*Getting to know*

# NIGERIA

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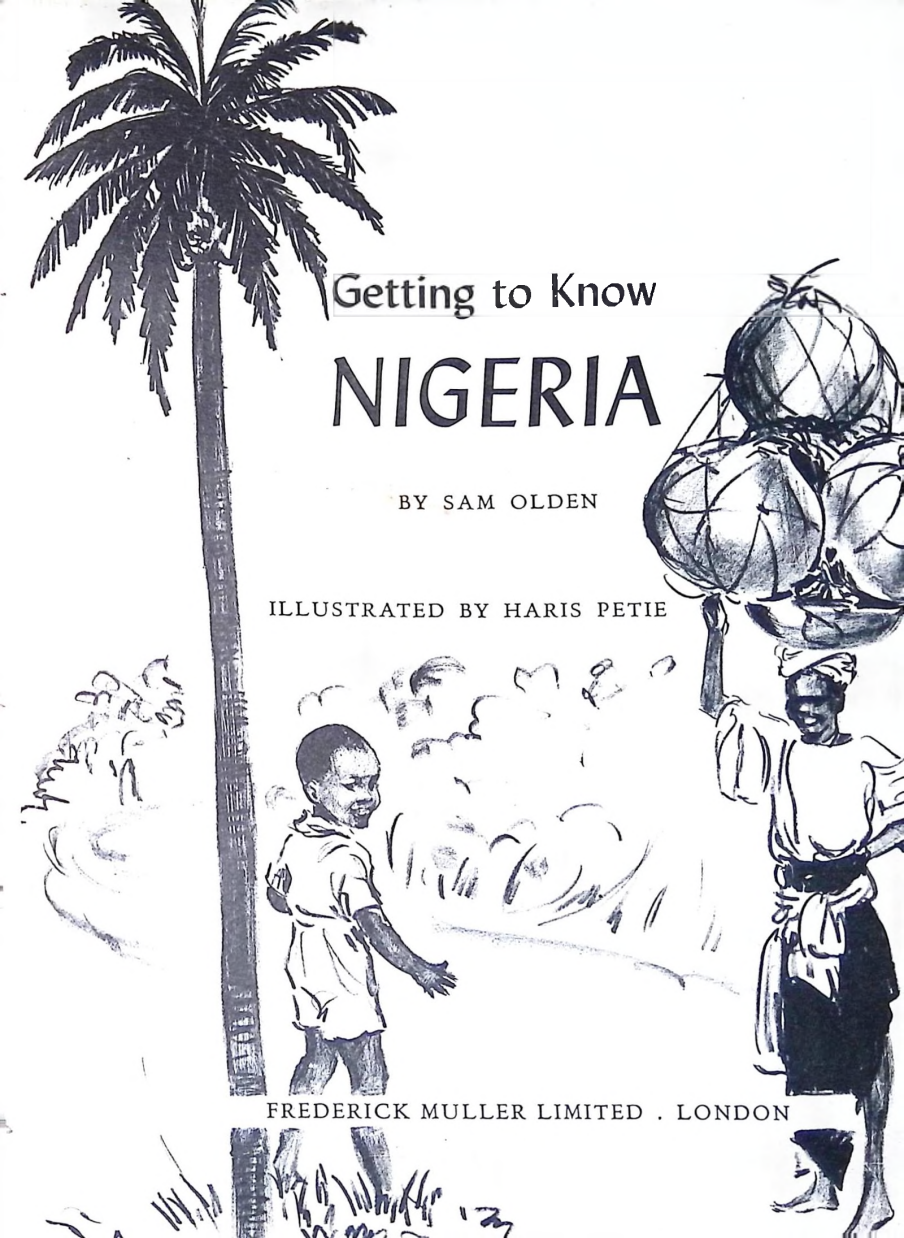

Getting to Know

# NIGERIA

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FREDERICK MULLER LIMITED . LONDON

First published in Great Britain in 1961 by
Frederick Muller Limited

Printed in Great Britain by Jarrold & Sons Ltd, Norwich

AFRICA HAS THREE mighty rivers all more than 2,500 miles long. In the north the historic Nile flows northward through the deserts of Sudan and Egypt to reach the Mediterranean Sea. In the centre the Congo glides past lush tropical jungle to empty into the Atlantic Ocean. In the west the Niger winds eastward through the hills and valleys and open, tree-studded plains of several countries until it is joined by another large river, the Benue. From there it rolls swiftly south towards the Gulf of Guinea.

The last land through which the Niger flows, and where it finds the sea, has taken its name from this lovely river. It is Nigeria—one of the four new independent nations of the year 1960.

Nigeria's neighbours on every side are also recently born states. To the west lies the Republic of Dahomey and to the north the Republics of Niger and the Chad. All are members of the French Community of Free Peoples. To the east lies Cameroun, which gained its independence only nine months before Nigeria.

