole thing sounds absurd, ridiculous and artificial. The expert in the art is a welcome guest at these funeral gatherings, Men and women, particularly the old, see that she sits within hearing. These 'weepers' seat themselves a few yards away from where the dead is lying in state, and pour forth their verses. This is so much

appreciated that gifts of coins are given. Three such women will soon put out the many others weeping, and silence will ensue in the men's gathering. For this season the girls on errands on this day use the greater part of the time practising the art. They sit in knots of fours and sixes and do the weeping two at a time for the comments of the others.

Though custom has it that these boys and girls in their teens must not eat as the adults, the ruling is so lax that by themselves they cook whatever they like to satisfy their hunger. primarily, and to have practise in the art of cooking, taught them directly and indirectly in the case of the boys, in normal times at home. As during the marriage observances, the boys have the opportunity of catching fish and animals and supplying them to the girls for the preparation of their meals. In all these doings they lose count of the time.

The result of all this is that they return late to their homes to give their parents water for bath in the evening. This story is repeated the next day for their enjoyment and to their satisfaction.

On the contrary, those not selected are at the beck and call of those in charge of the funeral arrangements. They are wanted to carry messages connected with the funeral to, and from, people. They see that supply of wines and other drinks is not insufficient, by drawing attention to low stocks. Others are also to see that groups in their charge are not denied their share of what the organisers give out. Another group of children also busy themselves sharing wine amongst the gathering.

These children, in doing these pieces of work entrusted to them on the scene, learn by direct observation all customs connected with funeral observances.

During the third and eighth days' observances many strangers arrive to pay their last respect to the dead by appearing in person and giving donations. The neighbours and the relatives also give donations at this time. Fearing the order of engaging the children lacked plan and that they cannot be effectively trained in that way of life, I asked a boy of 10, who gave me the following facts. These he gave out in this order of happening as though from a record quite invisible to me but, nevertheless, plain to the old man acting as a check. "At the ELESA (breaking the fast on the third day) the people at the gathering group themselves into two, the MANLE and the ABUSUA (The general community as distinct from the relatives.) The former appoint a committee of three to seven from among them to see that approved donations are collected. The mother and father of the diseased, if alive, are exempted from giving donations. The sons and daughters pay as much as £2 and 10s respectively in cash and give in kind wearing cloths, loin cloths, towels, headkerchiefs, perfume and pomade, and the coffin. These materials, though given on the day of death, are all the same, enumerated at the gathering. This roll is played by the relatives, if the diseased has no children.

The brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts are subjected to the same treatment with the difference that the men give £1 each and the women 5s and 4s each in cash. Under this category come the 'in laws' - brothers, sisters, and cousins, paying 10s per man and 4s per woman.

The distant relatives pay 4s or 2s and 1s in respect of the men and women. The 'manle' then give their donations ranging from 2s, 1s and 6d for the men according to their statuses, and the women in the same manner pay 1s, 6d, and 3d each.

The men and women from the neighbouring villages and towns excluding the relatives who pay the donations prescribed for relatives, may give as much as 2s and 1s respectively for the men and women, otherwise they should pay sixpence and threepences.

Besides these prescribed donations men and women give varying amounts from 3d to 10s for two purposes. In the first place they give the amounts to be tied in the handkerchief of the diseased, who uses it in paying ferry dues and meeting petty expenses in the underworld. This money, sometimes totalling £30 or more, according to the diseased's popularity, is put in the coffin and burried.

In the second instance these amounts are given to parents, children and wives or husbands to help liquadate their incidental expenses in connection with their loss. These may total up to £15 according as the person concerned is popular in the community.

Children below 16 years do not give donations except the diseased is the father, in which instance the relative give little amounts on their behalf.

At the KELE MOTWE (eighth day observance) it is the time for the widow or widower to rise from the mat of mourning and take a bath in the sea. It is at this day's gathering she (he) gives her (his) donation of 10s or £2 according as the person concened is a widow, or widower.

Giving of donations is observed as on the ELESA. Usually, it is then that those who could not be present on the first or third day on account of distance, business, or late anouncement of the death, are afforded the opportunity to play their part. The bed in which the diseased was laid in state is removed, sun dried, and fixed in its usual place on that day. Weeping is forbidden and is only allowed for some three minutes in case of new arrivals. This explains the short but frequent spells of weeping characteristic of every KELE MOTWE.

At this juncture I interrupted and said to the old man "May I please know your opinion about what the boy has told us?" "Perfectly correct, as regards the sequence and facts" he replied. By this time a few children and adults had crowded round us. Therefore, for a change and to prove whether all the children are actually interested in what is happening about them as the elders claim for them, I turned to a slender, dark girl of about 9, who had hitherto shown no apparent interest, and asked her to tell us about the strnagers and the food, fish, and sheep, or cows, they had previously collected from the neighbouring towns and villages.

Beaming all over with apparent joy, she stepped into the little circle formed and narrated happily the following:- "These stranger are not totally strange. They frequent our town often during festivals, marriages and funerals, and have relatives and friends with whom they lodge. During the Elesa (third day) or KELE MOTWE (eight day) we girls are asked to take the women to their places of residence, and we keep count of the number we escort. The boys do the same thing in the case of the men strangers.

Our totals we indicate by grains of maize we drop into a special basin at the place where the distributers are by the fish, meat, and foodstuffs. We keep duplicate grains here, pointing to a pocket in her pair of shorts. By 8 o'clock we start distributing the shares for both the strangers and important members of the community simultaneously as we move from one compound to another. When we have served a stranger a grain is dropped. In this way we often serve everybody who has come from another town. With the citizens we do not employ the grains as the number which is about 8 compounds is convenient to remember.

