you are their personal property, labelled "the proper (i.e. European) channels". This greatly encumbers one's contact with a sufficiently representative number of societies.

Nevertheless there is a considerable inter-society contact. Women go and visit each other's societies; they send delegates to each other's functions; they come and help celebrate each other's openings or foundings; they even contribute funds towards each other's needs.

One chairlady relates:

"Somebody invited our society the other day. She said: "I am taking out the flag', and we know what it means, when we are invited to such a thing. It means she needs money and we must give something.

"Oh you can give what you like. 10/- or 5/-. Our society gave £2 (obviously a matter of prestige). We were about five societies there.

"Oh yes, that happens quite often, but not for the flag. When we made our flag, we did not invite people. She is the first woman to ask people to come and see the flag".

(It is like inviting people to come and see the new baby!)

Members also remain faithful to their own society, even after they have moved away from its main centre. At a meeting at Vrededorp, the members came from Orlando, Sophiatown, Newclare and Kliptown. At another meeting in Pimville, members came from Pefheni, Moroka, Kliptown, Albertynsville, and they also had a member in Venterspost. At another meeting in the Nalay Camp, members came from Orlando, Pimville, Western Native Township, Jabavu, and so on.

"They travel very far for these stockfels", said one of my informants, "they like travelling too much".

Why the funeral societies started.

From the "how", some of the "why" can already be deduced, but not all of it. When one asks the women, they answer in only one word: "Poverty". Yest this is not all.

There is also the "alone-ness" of urban life.

"One day she may die, her children will have no money, her husband is dead, her corpse may lie there and rot. She must have a coffin. You don't know who is going to buy a coffin, now she knows that her corpse will never lie there rotting."

The fear of a pauper's death, the fear of dying alone, far away from one's kin, unburied, unwept, unassisted. Isn't it a general thing amongst /.....

amongst poor people the world over? Certainly in Europe, but not in India, where very little thought is given to what is for Indians an empty shell. And certainly amongst Africans, for whom the ancestors and the dead play such an important part in life and amongst the living. "A dead person who cannot be in contact any more with the living, whose life-force cannot work any more upon the living is really dead, say the Natives".(1)

There are, however, two additional more directly, African motives:

"Behind every death there is this that you can't be alone with a dead body, they are afraid to be alone. There must be many people. Always in a house where there is death, there are many people, the bereaved is never one minute alone.

"And then the bereaved is not supposed to do any work at all. The women come and scrub and clean and cook and look after the guests. In olden times they had to smear the house.

"And then the party, there must be a party. That goes back to tribal ways. You had to slaughter an ox. The skin was used for wrapping up the corpse, and the meat served the guests. And then there was beer-drinking. The guests must be fed, they come from afar."

Death, even in town demands an elaborate ritual. Even apparently very Westernised women, who in their normal lives have forsworn most of the old African customs will, in the face of death, again revert to tribal ways.

A very evolved Westernised woman relates:

"After your husband's death, you must sit down. The time is according to the laws of each tribe. Women must stay at home for a little while, like Europeans do. And you may not fall in love with a man. When you fall in love during that time it is very dangerous for the man. He gets sick, not a disease, but really sick.(2)

"Mrs. ..... knows this for sure, one man she knew got hair growing all over his body. If you cannot sit down during that period, you must ask the right people, the husband's people to release you. They then do the right procedure. They wash you and give you certain herbs, all one's husband's things are taken out of the house, and then they slaughter.

"Oh yes, Mrs. ..... did this too, she would have made the man she was in love with very sick. You are, in my language ..... something like under a cloud.

"But/.....

---

(1) P. Placied Temples, O.F.M. Bantu Filosopie Antwerpen, 1946 p.35.

(2) Note the unconscious differentiation between European "disease" and African "sickness".

"But she would not wear mourning, "That is terrible. Dark black things and veils. It makes you look fearful, so that the men do not like you, it is to help you against temptations."

In the face of deathm who does not seek again the security of the old familiar ways? How many rationalists return again to the religion of their childhood?