Three very different regions make up Nigeria. Each is the home of Negro peoples with their own languages, their own customs and their own elected governments. The regions are called Western, Eastern and Northern Nigeria. The three have banded together to form the Federation of Nigeria. Its capital is the old coastal city of Lagos.

The Federation of Nigeria has its headquarters in Lagos, and the city and a small area round it form a federal district. State governments are located at Ibadan for Western Nigeria, Enugu for Eastern Nigeria, and Kaduna for Northern Nigeria.

The Federation covers a vast square of rich territory a little bigger than the British Isles and France together. It is the of home 35,000,000 people. Many other states in Africa are larger than Nigeria in area. But none has nearly so great a population.

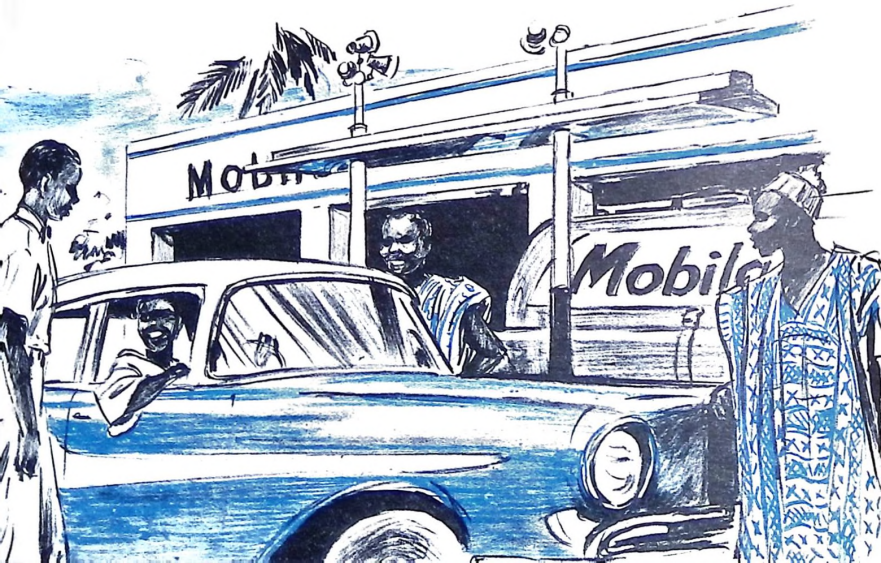
Really to get to know the land and its people you must visit Lagos and all three regions. Each differs greatly from the others.

As you travel from one to the next, everything will change. Scenery, crops, the dress of the inhabitants, even the shape of their homes, will be different.

Good roads, aeroplanes or trains connect the main cities and towns. And Nigerians in every corner of the land are among the friendliest people on earth to strangers. Their wonderful smiles will become even brighter when you tell them you are English. They have a lively interest in Great Britain. And they will probably answer your questions about their homeland in English.

They learned our language from British traders, who began to come to the southern part of Nigeria more than 150 years ago. Missionaries from England and Scotland soon followed. When these early merchants and ministers arrived, the country was not developed. No roads ran through the vast forests of the south or the great plains of the north. There were no big cities and only petty local commerce. And there were constant wars among the many tribes.

As more traders came, they moved into all parts of Nigeria. To




protect them and to help improve conditions in the area, the British Government sent out many other men. Among them were soldiers who brought peace to the tribes. Then British officials set up a system of law and a police force to ensure order and protection for all.

Engineers, teachers and doctors followed. These specialists built roads and schools and hospitals. They fought disease. They helped the Nigerians to improve farming. They introduced timber and mining industries. They increased trade among the regions and with the rest of the world. In recent years they have paved the streets of the growing towns. They have put in water, sewerage and electric power systems.

These people did not settle in Nigeria but returned home when

STREET SCENE LAGOS

their duties were finished. In fact, they were forbidden by the British Government to buy land. All the land was kept for the African inhabitants.