Some people from the town, particularly from the compound of the diseased, are often so busy that we girls do the cooking for them, under the same conditions as obtain during a marriage feast preparation. It is to be noted, however, that these cookings aredone in almost every compound. As such we have far greater freedom in doing as we choose. We have a few elderly women who go round to supervise our work.

The girls, appointed to work in the home of the diseased rise as early as 3 in the morning, having got their supply of food the previous evening. The result, like that of the marriage feast preparation, is that many of us wake up long before that time and having kept awake, sleep during the day. Sometimes we may be so badly feverish that we start vomiting. Our elders, unfortunately, look upon this as a sign of weakness. Consequently, we do all we can to keep each other up in order to avoid the disgrace.

When a great person dies, a cow is slaughtered and shared, along with the supply of fish or sheep. When this happens we are very happy, because at that time we get plenty of meat to eat. This is very rare here, as fish is what we often get" Interrupting her I asked, 'Who buys all these things?" In answer she continued thus:- "At the death of a person, the MANLE, after appointing the management committee for the funeral will give them a large amount of money, with which the needed purchases are made.

On the 6th day the donations and expenses are named to the gathering and any dificit is provided by the relatives. In the case of a credit balance, it is divided among the relatives. The latter is what happens generally. She further explained that it was considered dangerous to drink before one reaches adolescence. It was, however, customary to take a sip from a father's glass, otherwise he will be disgraced before the gathering" At this point the meeting broke up as there was nothing more to be got from her and the old man.

The sipping from the father's glass has a bad effect which all know about, but will not own to be a drawback upon their children's education for life in the community. I discovered this incidentally in course of my studies. To supplement my information, I availed myself of the opportunity of going to a funeral celebration to observe things on the spot. Things were done exactly as have been narrated with more interesting side lights which, being taken for granted presumably, had not been told me. On my return home I came upon a boy of about 12 being taken away by friends apparently against his will. He spoke

more quickly and rather more loudly than I had seen him do since my arrival in the village. When I went near, I saw that he smelled of the native drink. I learnt from the others that it has now become a habit which originated from sipping from the father's glass. Later he confirmed it himself and told me confidentially that he had since devised the means of leaving a few drops at the bottom of the pot or bottle to be used later when he was unobserved. He had also added that he had a way of drinking from stocks before use. He also revealed that he knew of the presence of four others in the village, who were addicted to drinking. This state of affairs may be directly attributed to making children share drinks and drink from fathers' glasses.

The other evil of which, like the drink, I had from the beginning expressed apprehension, is the way people, in a sort of competitive way, get into debt. The men, in showing off, gave freely to mothers, wives, and others directly concerned with the diseased. Though I never heard of actual debts resulting from funeral expenses, the pratice, as an example to the children is questionable.

On the contrary, however, the system of providing for all food and drink, as opposed to making people caterfor themselves individually on these days, is indeed commendable, and sets a really good educational pattern for the children to emulate. This fact applies absolutely to the graded uniform donations which are within everybody's pocket. These are great things most other states in the Colony may copy to lower insolvency in this connection particularly in Fanteland.

Chapter 10 A DAY IN AN ELETILE NZEMA VILLAGE

It was at the village of Ayenzile and the day was Wednesday. The time in the morning was about 4. The quiet was broken by occasional understone greeting orders to children, and the sound of brooms sweeping the compound. About 5.30 the compound was getting busy with all the girls and women washing pots, plates, and other kitchen utensils. Women and girls had started preparing family breakfast and articles of food for sale. Paddles, kerosene tins, cutlasses, hoes and other necessary articles, for the day's work were being gathered together by the boys and girls. All this went on for some time under control.

Just before 6, every compound literally came to life. Speech almost immediately becomes loud, distinct and free. Boys and girls lawled to one another in the discharge of their duties and in passing on orders from parents and guardians. Girls hurried with the water collecting, materials, cutlasses, hoes, and paddles to the riverside, where women and girls gathered together in knots about dug-outs, conversing or exchanging greetings. Meanwhile water was hailed out of the canoes, and others, recollecting forgotten things and orders, ran back to take or give them.

Soon they were all sitting on the ends of the sides of the canoe, facing each other talking and laughing, as the dugout was being rowed across the river. It was so full that the sides were just three inches above the water, but they appeared unmindful of the situation and continued to talk excitedly on the topic. Sometimes the ripples forced ~~water~~ water into it, then jokes and fun were made at the expense of ~~those~~ those who suffer from cold.

On the return the story is different. Strings of girls and women carry their vessels so posed and balanced that they use their hands freely in clapping to songs being sung. The young girls of 5 - 7 bear themselves not so surely. The water tips over their tins and basins and makes them wet. To check this, special leaves are put into their vessels. The leaves float on the surface and lessens the spilling.

They all, excepting the one or two young children, stand in the canoe as the boy ferries them across the river. They continue bearing on their heads the collected water in the pots and other vessels poised and steady. At the river side the row is not allowed to touch the ground directly as the impact causes the novices' water in the canoe to spill. It is therefore brought to the ground with the side of those standing to step out first. On other occasions, when there is no boy to ferry them over, one of the girls takes her seat at the stern of the canoe with her water pot upon her head and rows them across the river. She does this with one hand holding, the paddle while the other steadies the vessel on the head.

The boys wash the plates, pots and other vessels along with the girls. They sweep and dust the sleeping rooms while the girls fetch the water. They may sweep the pens at times. They then busy themselves whetting the cutlasses and knives on the whetstone, and file the edges of felling axes. They carry these as they accompany their fathers to the farms. By this time the girls and women will have returned about ~~three~~ the fourth time and will have tackled the preparation for the afternoon meal.