The women of the society do the "services" as they call it. They do the cooking and washing and the cleaning. They supply the herbs, they sew the shrouds, and principally and mainly, they are there all along, and the widow and the bereaved mother is not alone .... They arrange for the coffin and the mourner's car and the buses for the guests, and the flowers and the candles. They warn the relatives and they collect together from amongst the neighbours and friends, all those hundreds and hundreds of mourners without whom no African funeral is a "proper" and a "nice" funeral. And the husbands are recruited to hold vigil.

"There are two members specially appointed to whom the death must be reported, and they tell it to the other members. Two members are appointed for catering, and two for sewing the shrouds.

"One room in the house must be emptied for the corpse to stay. As a rule, the corpse must stay over one night in the house. If they know what it has died of, it stays in the house till the funeral. But sometimes if the relatives live far away it may stay four days or longer. Then they ask the mortuary to keep it, till all guests arrive. But when they do not know what it died of, it is kept in the mortuary many days, three days to a week, and even longer, waiting for a doctor to do the post-mortem, and doctors are often busy.

"But before it is buried it must stay again one night in the house. After the funeral the women come to the house and do all the washing, cleaning and ironing of clothes, curtains, blankets, floor. They can do this in one day, because there are many.

"After the burial they hold a meeting to pray and to see whether all the money has been collected, and everything has been done properly and there are no complaints."

One woman explained:

"I became a member of my society in 1946, because after my husband died I was all alone. And then a friend of his died and his wife was all alone, but she was a member. They were newcomers here, but they were looked after properly."

When one is a member of a society, "one is looked after properly", in the big town, even though one is a stranger and has no relatives or kinsmen nearby.

"My /.....

"My husband died at 12.30 on a Wednesday and at 7 that night this room was full of neighbours. They gave me £35. Yes, everybody helped. I bought a coffin for £12.10.0. They helped me for three months after that. He was not buried by the government and taken far away. He was buried here and nicely. It was a big funeral with many lorries and much people."

The "niceness" of the funeral stands in direct relation to the number of people following the hearse, a great number of whom consists of the women of the society. The last funeral of one of the societies had many people, "our people were nearly all there, 140 of them, and then there were some other people". It is mostly the friends from the society who notify the relatives and send the telegrams which bring them from far and wide.

How important these "services" are deemed, can be seen from the fact that many societies have a different scale of "out-payments" for a death in town with services and a death in the country without services. For instance, the O.C.S. pays £30 for burials along the Reef and as much as £70 for any burial further than the Reef. The Pimville National Women's Society gives, apart from its services and the undertaker's work, £5 for an adult and £3.10.0. for a child in cash to the bereaved. "Only when death is far awy in the country, then we send money: £25 for adults and £18 for a child, because she won't get the services."

(It is interesting to note, in passing, that many funerals and much funeral help in the rural areas is paid for and prepared for by the relatives in town.).

Death in town is expensive.

In Durban:

A woman relates:

"At that time (when her society started) the grave was free, the coffin cost from £4 to £7 (depending on whether rough planks or polished wood, on the size, and on whether adorned with embellishments like silver handles, etc.)" and you got a coach-car from the corporation free".

"Now my husband, for instance, he died last year."

Grave: "It cost me £2.10.0. for the place"

Coffin: "I had of the insurance. It cost £8/£9 the cheaper quality, and up to £20/£30 the beautiful ones".

Buses: "The bus for the coffin, the undertakers' bus cost £1.10.0. The bus for the people, they are all coolie-buses. The Indians take £4, the same for adult or child. Natives are dearer, anything from £4 to £7, they ask what they like."

About 50 people go in one bus.

"Sometimes/.....

"About 900 people attended the funeral of the late Mr. Bethue Tennyson Mokoko ....." (1)

Sometimes, especially if the deceased had achieved a certain fame, popularity or status, collections are taken at the graveside and these help the bereaved.

Often the coffin is not included in the expenses of a funeral, since this item is covered by a "European society".