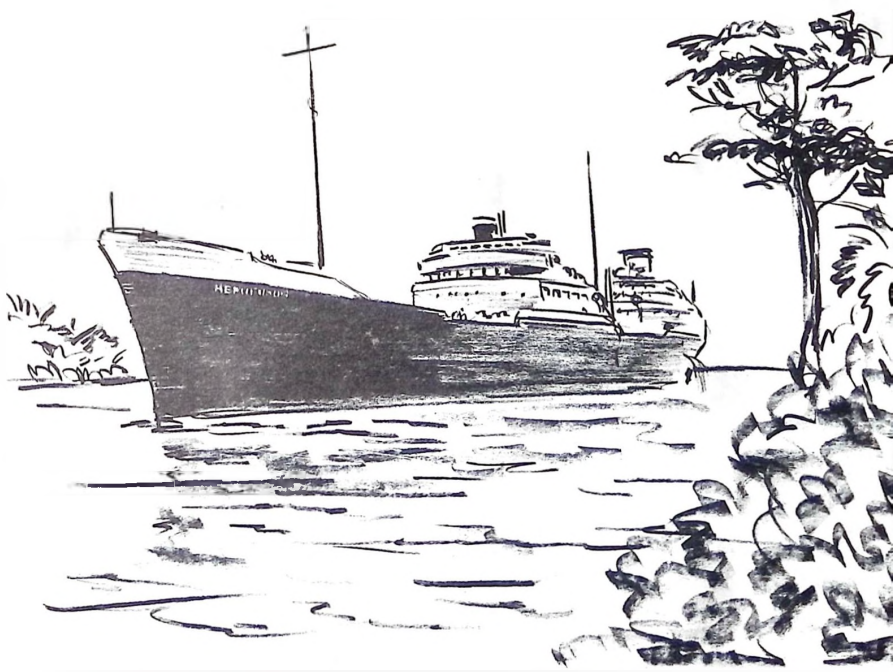
After the Second World War, Britain began to prepare Nigeria for self-government. Nigerians formed political parties and joined in running their country.

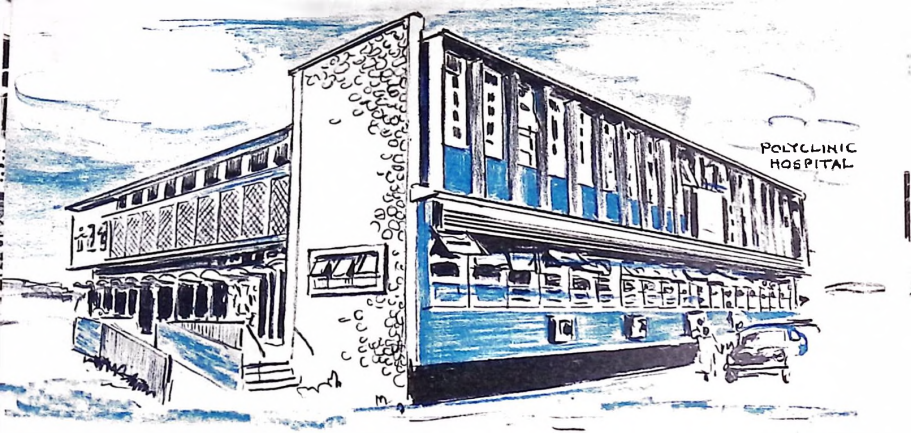
On October 1st, 1960, Britain granted the new nation full independence, and Princess Alexandra went to Nigeria for the ceremony. However, Nigerians have chosen of their own free will to remain a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Their country is now an equal partner in our world-wide family of co-operating states.

During many years of working side by side with the British, Nigerians found it helpful to be able to talk in English with them. They also found English useful among themselves. Various tribes of the three regions speak twenty-three separate languages and over one hundred different dialects. So it is very helpful to have a single tongue that all educated citizens throughout the nation can understand.

Lagos is a good starting-point for a journey through this land. Planes from London arrive daily at the modern airport. Ships from all over the world sail into its palm-fringed harbour on the beautiful, blue Gulf of Guinea.

The main part of this bustling city of 300,000 citizens is built on a small island a few hundred yards offshore. Two bigger islands lie a bit farther out to sea. They hold back the thundering surf that pounds most of West Africa's coastline. As a result, the water around the island city is as calm as a lake—which indeed is the reason Lagos was given its name. Portuguese explorers first discovered and charted this unknown part of the world in 1472. In their language the word for lake is *lago*.