They usually take fish or meat and some salt, put into an empty bottle, before they follow the men and boys to the farms, reaching the farm to about 7. As this happens in every house, by 8 the village is practically empty save for very old men and women as well as children between 3 and 4, and people who may be ill.

The men and women, after giving orders to the boys and girls respectively about their day's hours. After this they meet to relax for the next thirty minutes. During this time they take their breakfast and eat in groups of men, women, boys, and girls separately, the two latter groups taking theirs first to be able to serve their parents later. The children, who will have finished some thirty minutes prior to the start of their parents' eating, go back to continue their assigned pieces of work.

The boys rewhet the cutlasses for the next five to ten minutes. The portion of the farm set apart for their clearing is first inspected by an elder to make sure there are no snakes or any other dangerous things there. The youngest are allotted to clear vegetation easy to cut. By the age of eight the children will have so developed that a more difficult phase of the work is introduced. This system of introducing difficulties with age groups is so effective that by the age of twelve and over the children take their place by the side of their fathers. The latter group, having qualified, eat with the adults. All faults discovered in their work are corrected in the course of the work.

A grandfather, or a grand uncle, is usually in charge of the younger set of boys who work according to age ability.

He goes to inspect their individual pieces of work. His chief tool is praise. The praise is lessened where work has been unsatisfactory, and the individual concerned will there and then be made to go over the supervisor directing the operations in person. Another useful device to help improve the standard of work is for boys, frequently making mistakes, to be put to work with their immediate juniors. This is looked upon as a great disgrace by other boys who make jokes at the victim. He weeps bitterly for many reasons, one of which is the fear that the news will reach the village, and he will be a laughing stock to his playmates. This fear usually makes them abide implicitly by the grandfather's orders. Thus, after the supervisor's work is turned a boy will let others watch his subsequent efforts for criticisms in order to help him to overcome his particular difficulty. This method the grandfather uses with the nine to eleven year olds.

The six to eight-year olds are not subjected to the treatment given to the former group. The best worker is given extra food, and he is in charge of the parents' breakfast table remains, which, taking the lions share, he shares amongst his age group. He breaks first from work and goes about happily smiling. He later causes the others to break also. This being the end of their day's routine work, they forthwith go to set bird traps. They are so close to people that there is not the likelihood of birds ever being near, and much less being entrapped, as they are generally badly set. All the same, they will spend hours on end, watching over them to take the first bird alive and without losing its plumage. The younger ones, standing behind

trees and bushes, watch to find out how their traps work to catch the birds, and the others spend their time resetting their traps noisily, though they mean the action to be noiseless as not to scare away birds.

By 11 o'clock the elderly ones, twelve to eighteen year olds, working with the elders, one asked to rest. They spend their time in several ways. At times they go to the nearby forests to cut needed supports, and twine from reeds to repair and strengthen the fence at home; they may collect materials from the raffia palm to be employed in mat making and fish traps. From the remains of the materials collected, cylindrical baskets, used to protect growing coconut seedlings, are made. Or they may employ the time working on their individual farms. These are peices adjoining the main family farms and are entirely under the children's own management. The children work these according to their taste, which, in one way or another, is coloured by their observation work on the main plots. These, though not actually inspected by relatives, are still visited as often as convenient by parents who commend children's work and suggest means of improvement with regard to spacing, sowing, weeding and thinning or tillering where necessary.

In carrying out these they will spend hours by themselves without any form of actual supervision. The younger children, whose enthusiasm dies more quickly, sow their seeds so closely together and at times so mixed up, that their return is poor by adult standards, but everything to the child. He relishes his own 'bad' crops more than what has been got from the main farm.

This attitude changes with time. The older ones spend more time on their work. The fruit of the labour a boy proudly asks the mother, aunt, or sister to collect, if he himself is engaged on an errand or on some other mission. The girls being more through and more painstaking especially with the weeding, get comparatively better results, upon which they look with pride and satisfaction.

What proves a constant source of interest and therefore a favourite pastime with the older boys is setting traps for birds fish and animals. From these they often return the next day with birds, small animals like squirrels, fish, crabs and shrimps. The parents here insist upon their visiting the traps daily, as from them they get the fish or meat for the next day's meal.

Meanwhile the girls help the parents to prepare lunch. They are entrusted with the greater part of the cooking, but under direct supervision. Finishing eating at about 2 in the afternoon, the men and women go over the day's work, adding finishing touches here and there. By 3 the women, assisted by the girls, have got ready the foodstuffs and firewood, while the men and boys take home the materials collected.

The return journey starts half an hour later. The boys lead the men, and girls, the women in an Indian file, quite serpentine, looked at from a distance, They talk and laugh and sing. The children break the monotony by shrieks and cries. Soon they reach the river and crossing over starts all over again. The old people come to welcome them at the river side and help them

convey to the house what they have brought. Meantime complaints about all that has taken place in their absence are made by the under fives to the mothers and fathers.

Once again the village of Ayenzili is alive.

PART III

FORMAL TRAINING

Chapter 11 PARENTS' DESIRE FOR CHILDREN - BIRTH

The desire for large families in the Eletile Nzema society are household words. The head of the family prides himself on its sieze, because his status in the community is enhanced by the size of his retinue at funerals, festivals, and at any other assemblies where the compound unit is taken to account. This is particularly so, where tax raising or communal labour is taken into consideration. He proudly refers in gatherings to his sons, daughters and dependent relatives like nephews, nieces, and grand children. These dependants, on their part, enjoy being in large families, and showed it by word and deed. Mothers, too gloat over many children. Their neighbours refer to them jealously for being blessed with many children. The contagion of the desire for large families is a special obsession of the people of Eletile Nzema.