It is possible that in Durban a funeral is cheaper than in Johannesburg. In any case the sums paid out are considerably smaller. The only two funeral societies in Lamontville (supposedly a well-to-do village) do not pay out more than £7 for an adult and £3 for a child, which would be considered totally inadequate in Johannesburg. The only society in Beaumontville has been defunct for some years and the necessary assistance is given in the form of spontaneous and voluntary contributions collected in each individual case. I have not investigated the position in Cato Manor.

It appears, however, also from general information received that the societies in Durban do not attain the scale and proportions of those in Johannesburg.

Immediate money for petty expenses is also provided by the women of the society, as for example, in the Arme Moeder Society, which gives £3 at once for petty expenses, out of the £25.10.0. which the bereaved will receive later. And if no actual money is given immediately, everything necessary is paid for by the society friends, for "who has so much money like that!" Since the great majority of the African families hardly ever have any extra money in the house, this is a very great help indeed.

The "European" burial societies.

It is quite clear that no "European" society could give the women anywhere near all these things, which are not only money but, even more important, concrete help and, above all, the presence of women-friends. Their easy chatter and buzzing activities drive the "evil spirits" away, and also the worries about a future without a husband.

I must remark here, in passing, that in the opinion of the women I asked, all the burial societies of the insurance type, "those where you pay /...

---

(1) As a comparison with the European community one could quote the funeral of such a well-known person as Mr. P.M. Anderson, which was attended by some 400 people.

"About 900 people attended the funeral of the late Mr. Bethue Tennyson Mokoko ....." (1)

Sometimes, especially if the deceased had achieved a certain fame, popularity or status, collections are taken at the graveside and these help the bereaved.

Often the coffin is not included in the expenses of a funeral, since this item is covered by a "European society".

It is possible that in Durban a funeral is cheaper than in Johannesburg. In any case the sums paid out are considerably smaller. The only two funeral societies in Lamontville (supposedly a well-to-do village) do not pay out more than £7 for an adult and £3 for a child, which would be considered totally inadequate in Johannesburg. The only society in Beaumontville has been defunct for some years and the necessary assistance is given in the form of spontaneous and voluntary contributions collected in each individual case. I have not investigated the position in Cato Manor.

It appears, however, also from general information received that the societies in Durban do not attain the scale and proportions of those in Johannesburg.

Immediate money for petty expenses is also provided by the women of the society, as for example, in the Arme Moeder Society, which gives £3 at once for petty expenses, out of the £25.10.0. which the bereaved will receive later. And if no actual money is given immediately, everything necessary is paid for by the society friends, for "who has so much money like that!" Since the great majority of the African families hardly ever have any extra money in the house, this is a very great help indeed.

The "European" burial societies.

It is quite clear that no "European" society could give the women anywhere near all these things, which are not only money but, even more important, concrete help and, above all, the presence of women-friends. Their easy chatter and buzzing activities drive the "evil spirits" away, and also the worries about a future without a husband.

I must remark here, in passing, that in the opinion of the women I asked, all the burial societies of the insurance type, "those where you pay /...

---

(1) As a comparison with the European community one could quote the funeral of such a well-known person as Mr. P.M. Anderson, which was attended by some 400 people.

you pay 2/6 per month", are "European". I first thought that this qualification connoted European idea and method, but I am not so sure now. I believe they think that all burial insurance companies are European-owned. As one man explained it to me:

> "No, the European societies take a licence for an African to run it for them. It is true that the African has the licence, but at the back is always a European".

I do not know whether this is objectively true or not. But this is of little importance; the fact is that most women believe it.

Some of the societies known to me prohibit their members from also subscribing ti a "European" burial society, saying: "There cannot be two coffins". Ohters, however, allow this, and others again actually count on it, for example, the Arme Moeder Society, "All members have a European society to pay for the coffin and funeral", i.e. the hearse and the mourners' car. The Pimville National Women's Society has made an arrangement with an undertaker for the whole society, whereby the undertaker provides the "coffin, the hearse and the mourners' car" against an instalment payment of £5 per month.