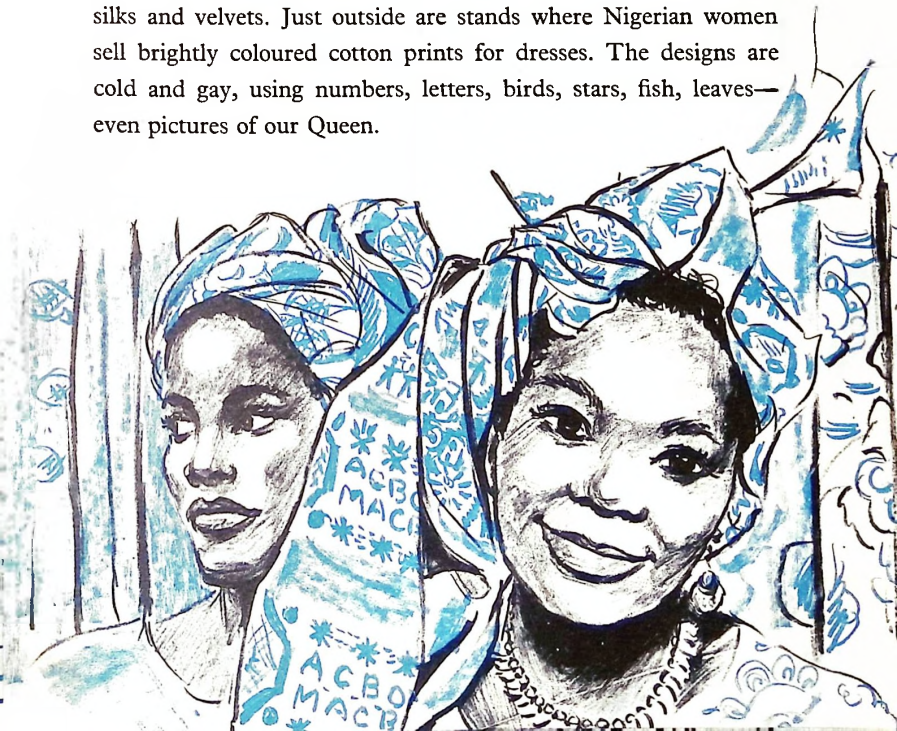

Today the old island city has many new suburbs on the mainland near by. Unlike Lagos they all have purely African names—Ebute Metta, Apapa, Yaba. They are neighbourhoods of broad avenues, pleasant homes with gardens and fences, new schools, and flats. There is a new 500-bed hospital covering many acres. There is a handsome new railway terminal. There is even a Coca-Cola bottling plant.

A great bridge connects the suburbs with Lagos. Crossing it provides a sweeping view over the old section of the town. Here you still see low, tiny houses crowded along crooked lanes. Your biggest surprise will probably be the thousands of corrugated iron roofs. When the rain pours down, a sturdy iron roof is the best kind to have—even if it does get awfully rusty. From May to September it rains for several hours almost every day. Then from October to April, it rains hardly at all.

As in most tropical places, the only seasons in this tropical capital are the rainy and the dry. At four degrees north of the equator, the average temperature is 80 degrees F. You never need a sweater or an overcoat.

Rain or shine, Lagos is one of the busiest trading centres in Africa. Thousands of people hurry up and down both sides of the streets. Most have no pavements and the people leave little room for a stream of loudly honking cars and buses. Men trot by with huge boxes and bundles balanced skilfully on their heads. Others push carts in and out of the crowds. The carts are piled high with crates, sacks, or large cans of paraffin. Hawkers with trays offer fresh pineapple slices, fried cakes, or combs, mirrors and trinkets to one and all.

In Victoria Street, Nigerians crowd into dozens of small, open-fronted shops. The shops are crammed with fine cottons, linens, silks and velvets. Just outside are stands where Nigerian women sell brightly coloured cotton prints for dresses. The designs are cold and gay, using numbers, letters, birds, stars, fish, leaves—even pictures of our Queen.



In other shops, craftsmen make animals, figures and decorative objects from native hardwoods. They are rich and dark in colour and hard as stone.

In the main thoroughfare, Broad Street, are some of the finest new department stores in West Africa. Broad Street leads to Independence Square, where banks, offices and other new business buildings are situated.

Leading out from the business section, along the harbour, is a wide drive, called the Marina. Lining it are many imposing buildings. Midway along the drive there is a fine view of ships waiting for their turn at the docks. They lie at anchor, displaying the flags of many countries.

Towards the end of the Marina, overlooking the harbour, is Government House. It is a stately white mansion surrounded by spacious lawns, trees and flowering tropical shrubs. Flaming red hibiscus, clusters of purple bougainvillaea, and the yellow, wax-like frangipani bloom all the year round. Government House is the residence of the Governor-General. He is the representative of the British sovereign.

Next door is the beautiful new residence of the Prime Minister of the Federation. The Prime Minister is the chief official of the Nigerian Government.

The far tip of the Marina is quiet and cool. All around are thick and shady groves. Tall eucalyptus, mango and feathery casuarina soar above the shorter trees. Almond trees, cashews and poincianas spread their branches.

A short bridge runs from this point to Victoria Island near by. Here are the modern buildings of the Nigerian Parliament. This Parliament like ours is composed of two houses, but they are called the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Not far away is the beautiful new Federal Palace Hotel, and, a bit farther on, lovely Victoria Beach. As far as the eye can see is a wide, wide bank of white and glistening sand. On one side is the unbroken green of the coconut trees. On the other stretches the blue of the South Atlantic. Huge waves—sometimes 15 feet high —break not far out, and foaming surf charges in upon the sand.

Back across the bridge is a great oval race-course. Around it are the other chief buildings of the Nigerian Federal Government.

In any street of the capital you may have an exciting experience. You might meet the Oba—the King of Lagos—and his Court.