To achieve this end, he will make additional marriages, especially if his children turn out to be mostly girls; for to the head of the Eletile family, daughters depiete families, while sons angment them, through marriage. For this same reason, he helps his sons financially to contract other marriages, soon after making them divorce old wives for failing to bear children after a period of three to six years. He also sees that matrilineal sisters and nieces are divorced from husbands, who after a similar period, fail to have children with them.

Men and women without children are looked down upon and have little respect shown them. They do all in their power to have children by undergoing various medical treatments from native herbalists and physicians. When these treatments fail they very often leave the district to live elsewhere to avoid the disgrace and taunts. In advising children against immoral practices, resulting in sterility, parents and guardians cite these barren people as examples.

Consequently, pregnancy is looked upon with pride and given very careful attention. Elated by this fact, some thoughtless girls hide behind the change and evade normal work. To offset this lazy tendency, it is customary that pregnant women after the second moth, work harder than they normally do, before being in the family way. This, they say, will ease childbirth, and make children strong and healthy. They start the day by sweeping. On the farm it is required of them to do an extra bit. In the house the rice and corn is beaten and ground by them. The pregnant woman is also required to store up firewood in piles. She marks by the kitchen a space roughly five feet long, three feet wide, and four feet high. The area is marked out by stakes made of old, discarded, wooden pestles. Here she makes a careful pile of firewood which she brings each time she visits the farm. Two ro three such collections are made by the end of the eight month.

On a day one of the village midwives enters the compound on the invitation of the head of the family. The elderly women of the compound appear younger as they move from room to room in a rather brisk manner, taking odds, and ends - rags, blankets, mats,

soap, towels, basins and water into the room where the midwife is seated by the pregnant woman. She is confined. Children under five are gathered together at one end of the compound, usually under an aunt or grandmother, whose principal duty is to stop the children from going to the place where the wom is in labour. They listen to stories by their mates and usually by the aunt. They work in groups at a favourite game, or they may be scrambling over their food. In the last instance, cheated ones cry or fight, or lay complaints to the aunt who is kept busy talking, or listening to several of them at a time.

The older children, if not away on the farms, are made to run such errands as will take them away from the compound. The messages are such that the aunts or ther relatives, to whom they go, divining theri real meaning, detain them there indefinitely until further notice.

Meanwhile the woman in labour is lying on a mat. When she feels the pain, she rises up, bends the knees, holding on to two firmly diven posts. This action is repeated until the child is born. A word is quickly sent to the husband through the head of the family. The few men, gathered there, are served with gin and native wine provided by the husband and the head of the family to commemorate the occasion. A portion of the drink is sent to the midwife, who causes a libation to be poured as in the case of the men, before the women about her are served with the rest.

Immediately after delivery the midwife washes the babe three times with three changes of water, containing special herbs and roots. It is then wrapped up and taken to the dipped three

times in the Amanzule River by way of introducing the babe to the river, so that it will take to the water early and without fear. After the room has been cleaned, the children are taken to see the babe they term "whiteman" The child immediately senior to the new born is made to sit down on the mother's bed and take it with the aid of the midwife and to hold it for a little while in the lap. The midwife washes the baby twice a day for a week, during which period she also attends the mother. From the next fortnight up to the third month a grandmother or an aunt attends both mother and baby. The mother, after the third week, if that is her first child birth, practises washing, and doing other things for her baby.

Chapter 12. EARLIEST TRAINING

For the first three days the baby lives on plain, boiled water. From the fourth day onwards it is breast fed. It is put on the mother's lap to suckle and this is done at stated times. When it stops suckling it is allowed to rest for a while, then the operation repeated about three times, after which it is put in bed to rest and sleep. Its cries before the next feeding time are attended to, to find out whether lying on one side for a long time, else, is the cause, On the contrary if a mother has a baby for the first time, she makes the crying a pretext to give it a suck, as she is particulary enthralled by the act of feeding it. The woman in attendance stops the practice by pointing out the many dangers that that action exposes the child to. At times cries may be due to indisposition In this case an enema, or any other treatment, is given and the child is made to rest in bed which is shares with its mother.

About the first month the child is "outdoored". The mother and the baby, accompanied by an aunt and a few girls, go to greet and thank the prominent men and women by whose prayers there has been no mishap to either of them. A party is usually arranged by the father to mark the occasion. The day chosen is usually Sunday, and the place is where the head of the compound chooses. This day usually synchronizes with the naming ceremony, so that when their friends and prominent people invited have met, the child is taken by the person nominated by the head of the compound. He takes hold of both of the baby's hands in one of his, and as he lightly throws it into the air, he mentions the name and catches the child. The gathering stands on its feet at the name and instantly sits down. The baby is now in the father's arms with the woman standing behind her, while the man, who gave the name, with glass in hand, pours the libation. After this he dilutes a drop of the gin in water. He puts three drops of the mixture on to the tongue of the child as he says in effect the following:-

"You are now in the world.
Stay longer in it.
Doing better than he
After whom you are named.
Between good and evil distinguish.
Be healthy, wealthy, wise."

The mother, taking the baby from the husband, follows him to their seats, and the party is started. Drinks are served first. Then follow the different courses. Speeches are made congratulating the pair. The child in course of all this is

offered gifts of various kinds, ~~namely~~ such as money, gold rings, yards of cloth, powder, pomade, lavender, and combs. If the people are well-to-do, a photograph of father, mother and baby closes the function.)