But although they allow the "European" society to provide the coffin, the society women do not like the "European" burial society:

> "If I have my money with the white people, and if I am late for two weeks, they don't bury you. And that for 5/- too little. White people are too much skelms."
>
> "If you have paid for 10 years, and then for 6 months you do not pay, you are sick and you have no money, then they don't bury you."

Most chairladies pride themselves that they are "not like Europeans - we are Africans", and that they allow a poor member quite a considerable latitude in her payments.

> "We have a constitution but we never use it. If you have to go according to the constitution, it is more strict, we have to throw some of our members out, because they have not paid yet. But we are Africans, we do not do that. Europeans are hard."

If Europeans are hard, it is equally true that Africans are inconsistent and irregular in their efforts, and it may be that they so often have that part of the funeral insured with a "European" society to be quite sure that at least the "coffin" will be there, and in time.

Although no chairlady would admit it, the society itself is sometimes in arrears with its funeral-payments,(1) which is particularly

likely/ .....

---

(1) This can be seen, for example, from what was said of the Bapedi (p) and the Balwena (p).

likely to happen when the sum to be paid out is not taken from the accumulated burial funds, but has to be collected from the members after each funeral. In the 11 societies studied more closely, all except the two larger ones follow the latter method. (Except of course, the Arme Moeder Society which is an extraordinary well-managed little society).

Money quarrels often originate, not because the chairlady is accused of "eating" the money, but because:

(1) A bereaved member complains that she has not had her full and due amount because some members have not paid up their contributions as they should after the funeral.

(2) All the members were not properly notified of the death. "There was a misunderstanding, one woman had a death and she was not helped. The report had not come in time. Then her supporters were cross."

If the complaining member stands alone, she will just leave the society, but generally she finds "supporters". And if she has one of the leaders on her side, then the chances are that this leader will split off and start on her own, taking all the other "supporters" with her.

For this reason it is important to have a "loan-fund" out of which members, who for some reason cannot pay their contribution at the time due, receive advances.

The Leaders.

Since the leadership-patterns, so clearly visible in the funeral societies in which the women have all the freedom to develop in ways congenial to them, continue to work in the European-inpsired organisations, a few remarks on the leadership situation may be useful.

The most important person is the Founder. It is she who knew "how to do it", it is she, moreover, who "gave the laws".(1) Her position, as such, remains unchallenged. If she is in addition a strong personality, she will also be the "leader", and then the secretaries and the assistant secretaries and the treasurer and her obedient servants, who do the actual job and execute her orders. If she is not a naturally dominant personality then, although her status remains inviolate, another intelligent and leading personality will become, nominally "secretary", but actual fact the leader, the power behind the throne. But the Founder will generally remain chairlady.

Sometimes she chooses not to be chairlady, but rather secretary or treasurer. She will then always find it necessary to explain this.

Even / .....

---

(1) See Section on "Women's Organisations".
On the African's legalistic tendencies, his love and need for "laws" - see the manyanos.

Even though she is the chairlady, she will sometimes not preside over the meeting, leaving this to, for example, the more voluble secretary. She then sits quietly in the background, but a little apart from the others. Important questions are referred to her superior wisdom by the office-bearers, as no member would speak to her directly. During meals she is served first and with due respect.

She is the embodiment of the common purpose, the personification of the society's continued existence "from strength to strength". Generally her very presence is sufficient to guarantee that all is well.

Whoever the leader is, whether she founded the society or whether she leads by virtue of her capabilities, it is she who holds the group together, she is the mortar binding the bricks. It is primarily authority and discipline exercised from above and trustful following and faithful obedience from the members, which hold the group together.(1)

I have been able to observe this leadership authority in action. Members are supposed to attend the regular Wednesday-meeting and only those who are working are excused. In case of non-attendance explanations and apologies are expected. One chairlady explained, "If a member cannot attend she must send in a report and if she does not attend a few times in succession she is cancelled as a member". Non-payment among these poor people is more easily forgiven than non-attendance. In another society, one member was severely questioned why she had not attended the previous week, and she answered quite apologetically and humbly, that she had been caught in the rain.