The Oba, as Nigerians call him, is a figure of great dignity. On special occasions he visits different parts of his city to preside at ceremonies. When he goes out at such times he walks regally under a huge orange umbrella. It is the symbol of his rank and is carried by one of his retinue. The Oba is dressed in elaborate, flowing robes of the finest cloth. On his head is a high, round crown with several tiers. His slippers are of silver and cloth of gold. In his hand he carries a wand with a golden tip.

He is accompanied by a crowd of chiefs in white caps, notables and servants. Drummers make a fierce din to herald his approach. People run from all sides to see him. He is a greatly respected man.

In the old days, Obas in Lagos and other cities in the west of Nigeria were all-powerful. Their word was law. Today in a modern country and a democracy this can no longer be so. But the Obas are still looked upon by Western Nigerians as wise fathers and counsellors of their people.

By far the greatest number of Western Nigerians are members of the Yoruba tribe. There are many other tribes in the region—Bini, Ijaw, Urhobo, Kukuruku, to name but a few. Each lives in its own district and speaks its own tongue. Each has its local leaders, its own special costumes and dances, and its own gods. While these are very small groups, there are more than 4,500,000 Yorubas.

THE OBA


The Yorubas are an old and proud tribe whose ancestors, legend says, came from ancient Egypt. They are tall and erect, with beautiful, jet-black skin. Their faces are usually oval-shaped with high cheekbones and delicately slanted eyes.

Several great clans make up the Yoruba tribe. The four largest are the Egba, the Oyo, the Ijebu and the Ife. Each has an Oba with an imposing title. Some titles were made up centuries ago to terrify the king's enemies. One is the Awujale, or "The Crocodile". Another is the Alake—"He Who Wields the Rod".

The Oba of the Ifes is called the Oni. He has a special dignity. He is the spiritual leader of the Yorubas. He alone among his brother kings has the right to guard the sacred relics of the tribe. In his residence is the sword of state which is used at the coronation of other Obas.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Blue and white is the favourite colour combination in Yorubaland, and everyone wears it. Fathers and sons wear very baggy trousers, called *sokotos*. The legs of the trousers stop several inches above the ankles. Instead of a shirt, a man or boy wears a loose, sleeveless smock, called the *dansiki*, that falls below his waist. Over this he wears an *agbada*. This is a full and flowing garment that drapes gracefully in many folds from shoulders to below the knees. It is made of the same cloth as the trousers. The neck of the agbada is open and rounded. The long, wide sleeves can be turned back, leaving the arms bare. The jaunty cap, or *fila*, resembles a fez that has been crushed down on one side.

Mothers and daughters wear long-sleeved blouses, called *bubas*, and knee-length skirts, called *iros*. The skirt is several yards of cloth wound round the hips. Between blouse and skirt is a sash called the *iborun*. Over the sash a woman winds another very long and very wide band of cloth called an *oja*. It is excellent for carrying things, including babies.

All the mother has to do is put her little one astride her back. Then, as she wraps the cloth round her waist, she passes it over the tiny body too. Only the little head is left poking out.

Snugly strapped to their mothers, African babies appear to be comfortable indeed. They sleep soundly in spite of the bumps and jolts. When they are awake, they are very good as they ride along piggy-back.

The most striking thing the Yoruba woman wears is her turban, or *gele*. Twisted and tucked at the right places, it becomes an enormous headdress. When finished, both ends of the cloth stand out like small sails.

A pretty woman dresses up her costume with gold jewellery. She especially likes ear-rings, finger rings and filigree pins.

For school and play, Yoruba children prefer shorts and sports shirts. Like all Nigerians, they love soap and water. Wherever you see a stream or river or pool, you will see children splashing away.

When you leave Lagos for your journey through Western Nigeria, you probably will not find the scenery you expected. Many people who have never been to Africa picture it as one vast jungle. This is a mistake. The jungle covers scarcely one-sixth of the continent, crossing its middle like a belt. Most of Nigeria is either sparsely wooded or open, park-like country. And most Nigerians are farmers.

Along the roads in Yorubaland small farmhouses are everywhere. Often a dozen or more are grouped together to form a village. These clay houses are like rectangular boxes, plain and unpainted, with one or two small windows and a door.

Around each house the earth is completely bare. Near by grow banana and papaya trees. Beyond them, hidden by the tall grass, are patches of cassava, yams and vegetables.

In the villages chickens run loose—all too many of them in the road! And if you are driving, you must watch out even more closely for the goats. Small goats are the main source of meat. They are fat, black and white creatures with tiny horns and stubby legs. Their favourite pastime is playing follow-the-leader across the highway—right in front of your car.

If you are lucky, you may also be halted by a Yoruba wedding procession. Everyone is dressed in native attire and the procession looks like a river of blue.