From birth to the fifth month, apart from washing and feeding, the child spends most of its time sleeping and is rarely moved about by people other than its mother and the aunt or grandmother attending it. In its waking hours, a sister of any girl servant plays with it until it falls asleep. It grows grows rapidly until about the minth month when there appears to be an arrest in its development. From the sixth month onwards, if the child is healthy, people from all corners of the village start to carry it about. It is taken from the first carrier by the second, third and so on and so forth, until the tenth or twelfth person, finding it crying without stopping, takes it to the mother. This story is repeated in the afternoon and for all the days of the week, except when it is ill.

The feeding of the child becomes irregular, as it is not allowed to remain in the house for long. The mother, sensing the danger the child runs by this sort of life, reacts by giving it suck at shorter intervals to make for the losses likely to be sustained through the carrying about. Disturbing the child's digestion in this way, fevers follow thick and fast. They often end fatally, and this, in my opinion, is one of the main causes of infantile mortality in Eletile Nzema. This is only in the day time. At night the child feeds three times before the next day.

From the day of delivery, it is the express duty of the husband, to provide best fresh fish and meat for the preparation of the wife's special diet, This is separately prepared by the woman in attendance. The wife does not share this food with any other persons, except with her two children, the immediate seniors of the baby. This food is usually prepared in palm soup. It has the effect of increasing and, probably improving the mother's breast milk for the baby. The two children partaking of this dish change in appearance and look healthier. The mother, too, puts on flesh.

This food, though well prepared is shunned by the father who believes the wife unclean until after the six month.

From the the third month the child's training to relieve itself upon the chamber pot is taking shape. It often cries until the mother learns to connect the particular cry with that desire. By the ninth month it crawls to the pot if accessible. If left unremoved after a dischage, it will soon mess itself with it.

Semi liquid foods are introduced from the sixth month with porridges, made of ground maize and rice. As they get use to these, loss and less breast milk is offered until the latter is stopped entirely by the twelth month. While most children are weaned in about a year's time a few mothers do so from the eithteenth to the twentieth month. This last group of children usually look sickly, but the mothers contented that they check premature conception.

About the age of two children choose to walk instead of allowing themselves to be carried about. They use their hands at washing several times before the mothers attend to them. What they achieve by the attempt is to apply the soapy sponge several times to the belly and splash the forehead with water at the expense of the rest of the body.

CHAPTER 13 SEX DISTINCTIONS.

Sex inclinations are roughly unknown amongst children below five. They will play together and fight each other irrespective of sex, but from five onward the Eletile child leans heavily towards sex. The boys, feeling they are men, express themselves as such in their play.

They follow their fathers to the farms, if only they will make others feel, by so doing that they are strong men. For the same reason, they will carry things that belong to their fathers. In this way the learn by observation the best twines for traps and for household needs, such as maintaining the fence or for strengthening the huts (houses). They are taught other essentials such as where to stand in setting animal traps in the bush. They learn how to climb coconut palms; they learn how stars are connected with the local fishing, for when particular stars are seen at certain places in the sky, they indicate fish will be scarce or plentiful. At certain places these stars help the farmer to know whether it is sowing or harvesting time. By the fixed nature of a certain number of stars the children are taught to read how lost or benighted hunter find their way back home.

It is also during these wanderings about with their fathers that the boys are taught how to fight fives from the windward direction. It is also the period to learn to fight without being beaten and without crying. They learn not to show any tremour in cries voices when one is giving a statement to an equal or an elder after a fight.

The girls, on the contrary, spend most of their free periods with the mothers or aunts who through many ways and devices teach them sweeping the rooms and compound, cooking the household food. They learn the right way to do sowing, weeding, and harvesting. They learn about the uses of utensils. The young ones are taught how to carry water and other things on the head, posed and balanced, without using the hands, how to grind corn or cassava to the right dough consitency, and how the fufu is turned in the wooden mortar.

Both boys and girls learn the proper customary way of wearing their cloth, of paddling the canoe over the river. They learn the art of getting palm nuts for meals and the etiquette observed in this society.

In this way boys and girls behave differently as their whole life, especially during the day is devoted to practising what they have been taught previously in their play and work.

At night they occasionally play together, but often times boys and girls play games in sex groups, where the younger ones learn from their immediate seniors through such make-believe games as playing fathers and mothers. Here they teach the younger ones what they have learnt directly from their parents and older playmates. For instance, it is after the day's work

in the evening that boys from different sections of the village meet to fight according to a laid down plan drawn by common consent. At these mimic fights injuries sustained are connived as by parents. The girls supply the boys with heaped fight materials, such as dry coconut husks and corn cobs to cobs to help the successful prosecution of the battle. The victorious section usually celebrates its victory by dances to drums. The dances are performed differently by the two sexes.

Boys and girls, showing incompetency in their sex lore, or leanings towards the work of the opposite sex, are looked down upon by their own age groups and other members of the house. They are called names and made fun of in open ridicule, and in private by such terms as "Mmale Boo", "Abowa" (Sissy) and Ehereke (tomboy), which are used time and again.

As a direct result of the above facts, parents generally show preference for children of their own sex, and children show it for parents of their own sex.

CHAPTER 14 SIBLING RELATIONS

Having weaned the child and making it pass subsequent nights at the children's quarters, which is usually the room adjoining the parents' sleeping apartment, the mother is now looked upon as clean to share bed with the husband. This is one of the happiest of days for the eldest daughter, whose duty it is henceforth to mother the child directly. She will get the "akasa" (porridge) or any other type of food it eats at night, ready before bedtime. She sees that their mat and bedding are sunned daily. She now prepares the food and gives it to the child.

She prepares and administers the child's enema, whenever necessary. She washes it as many times as she can manage it, provided the weather is not cold. She takes walks with it and plays with it. Both share the same bed at night. The daughter's work is carefully supervised.