In one society we all had to stand up when the chairlady stood up to leave the room, and again when she came back. Every member who was asked a question by the chairlady stood up to answer, and I was told condescendingly that I "had permission not to stand up when I wanted to say something".

In the Bakwena Branch, there were three secretaries but my informant reminded me, "You saw the chairlady really did everything, she even wrote the minutes herself, you noticed that the secretary could not even read her handwriting".

In another society the chair spoke emphatically and severely for a few minutes. When I asked what she had said, I was told that these were "resolutions",(2) translation of which was forbidden, but later my interpreter explained:

"She/.....

---

(1) How this works in the European-patterned organisations will be dealt with when treating these.

(2) The women use these terms of modern Western democracy without the slightest knowledge of what they really mean.

"She gave them the laws. One of them was that the younger members must work more when a death occurs, more of the washing and cooking and helping in the house, and that they must not expect the older members to do everything."

In most societies I have knowledge of, the chairlady and the main functionaries are only re-elected every year pro forma. In reality, "they sit for life". As one society's constitution mentions: "They hold office for life or during good behaviour". In this lies the continuity and stability of the organisation.

"Oh yes, she must stay there because she keeps the work alright."

The idea that the institution of office-bearers has as its aim the division of work and responsibility is foreign to the women. To them it is a question of personality and leadership and not a division of labour. They are leaders by "status" and not by "contact".

E.H. tells me that in Vrededorp one daughter succeeded to the chairmanship of her mother's society. Her mother was "a strong leader", and so apparently is the daughter. E.H., however, stressed that this was only due to the force of her personality, not to succession or inheritance of leadership. I have myself no experience of such an occurrence. It would be interesting to study "leadership-inheritance".

In the three societies I was never allowed to talk directly to the members, the chairlady always interposing herself. Once the chairlady informed me:

"They must talk to me, and then I must tell you. It is not customary for them to talk straight to you. It is respect".

(was the respect meant for her or for me, I wondered!)

When I met the Bakhatla for the first time, some of them were very friendly disposed towards me, but the chairlady came and with one commanding sweep of her arm took them all away from me.....

After the Bakwena meeting, I offered a lift to some members. They had already accepted eagerly, but the chairlady forced them away and declined the offer graciously in their name.....

A group is primarily: "Followers of Mrs.....". This is very clearly demonstrated in the funeral societies; it is the personal attachment to the leader which holds the group together. The chairlady may say to me "she joins us because she likes the work we do", but in reality it is because she likes the chairlady, feels confidence in her and trusts that "she does not eat our money".

When /.....

When I asked the chairlady of the Golden Sunset Helping Society, how many societies like hers there were in Vrededorp, she counted them on her fingers, not mentioning their (rather fancy) names, but the chairladies' names. "Mrs. ....'s Society, Mrs. .....'s Society", and so on.

The second factor which maintains group cohesion is the system of reciprocal obligations, which in these funeral societies manifests itself in its most concrete form; the money given, the services rendered are visible, tangible proofs, continuously furnished to each other, that these obligations are real and pressing. There is no need to try and see the "common good" or an abstract universal, here are only the particular benefits with which "I help you and you help me". These actual benefits remain attached to persons, they are exchanged from person to person. The person who has recently been the receiver attends the next meeting and is known by all, and she knows that each one knows and expects her benefits in return.

The stress of meeting-attendance appears as an enforced reminder of these personal compelling relationships of reciprocity.

The prestige of membership.

There is also a great amount of prestige attached to being a member of a society, and even more to having it in one's house. "Communal work-parties reflect the status of the organiser"(1) "For the organiser it is primarily an economic venture and secondarily an occasion for the enhancement of prestige".(2) The fact that one needs people to come and help, shows that one has large fields to plough. The memory of this prestige still hovers around the town hostess and mingles with the new value of money of which, after all, one must have some in order to be able to pay the contributions to help others and to lay out the money for the entertainment.

