

one evening, a student asked me if I knew about the motor-bicycle. He then proceeded to tell me in all apparent seriousness that it was an African at Koforidua (a town some eighty miles to the south-east) who had invented the motor-bicycle; the Europeans had suppressed him, taken the idea to Europe, and then manufactured the machine to export at profit to Africa. For me this became an amusing tale as a sign of difference between East and West Africa. However, by chance my attention has recently been drawn to Rattray's *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* (Oxford, 1930). This contains the story of 'How the Hoe Came to Ashanti' and reads as follows:

' Kwaku Ananse, the Spider, and his children . . . lived at home along with Kotoko, the Porcupine. And the Porcupine began to work for the first time on a new farm, and Kwaku, the Spider, begged him to let him have a piece (of the farm) to cultivate (for himself). And he gave him some. And the time when Kwaku Ananse and his children were hoeing, the Porcupine went home to eat. And when the Porcupine returned and took his hoe and applied it to the ground, he raised his song, saying:

“ Gyensaworowa, Kotoko saworowa,
Gyensaworowa, Kotoko saworowa,
Gyensaworowa.”

The Hoe turned over a huge tract (of land). Then they stopped work and went off, and the Porcupine took the hoe and hid it. And Kwaku, the Spider, saw (where he put it). He said, “ This hoe that I have seen, to-morrow very, very early I shall come and take it to do my work.” Truly, very, very, very early, the Spider went and got it; he took it to his farm. Now the Spider did not know how to make it stop, and he raised his song:

“ Gyensaworowa, Kotoko saworowa,
Gyensaworowa, Kotoko saworowa,
Gyensaworowa.”

And the Hoe, when it commenced hoeing, continued hoeing. And it hoed until it came too far away. Now it reached the Sea-god's water. Thence it came to the land of White-men-far, and the white men took it, and looked at it, and made others (like it). That is how many¹ . . . hoes came among the Ashanti. Formerly it was only Kotoko, the Porcupine, who had one.'

It would seem that these stories are worth publicizing to discover if there are other similar tales elsewhere, for they are clearly a most vivid illustration of the traumatic effect that European rule and western technology have had on the popular mind of Africa.

¹ Rattray has here inserted '(European)' in translating from the Akan, but the sense is clearly better without it.

Dr. May Mandelbaum Edel

WE deeply regret to announce the death on 23 May 1964 of Dr. May Mandelbaum Edel. Dr. Edel carried out a field study in Uganda, the results of which were published by this Institute in her book *The Chiga of Western Uganda* (1957).