The child at first is resentful about the change of sleeping place, and the mother, compromising, goes to them every time it wakes up and starts crying. She stays and lulls it to sleep, before she goes back to her own bed.

Soon pregnancy takes place once again the youngest child is told when a new baby is expected. He is given the vague information that God is about to give another baby to the mother to be his playmate, and that accounts for the distension of the mother's belly, which is the home of the stranger.

At the birth of younger children, the child is intentionally sent on an errand to an aunt, or a grandmother, in a different section of the village. In other cases he is allowed to remain in the compound, but not at the place of the labout. The child is then brought to see the baby, after customary observances like dipping it in the Amanzule River have been attended to. If the colour of the baby brightens it, as it does many such children, he is made to lie by the mother for some time, while the grandmother attends to the baby. Soon, however, he is prevailed upon to watch over the new arrival either with the mother, or by himself. Any actions and expressions brought with jealously are nipped in the bud by soothing and cajoling expressions such as "You are going to teach this new chap how to dance, how to walk, how to talk, and how to do many of the wonderful things you do. Aren't you?"

"Has it abused you? Has it kicked you, hurt you?".....
This approach the Eletile mother employes effectively. The child thows after this complimentary speech and almost instantly co-operates with the mother.

The Eletile parents show no preference in the treatment of their children below the age of five. Above this age the mother, for the purpose of example, many show favouritism to the child that runs most errands ungrudgingly.

Children are regarded as an advantage to the Eletile parents for the help they give in looking after the younger ones, and doing minor pieces of work in the house, apart from the fact that they are specially regarded as a cause for pride in the family.

These parents, however, do not lose sight of the fact that they are a drain upon their pockets. They are also a hindrance to the free activities of the mother especially, who may not be able to ply her trade for some six months.

Before the age of five children of the opposite sexes are supposed to be closer to each other. Quarrels are more frequent among children of the same sex. These quarrels centre round "toys", food, and attachments to parents and favourite elders, such as grandmothers or uncles. The Eletile parent often deals with these quarrels by sharing the food all over again; by making them play with particular toys for a time and changing them, and, in the last instance, by making the elder concerned call them together and play with them all together, or in the case of neglect, by attending the child concerned, and in various ways, making the child feel at home with the elders once again.

CHAPTER 15 RELATIONS TO PARENTS

The mother is chiefly concerned with early care of the child, after the first three weeks of its life. Before this period an aunt or a close relative like a grnadmother takes care of the baby. The aunt is usually retained for about three months. She may come to live in the home, or come just to perform her duties.

The Child's early contacts with the father are as follows:- The father loves to carry it about in the compound with pride as his own, playing with and talking to, it. He at other times, takes it out for fresh air, whe it is not in the compound He carries it, either when the mother is very busy or ill. At times also he is in evidence in connection with discipline. On journeys it is not an unusual sight to see the child being carried on a father's shoulders. In a nutshell, the child is so closely connected with its father, that in its sleep it calls out his name frequently, particularly when it has a fever. They are happy in each other's company to the extent that they share secrets.

In disciplining the child the father has the chief authority, and he is also the main agent of discipline. In accordance with custom everything about discipline is first referred to the man who should deal with the situation in a manner commensurate with the nature of the fault. In the absence of the father, when the child goes wrong, it is the mother who punishes.

In more serious cases the father, in consultation with the wife, mets out the required punishment, after indicating its

nature by such statements as "You may not go out for three days from now for your play after the day's work", or "You need a severe thrashing for this misconduct..." To which the woman's answer will be indicative of the favoured line of action thus, "You are too lenient, no wonder so- and - so is always misconducting himself to the disgrace of us all. Speak of... (mentioning the type of punishment preferred) I am attending my business" By this she will take her leave of him.

The idea is to make the child think of the seriousness of the offence, and that even mother is so upset, that given the opportunity, the punishment may be increased. This often has the desired effect of being a deterrent and punishment at the same time. In this way the child's filial respect and love for both parents is maintained, for almost always the mother's reaction is to send for the child and by such words as "We are so proud of you and we know this has been an accident" or "You know the (mentioning names of neighbours) will taunt us that you are somebody, not well versed in our customs and therefore a disgrace. I know that you won't repeat this. Take this.." giving him something to eat.

Minor offences usually in the kitchen are readily punished by the mother with a warning to the offender that a recurrence will be reported to the father.

The cause of punishment is always explained to the other partner before or after, according to to the circumstances. It is always thought of as bad form to take sides with a child. In this case the child may think his action are right and may lead to future and worse troubles.

On occasions a parent may apparently be an ally to a child's bad behaviour on purpose. This, explained to the other fellow later, is an effective means of stopping children form vices. The present parent will say something like this putting much meaning into every sentence. "Oh! what is this? (purse) Have you forgotten its a great taboo?"....

This situation when well handed is certain to have the desired effect, if the other partner does not divulge the secret to the child. Badly practised the child will subsequently flout correction and admonition.

In the presence of children, the parents generally behave in concert, but occasionally a careless word by one of the parents may start a quarrel. In this, case if the family is a large one, the oldest of the children will take out the younger ones from the scene. The cries of the youngest of them when being torn away from the mother will after attack neighbours to the scene to restore relations. Other than this, and with the exception of drunkeness, the Eletile parents do not openly disagree about discipline, and do quarrel about other things before their children.

These Eletile parents feel it their bounden and express duty to provide for their children, otherwise they will be looked down upon by the neighbours who will point fingers of scorn at them in all gatherings, festivals or funerals. This reflects adversely upon the clan. As such all cases of difficulty are privately reported to the clan head who, using his good offices, will be influential in causing a member to give the needed help

as to himself. But what debars people from making free use of this is that the act becomes public among the clan, who will look down upon him and attribute the cause to sheer extravagence and lack of foresight, not mentioning laziness.