In a mass-interview, imposed upon me at the health centre in Lamontville, Durban, all the health assistants present were asked to explain why people like these stockfels (as they are invariably called in Durban).

"Prestige, it is prestige to belong to a stockfel"

"It is prestige to belong to any organisation"

"Yes, to any group you belong to"

"You can slo do something/"

"You/.....

---

(1) Hilda Kuper An African Aristocracy, Oxf. Univ. Press 1947 pp 144/1.

(2) Ibidem, p ..... 145.

"You are loved by other people"

"They feel important"

"You don't feel inferior, you are all equal in a group"

"There your presence is important"

"People of that group, not your relatives, no, they felt isolated before, now they feel there is somebody they can rely on".

The members.

They never belong to the upper-class but rather to the middle-middle and lower-middle classes, with the accent on the latter. Most of them seem to be washer-women, and good many of them are widows and near-widows. Their age seems predominantly over 40.

One chairlady told me:

"Mostly, the women here have no husband, or when they have a husband, he is very old and no work, no income. We are a poor women's society."

The names of the societies are sometimes already suggestive of the hard struggle to make ends meet.

"Mostly the chairladies are widows" I have been assured over and over again, and this checks with my experience.

As to their educational level, It must be remembered that they are predominantly the elderly type of women, who were young when general education for Africans was only beginning. E.H. thinks that standard III would be a fair average. I know from remarks scattered in conversations that many, if not most, of them cannot really read and write. Hence, perhaps, the striking observation one makes is that the secretaries working under the chairlady are so often younger women.

No direct questioning was done on this point. When the women are so manifestly of low educational level, such questions often hurt, for they already have an inferiority complex about it in the present general urge for education.

As to the income-level, no definite information could be extracted. During a meeting, such questions, all questions dealing with money, are frowned upon, and I never had the occasion to follow up individual members privately. The leaders were not informative either. It strikes me that a considerable number of them seem to be without regular occupation or job.

Yet, sometimes, as we shall see, they contribute considerable sums. This, together with the fact which I have observed that loans are often given for ill-defined emergencies, makes one inevitably draw the conclusion that some, at least, of the funeral society's members on other days participate in some benefits derived from beer-brewing. But this connection between the drink-stockfel and the Wednesday-stockfel can only be glimpsed.

The/.....

The majority of the members are washerwomen, domestic servants, and occasionally, teachers of the older type. Women is regular employment may become members, but do not, of course, attend the meetings.

They generally do not speak English, though some speak Afrikaans. The societies are interdenominational and, apart from the tribal societies, of course intertribal. They are the same type of women that one finds as members of the manyano.

Of two societies I have been able to obtain the complete list of the tribe, religion and manyano-membership of all those attending the meeting where I was present, mainly because they were proud to show that they belonged to all tribes and sects.

About half of the members were also found to be members of the manyano.(1)

It would be interesting to discover which of the three group-feelings is strongest. Of these multiple loyalties they take their society and manyano-membership and fellowship much more seriously than their denominational or tribal adherence. After that, at the stage of my present knowledge, it becomes sheer guess-work.

One wonders where the members come from which swell the membership of these societies.

As one chairlady explained to me,

"You live next door, there's a woman, you start talking. She's a nice woman, you say come and visit me. What are you doing? She tell. Then she asks: What are you doing. I tell. I say I do so and so, do you like it? Come and see, then if she likes it she join. Then she moves to Orlando, but still she come, because she like the work."

It is possible that the main recruiting-ground for new members is the neighbourhood. It is certainly amongst the neighbours that help is organised in needy cases. But with the instability of habitation, the constant chages of residence, the transfers and removals, the neighbourhood stage of a "grouping" is probably speedily passed. Further neighbours are often very different in class and interests.(2)

In the present organisational set-up, with its set patterns and relationships, the neighbourhood no longer plays a significant part in group-maintenance.

In the/....

---

(1) See Case 27.