At the head, the bride and groom stroll very slowly. Now and then they stop. They are a bit self-conscious like such young couples all over the world. On each side of them are musicians, especially drummers. The drummers beat loudly and rapidly. Behind come many friends. Most of them are dancing women.

The dance is a very slow shuffle performed to the beat of the drums. Each dancer prances and turns. She raises her shoulders, slightly bobs her head, and turns her body from side to side in perfect time. She holds her arms out from her sides and waves them gently and gracefully in the air. Dancing is an important part of African life. It is a way to celebrate all special occasions.

Drums are the favourite instrument. During the wedding feast they will beat steadily through the night until dawn. The drums are made of small hollowed logs, from two to four feet in length. A drummer hangs the hollow log from his shoulder on a strap and holds it under his arm. Pieces of goatskin cover both ends of the drum. The skins are joined by dozens of cords stretched tightly along the sides. Squeezing these cords with the under-arm while striking the drum makes it give a wide range of sounds. The drummer beats with a straight stick curved just at the end. A skilful player can make his drum almost seem to talk in a deep voice.

When the wedding party has passed, you will notice several interesting kinds of trees on either side of the road. You see dozens of graceful oil palms. The slender grey trunk of each tree soars 40 feet into the air, as straight and smooth as a pole. At the top is a crown of stiff green fronds. It looks like a giant feather duster stuck in the ground.

You also pass citrus fruit groves. And everywhere you see the cocoa trees. They are small—seldom over 15 feet tall—and grow best in the shade of bigger trees. Their slim, white trunks are like those of young birches. Clinging here and there to the trunks and larger branches are big pods filled with beans. The pods are about 6 inches long and look like small green rugby balls. Their stems are so short that the pods seem to be glued to the bark. When they turn bright orange, it is time to pick them.

After picking, the farmers remove the cocoa beans from the pods. They dry the beans in the sun. Almost every house has a small square drying area marked off on the ground. The earth is packed very hard or covered with concrete. It is well drained. Over this area farmers spread a single layer of beans. They turn them frequently. It is the children's job to keep the goats out.

Cocoa beans collected from thousands of small growers in Western Nigeria are used to make chocolates all over the world. They are the principal crop of the Western region and one of the Federation's main exports.

Another useful tree is the kola. It is much bigger than the cocoa and is thick with dark green leaves. Among the leaves hang clusters of wrinkled green pods the size of large oranges. Inside are six to ten pink nuts.

From the nut comes an extract that is used in our "cola" drinks today. But in West Africa it has always been a most popular thing to chew. If you taste it you will wonder why. It's bitter!

African peoples living to the north and near the Sahara chew kola to quench thirst. In arid areas where water is scarce, the nuts are very helpful.

Besides kola and cocoa, you will also see banana and plantain trees. There are patches of sugar too. Children peel the tough skin from the cane stalks to chew the sweet pulp inside. It is very good. Why not stop at a town market and buy some?

The market place is a sort of social centre, where people buy

and sell, and exchange gossip. It is very crowded and filled with the hum of voices and good-natured laughter. No one is in a hurry.

Many covered stalls line the edges of an open square. They are gay with scarves, ribbons and long sections of cloth. Some are filled with shoes, tinned goods, matches, soap and brightly enamelled pots and pans. Other stalls offer loaves of bread or pieces of dried stockfish.

Big bales of stockfish are imported from Norway. Each piece looks like a long, brittle stick of kindling wood. When crushed, the fish makes a favourite African soup.

On the ground in the market square are small piles of farm products in long rows. Beside each pile, farm women sit or squat. Crowds of shoppers pass along the rows looking at the good things to eat.

There are yams, long as water-melons but not so plump. They are different from the smaller sweet potatoes in the next pile. Yam skins are gnarled and tough. The meat inside is white. Then there are other big tubers called *cocoyams*. Ears of corn are displayed, also lima beans and African spinach with leaves much smaller than ours.

Several women are selling mounds of tiny red peppers that burn the mouth, and long green pods of *okura*.

Some of the women have bananas and plantains, citrus fruits and pineapples, kola nuts and peanuts, joints of sugar cane. Others offer palm nuts and bottles of bright orange palm oil. They also

have milky-white palm wine. The wine is fermented sap from the oil palm tree. It is not very strong.

In one corner are the *gari* sellers. Their big pans are filled with a coarse, white flour. It is cassava root which they have put in a hollow wooden trough and pounded for hours with a heavy pole. When boiled in water the gari swells into a thick, slightly sour paste. Gari and yams are the basic food of all southern Nigeria. Often they are flavoured with palm oil.

Lines of goats are tethered on one side of the market place.

Chickens and ducks stare out of round, flat cages woven from palm fronds. One little boy is selling some giant snails he has found in the woods. They have brown spiral shells, 7 inches long.