It is expected of the children to return thanks for what they receive from their parents apart from food. They are taught to say "Thank You" to a parent there and then, and early the next morning.

The parental ambition for a child is that the boy with reflect the father's qualities to the extent of being able to win a girl for marriage with comparative ease and "making money" within a short space of time. They will raise children as a matter of course and be able to call their offspring after the names of their parents. It is a pride for fathers to see their grand children. The bride's parents may have children named after them as an act of grace and favour.

It is expressly against custom to quarrel with parents. Those who may exchange words even with their parents are required by custom to pacify them with perhaps a fowl or a sheep according to the child's age. If a child had the misfortune to be involve in it, he would be subjected to a deal of indignity of having to lie down for the parents foot to be set upon his head, after having been stripped to the waist, carrying whatever was decided upon by the those called to the arbitration. The disgrace of being scolded by most of those who have assembled there, the fact that one's disgrace speaks ill of one's parents, and that one will subsequently be ostracised for a period - all these make children hesitate to quarrel with their parents.

These rare quarrels are the result of children disobeying their parents doing what they have been forbidden, for example going out late at night, or going out to witness a tribal dance at night at another village. These children ask forgiveness from their parents before the arbitrators dictate their terms of forgiveness.

On rare occasions when parents are guilty wise children let the matter drop. They even go to the length of finding an elder to ask the parent concerned to drop the matter. This is true of sons and daughters married or about to be. With the young child a relapse into quiet is an indication that the child is right. Very few parents go the length of apologising to a son or daugher. So that though the parents do admit their wrong, they scarcely ever ask forgiveness of their children.

In Eletile Nzema parental control does not end, but when children marry, it is not frequently or directly used.

CHAPTER 16 THE RIVER AND ITS INTERESTS

The influence of the river upon the Eletile is tremendous. He looks upon it as saviour and protector. He believes firmly that it will save him from sustaining any unnatural death, as it neutralises the effect of poisons in the system. For this reason he swallows a mouthful each time he comes into contact with it. He uses it for medicinal purposes. The curative power of its waters is proverbial and he uses it in mixtures for diseases. He carries it about him in phials on journeys that take him away from Eletile-land.

It is his drinking water, and he uses it for all washing and bathing purposes. It is the main source from which the Eletile gets his fish, shrimps, oysters and crabs. It facilitates his work of conveying his products and other things from place to place. By its banks grow the special plants and twines which he uses in making fish traps and in building his huts (house). Indeed, the Eletile's life is closely connected with the Amanzule River.

For this reason, swimming, more or less, is the first formal lesson taught to every Eletile child. Mothers generally are the teachers, but fathers and elder brothers and sisters assist in imparting this essential and invaluable art as far as the Eletile is concerned. The teaching starts just before the age of three. Mothers, after the afternoon day's work is done, take the child into the river for a wash. The child is given the chance to struggle in the shallow places at first. He imitates what the mother does, and stands up immediately difficulties beset him. In spite of the claims for the first immersion to make him take to the water easily, the child is at the beginning very much afraid of the water, and shows this fact by his facial contortions and shrill cries and futile attempts at running away from the mother towards the dry land.

However, he gets more accustomed to the water with days of practice. I actually saw a child who had who eluded a mother and was going to have a dip all by himself. The child learns to float within three months. The teacher then takes it into a deeper part of the water to swim towards the hand. The distance

is increased according to the progress being made by the particular child. When the child is able to swim for about thirty feet without help, he then passes from the direct tutelage of the mother.

The next stage in the swimming course is carried on informally under the direction of the older children. These children bathe at special places. The number of children varies from a dozen to about fifty at a time at one of these places. The water is ruffled with so many children bathing at the same point. Wavelets are consequently set in motion. These decrease at first the distance a child was able to swim. The difficulty of conquering the wavelets takes froma fortnight to a month.

Organised swimming races are undertaken by these novices under the direction of the older ones. These races are rare, as they need a number of older hands to succorn the tired and drowining ones. On the whole, they follow the example of older ones and practise what catches their fancy at the time. Nevertheless, they improve upon their swimming ability and gain new techniques.

Another interesting feature of the swimming practices is the following:-

Batches of half to a dozen of these practised novices are put into a canoe and rowed to a point of the river calculated within their average swimming capacity. The canoe is then capsized for the occupants to swim towards the land. A variation of this exercise is for the children to swim towards the canoe in mid water to be put on board and rowed towards the bank.

At this stage they are given formal lessons in paddling. Specially designed paddles are given to them for the purpose. Older brothers and sisters supervise this peice of work. They seat the learner at the right place and direct the strokes. In doing this the learner often loses control and falls into the water. At this juncture his swimming ability stands him in good stead, enabling the learner to swim to the vessel, and climb into it, or be picked up there by the brother or sister, This art has a great fascination for the learners who, for the love of it, will spend hours on end, ferrying people to and from the opposite banks.

Knowking the intricacies in rowing, the child continues the swimming lessons in earnest and more formally. He is next made to swim across the Amanzule, a distance of about fifty yards. Some four to eight children are started from one bank to swim to the opposite side in a race. More elderly ones follow the swimmers in a canoe or two, and their duty is, firstly to encourage those directly under their coach, and, secondly, to pick on board those who may find the attempt too much for their strength to cope with at a time. After a few practices children do it without help, rest a few minutes at the farther bank, and return by swimming to the point from which they have previously started.