(2) I have often noticed, when calling at a woman's house to take her somewhere, that the baby is invariably taken to a neighbour's house, but more often than not a few houses are skipped. A selection is obviously already made here.

In the few cases where I asked how a member became a member, the answers were along these lines:

"I saw that other people were helped"

or "I had a friend and she was a member and she took me"

The fact is that no African woman joins an organisation by persuasion or verbal explanation, they "want to see it work first". This, needless to say, is a great handicap in the European-run organisations.

The tribal kinship group may have formed the original nucleus of the "self-help" movement, but this has not lasted. To the best of my knowledge, it is only the Bakhatla, this most exclusive of all tribes in Johannesburg, where tribal kinship is still primary. Even the Bakwena have become less exclusive. The chairlady of the branch I know well, was Bakwena, but the secretary, assistant secretary and recording secretary were respectively Sotho, Zulu and Sotho. According to my informant (herself a Zulu) "That was to bluff". She had noticed a certain tribal favouritism. The money owing to Zulu and Xhoza members' funerals were "very much more in arrear than the money which had to be paid for the Basuto". (1)

On my asking why it was then still a Bakwena Society with all those other tribes in it, she explained:

> "Now you're a Hollander, you start a Hollands Club, then you decide after a while that you cannot get enough Hollands members, but you can do with some more members, and so you take in other nationalities. But it still remains a Hollands Club."

One chairlady answered by question:

> "I am pleased you touched on this. They have realised how difficult it is when each tribe keeps separate. They try to crush that. So we unite all together .... This tribal business is the cause of the formation of this society. Each tribe by themselves could not do this."
>
> "Why not?"
>
> "Because there would be one Zulu for example or one Mapedi here and there. We are all so mixed up in Johannesburg."

Since the manyano was probably the first inter-tribal grouping, one would expect it to be the most important friendship-forming and group-creating centre, and one would expect other groupings to have

arisen /.....

---

(1) Since this is one of my least reliable (though most perspicacious and talkative) informants, this cannot be believed without further evidence.

arisen from its fellowship. I have discovered three groupings which arose from manyanos.

The abortive "Wedding-gift" Club of Mrs. Y. (case 23) which stems from a Methodist manyano-fellowship together with "close relatives".

Mrs. Hl's "Tickey Society" (case 24) arose from the Catholic manyano, whence it recruited its first members. But it immediately spread to other Catholic women, who were not in the manyano.

Mrs. H's "Zenzele" (Case 19) stems from a Methodist manyano.(1)

The local evangelist also held people together on an inter-tribal basis, and then they became a more general "Gift-club".

I have, however, the feeling that the grouping-principle was more the fact that they were all Xhosa, than that they were all Methodists.

From these and more general experiences, I have been compelled to the conclusion that the leaders of the manyanos tend to discourage other kinds of groupings among their ranks; they probably consider them competitive, and mainly financially competitive.(2)

Concluding this section on the membership, one can say that in the majority of cases, the societies take pride in having broken through tribal groupings, are rather impatient of questions relating to manyano-membership, and very evasive, if not irritated, by questions connected with money. Such questions were usually considered "bad manners" by my informants, who often refused to communicate them to the gathering. It must be said that they were in constant fear of what I might ask next! For afterwards, the full responsibility for my "behaviour" would land on them as well as all the consequences in case I had lied that I was "no government spy", and "would not betray them to the Europeans".

The beneficiaries.

Whose funeral is covered by the society is generally expressly stated in the constitutions, and if there is no constitution then the women "have it in our head". This is an important point, since the amounts to be paid in are proportionate to the frequency of the "corpses which must be faced".

If there is a burial fund proper accumulated by regular fixed contributions, as to my knowledge only the larger and better structured societies have, then it is necessary to ensure that the number of deaths does not exceed the capacity of the funds. This is a tricky business.

Most / .....

---

(1) We have dealt with the homemakers' clubs which European missionaries tried to establish from the manyanos under "Manyanos" and shall discuss them further under Homemakers Clubs.