Little girls and mothers are tempted by other desirable items in the market. They both like the pretty beads. Mother chooses a bit of lilac or yellow chalk for face powder. There is also antimony for eye shadow. Antimony is like white coal. It comes in soft, shiny lumps from the earth.

There are magic charms for sale too. Would you care for a monkey skull, a dried mouse on a stick, or some nice parrot beaks?

When you leave the market with your souvenirs, and travel on, your road may lead into the jungle belt. Looming up suddenly before you will be a great wall of trees.

Inside the wall, it is cool and dim and green. Trunks of huge mahogany and kapok trees rise almost a hundred feet above the dense underbrush. Their upper branches join to form a thick umbrella of leaves. They are matted with tangled vines. Only here and there do shafts of sunlight break through the deep shade.

On the trunks of the trees grow lichens, some of them like tattered green dishcloths. Along the streams are giant fern and deep emerald-green carpets of moss. In the moss are tiny red flowers. Swarms of little butterflies flit near the water. Here and there is a clump of bamboo. It is like forty or fifty giant fishing rods stuck closely together in the ground. Each pole is 6 inches thick. Their tops are a billowing mass of shiny leaves. The plant resembles a great jet of water leaping into the air.

It is quiet and eerie in the forest. Occasionally a pair of big black hornbills will call overhead. But smaller song-birds prefer the open spaces where there are grasses and seeds. There are grey-green monkeys here, but you rarely see them.

A tiny antelope may bound across the road. He is no baby, though. Fully grown and perfectly formed, this little antelope is only the size of a tomcat.

You may also see a hunting party looking for the antelope. The men and boys wear only loincloths and carry spears or flintlock muskets. Running before them are tiny, hairless dogs with big mouselike ears. Around their necks are large clanking cowbells. The dogs are related to Basenji-hounds. But hunters called them "pie dogs". This breed of dog cannot bark at all. Their bells tell the hunter where they are.

You will never see hunters looking for big game because there is very little left anywhere in Nigeria. Most Nigerians who have seen a lion or a zebra have visited the London Zoo!

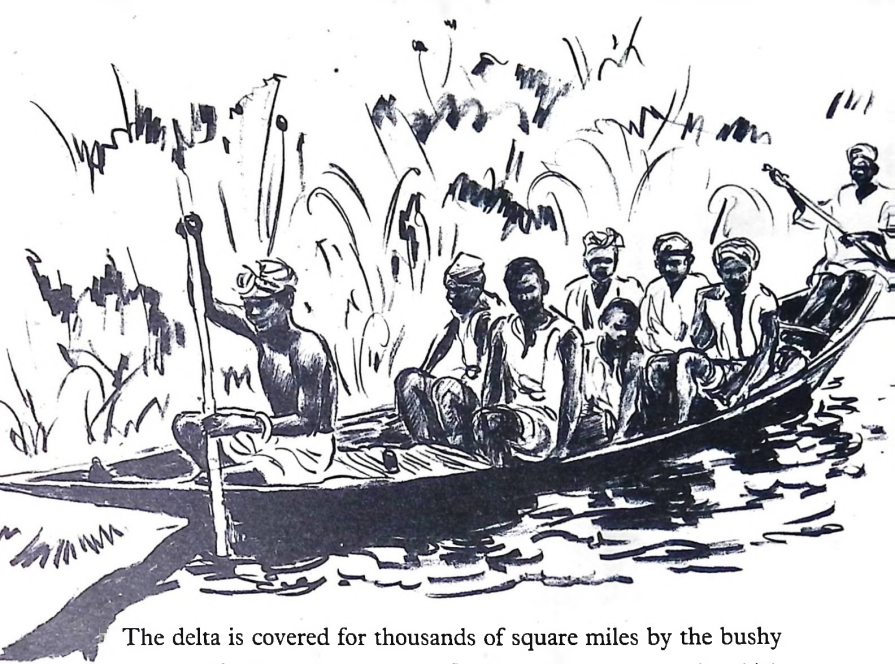
Nigerian forests are not only a haven for small animals, but a great source of lumber. Deep in the woods the lumberjacks hack narrow trails. With great saws they fell the trees. Then they cut the long trunks into sections. With tractors and trailers they haul the logs to sawmills. Nigerian hardwoods are exported all over the world to make fine furniture.

Some of the wood is floated through creeks to the largest plywood plant in the world. It is in a town called Sapele.

Near Sapele are also rubber plantations. The trees are very dark green and close together. Each one has a long gash on its trunk. At the bottom of the gash is a small cup to catch the dripping latex. When latex is collected and smoked, it thickens into crude rubber. Rubber culture is a growing Nigerian industry.

Not far away from Sapele is the homeland of the "creek people" —the Ijaw, Jekri and Sobo. These are tribes which dwell in the swamps and along the waterways of the Niger Delta.