The next state taught to the Ehetile child in connection with its swimming lessons is Diving. It is at first a sort of free exercise. The leader gives the word and the children dive, staying under water as long as each can conveniently manage. The winners then are those to come out last. At times the

leader, after giving the starting word, starts counting while the children remain under water. The child wins, if it is the one to get the largest number of counts.

From this stage the learner is taken in a canoe to a point where it is fairly deep. Here he dives to bring the silt from the bed of the river. Gradually the learner is able to get to the deepest parts where the children bathe.

For further practices and tests objects like stones, pieces of iron, shells, and pelces of money (preferably nickles) are thrown into particular places for the children to recover by diving. It is interesting watching the smiling faces of successful children. I was present when a boy of seven brought to the surface an office pin purposely dropped into the river.

The Eletile child is now important and looks it. He takes part in the excursions for oysters and other shell fish found at the bottom of the river. They go in canoes in groups of two, three, four, up to a dozen, the size of each group being dependent upon the size of the canoe. At the spot, the children equipped with a bag suspended from the waist, dive for what they want. The filled waist bag is frequently emptied into the canoe until the required amount is got. They then leave for their home, rowing or punting the canoes in a competitive manner, and singing.

Life Saving is a sequel to the lessons of swimming and diving. It is so highly regarded that the teacher now is either the father, or uncle, or the eldest brother. The theory is simple and direct. This is about all the teaching explained to

me, and it was confirmed almost verbatism by all the children of five and over who had taken the course and had been interviewed:

i. "Give the alarm.

ii. Never face a drowning person.

iii. Push him from behind towards a bank."

The father, or whoever takes his place, acts as somebody drowning for the learner to save. They obey the rules generally, but at times mistakes occur and the teachers take advantage of the situation to make the child feel the result poignantly. For instance, one learner in this situation was made by the father to sink with him. This caused the latter to drink quantities of water. He became tired and weak. When he finally came out of the water, he panted heavily for breath and his stomach was greatly distended. The father, taking advantage of the situation, collected the children together and demonstrated forcing out water from the stomach. This over, he explained the boy's mistakes, which he attributed to over anxiety to save the "drowning" person. As he spoke, he mimicked the actions of the drowning man and those of the life saver, if the latter was to succeed. After this he sent his boy home for further treatment. Approaching the father at this juncture as to why he did not content himself with pointing out the fault to him by word of mouth, he said that that would not drive home the lesson so well as the bitter experience.

The knowledge of swimming is invaluable. It enables even boys to recover things like money and trinkets from the bed of the Amanzule River in the case of a boat capsizing.

CHAPTER 17 SOCIAL ETIQUETTE AND TABOOS

Strictly speaking, life in the Eletile Nzema Tribe is one continuous preparation for births, marriages, funerals and festive observances to which the children's education is formally and informally directed. This fact is a convincing proof, that the Eletile, though not literate, is nevertheless, educated, because from his actions and words it is manifest that his chief aim for the child is to develop him into a full and balanced Eletile.

To be sure that the child knows all the necessary rules of life in an Eletile community, more direct and plain teaching is resorted to from the age of thirteen to eighteen and fifteen to twenty four in the case of girls and boys respectively. These lessons are given by grand mothers and aunts, and grandfathers and uncles in the evening after the day's work. Instruction on sex is vague, as apart from the fact that their sexual organs should always be kept clean, there is hardly anything else said to make the children wiser.

The teaching given is, in reality, a list of don'ts and is done after about half the time has been spent with a great deal of moralizing. The form taken is the following:-

i. It is bad to steal, because people will despise you, and say you are poor; they will call you thief.

ii. It is bad to be unvirtuous, friends will be ashamed of you, you will gossiped about, and no one will want to marry you.

iii. It is bad to lie, because people will laugh at you, and when you tell them anything they will not believe what you say. They will call you a liar.

iv. It is bad to be lazy; you will always be poor and no woman or man will marry you.

v. It is bad to commit adultery; because people will avoid you and gossip about you. Your relatives, friends, and children will be ashed and people will laugh and scoff at them. You will be killed. (In the oldern days they were killed) You will be called adulterer.

vi. It is bad to be cowardly; people will laugh at you, insult and mock you. They will impose upon you and trade without paying; women will not want you for husband, they will call you 'foanavoane' and 'mmaaleboo' (woman and coward).

vii. It is bad to be inhospitable and stingy - Such conduct causes neighbours to laugh and gossip.

From these they move on to dilate upon the need to abstain from sexual connection with members of one's family, particularly on the mother's side, and the need to observe this with all others during menstruation. Murder should not be committed. Apart from incurring the anger of God upon one, one stigmatizes one's family for life.

These other lessons are given to girls a year after puberty when considered mature enough to marry:-

(a) A pregnant woman should not allow roasting of anything on the fire upon which she has placed a pot, otherwise her child will be still born or a mutation.

(b) On pouring off water from yams, cassava, or plantain, the lid should not be on, or the child will be born dumb.

(c) To avoid difficult labour, she should not, on going to a particular spot, return for something forgotten in the house.

That action has the effect of "feeling the child coming and returning". It leads to the death of either the mother or the child.

(d) She should not lie with face down or up. It leads to children vomiting frequently through the nose.

(e) She should not split firewood, if she is to avoid a miscarriage.

Boys about to get married are given these lessons. They are given cap guns at about eighteen. The girls too are given their "Ehuabeteba" (small basket) containing a necklace and ear rings. These are passing out ceremonies which are marked by a party on the next day or two with their friends.

The handing down of these things takes place in the middle of the night, and custom has it that the secrets be not divulged to any other person, beside the initiated.

After the ceremony they go about for a week in their best clothes. It is marking the stage at which they cease to be children. They are now reckoned as men and women, ready to continue the life cycle of the Etetile Nzema Tribe.