(2) See "Radiation outwards" under Manyanos. p. 198/9.

Most frequently, I think, the beneficiaries are the member herself, her husband and her children. This last is sometimes expressly qualified as "unmarried" children. A married child must become a member herself. One can, however, include other relatives, but then these have to be entered by name as members. In that case, one "plays for" one or more other relatives, and one "doubles up" (note the stockfel terminology) one's monthly or weekly contributions.

It is interesting to note that

"When the daughter is not married and has a child, they do not bury it. That is when the child is not legal, because the mother is not legally married. But they bury its mother."

(I first thought this was sanction imposed on illegitimate babies and, following this wrong track, put my next questions. My informant also regarded it in this light, saying rather proudly

"You see, they do not want to encourage this illegitimate baby-business!"

However, on inquiring further, it turned out to be a pure technicality.

"If I want my illegitimate baby to be buried, I must register the baby from its birth", which means as my informant then explained "The mother of it must register double, or its grandmother if she is a member."

"Yes", says the chairlady, "you see, the trouble is that the child is not registered. It is like a burial society."

As I understood finally, an unmarried daughter is automatically assured of a burial because her mother is a member, or a son for that matter. But when son or daughter is married, the society's commitments cease towards them, unless they register as members. But an unmarried daughter who has a baby, although she herself can claim burial help, cannot claim this for her baby, unless the baby becomes a member through its mother or, more frequently, as I found later, its grandmother "playing for it", i.e. making it a member.

In this particular society it appeared that quite a few members doubled up for their grandchildren.

At the next society whose meeting I attended, I put my question directly, "How many grandmothers double up for their grandchildren?" The figures given, (very reliably), because I counted with them from the "books") were:

In July 1954 - 27 out of 147 members. Of these five double up for their mothers, hence 22 of 147 members. Of these 147 some 25(?) should not be counted in, as they had not yet paid their membership-fees, hence the figure should be <u>22 of 122 members</u>, i.e. <u>18% of the members, had provided for illegitimate grandchildren.</u>

The /.....

The tragedy is that this was one of the most "Christian" societies! The members were respectable, quiet people, amongst them were service committee members, manyano members, and some of their daughters were teachers, nurses, dressmakers and factory workers.

Sometimes, further relatives are included, for example, the Arme Moeder Society which specifies: "The member herself, her husband, the husband's or member's parents, her own children or any rightful dependants (by European or African custom), and its constitution even has a paragraph on divorce and separated women.

The men

The men are generally not members. As the husbands who have to be given a "proper funeral", they are in any case amongst the first beneficiaries. The Bakwena branch had four men amongst its members. In the Constitution of the Arme Moeder Society, "African men are forbidden membership", and on my asking the reason, I was answered: "Men are too slim". (The husband, a very nice man, was present when this was said and did not protest.)

Since this sad fact, namely, the realisation of many women that the men can be written off as constant, reliable and responsible providers, permeates my whole investigation, I need not adduce other evidence than that within the context of funeral societies.

I have often tried to talk about the "husbands", but African women are loyal wives, and whatever they think privately about their husbands, they will not say it to a European. But it seems they often do not think too highly of them! (1)

The relations between Manyano and Stockfel

The competition between manyano and funeral society is best shown by quoting some of the women themselves. For example:

> "No, the Anglicans and Methodists and all the other churches are not in favour of the societies. They want all the money to come to the churches.
>
> "But when somebody is dead the churches do nothing. The church only comes when all the work is done. The society women do the work. The minister is only on top of the grave. And then he expects a big meal, and a nice table-cloth, and then he walks out."
>
> "Work? No the churches don't work. They pray, it is most important. And it costs much money to have many ministers at the funeral. That is a Christian burial. That's civilisation. But my society when I die, they are going to help me, and they do my African way.

Yes, the funeral societies do the "African way", and the churches, that is "civilisation" .....

It would seem as if, here again, the churches failed to see a need.

In/....

---

(1) see the two conversations reported under Case 31.