On the map you will have noticed that the great river does not pour into the Gulf of Guinea all at one place. It has many mouths. Through the ages the Niger has brought millions of tons of silt and sand down to the sea. Gradually this has piled up in wide banks. These sand-banks have slowly pushed back the sea to form a vast delta.



The delta is covered for thousands of square miles by the bushy mangrove plant. Mangrove roots flourish in the shallow, brackish water and help to hold the sand-banks together.

Today the Niger's waters cut through the mangrove swamps in a dozen great channels. Along lagoons and creeks that connect the channels are the houses of the creek people.

The houses are built on stilts above the water. They are made of mangrove wood, cane and straw. The people are mainly fisher-folk. No men, women and children on earth are more skilful with canoes.

As the new Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Merchant Marine grow, the creek people will make splendid sailors.


Before leaving Western Nigeria you will want to visit its capital, Ibadan. More than 500,000 people live there. This makes it the biggest city in the Federation and the fifth biggest city in all Africa. In the centre of the town a high hill is topped by a transmitter of the Nigerian Broadcasting System. Nigeria was one of the very first African lands to introduce TV.

A few miles beyond the city is Ibadan University College. It is Nigeria's leading college. Few colleges in the world have such up-to-date buildings. They are very modern in design and are decorated with panels of yellow, red and blue. The college library has 100,000 books.

Many of the students are training to be teachers. They are badly needed, for most older Nigerians can neither read nor write. And there are still not nearly enough schools for all the boys and girls to attend. The Nigerian Government is doing its best to prepare more teachers and to open new schools. More than 2,000,000 children are at present enrolled.

They attend primary schools for six years. Then they go to secondary grammar schools for another three years. Then, they can take advanced training in a number of institutions.

Besides University College there is the Nigerian College of Arts, Sciences and Technology at Zaria in Northern Nigeria. It has branches in Ibadan and in Enugu, Eastern Nigeria. There are also three large technical institutes in the Federation. They are at Yaba, the suburb of Lagos; Kaduna in Northern Nigeria; and Enugu, Eastern Nigeria.

Besides the advanced schools there are trade centres scattered about the country which teach Nigerian students to become machinists, motor mechanics, painters, cabinet-makers and blacksmiths.

But the country is large and its population continues to grow. It will still be a number of years before there are schools for everybody.

Meanwhile, missionary schools supplement those run by the government.

Almost all the missions in Nigeria have been British. They have provided schools and medical care, and have translated the Bible into Nigerian languages. Anglicans, Methodists and the Church of Scotland have all sent missionaries to Nigeria. Perhaps you have heard of Mary Slessor, a very brave woman who worked among the Nigerians at the end of the nineteenth century. Missionary groups have come from America and Canada, too.

Until the first missionaries came, the Yorubas had their own

religion. Many of them hold to it still. Others have become Christians or Moslems.

Like Christians and Moslems, the Yorubas believe there is one great God. He is Olorun, whose name means "Owner of the Sky".

But Olorun is much too mighty and far away to care a great deal about human beings. Their affairs are at the mercy of more than 400 big and little spirits, called *orishas*. Some orishas are good like Ogun, god of iron. Some are fearsome like Shango, god of lightning, or Sopona, god of smallpox. Local orishas inhabit unusual rocks, or special streams, or very big trees. They are powerful only in the neighbourhood.

To keep on the right side of the orishas, Yorubas offer sacrifices. Sometimes along the roads or streams you will see these offerings —bunches of sticks, dead birds, bits of rag tied to the bushes.

Just as the Yoruba tribe is the largest in Western Nigeria, the Ibo tribe is the largest in Eastern Nigeria. But, as in the Western region, there are many more distinct tribes, too. The Ibibio, Efik, Kalabari and Tiv are all Eastern tribes.

The Ibos, especially, are good farmers and clever traders. Throughout their history each man has been his own master. Each family has tended to its own business. As a result, the tribe has never been highly organized like the Yorubas. There have never been any kings or very important chiefs. Each town and village has been independent.

Crimson, maroon and wine-red are the colours Ibos love. Fathers and sons wear a single piece of cloth, several yards square. It is printed with blocks, stripes or figures. First they wrap the lower portion of the cloth round the waist to make a slender, ankle-length skirt. The skirt has many graceful folds. The rest of the cloth is rolled and tucked round the waist with a knot at the side. The chest and arms are left bare. If the weather is cool, the roll of cloth above the waist can be pulled up over the upper part of the body. It is then tied behind the neck and becomes a full robe.

Mothers and daughters wear equally long skirts of similar pattern. But their skirts have less cloth and fewer folds. Many women wear no blouses. On their heads are bright knotted scarves. Many tightly fitting bracelets of thin metal adorn their arms and ankles.

An Ibo father has a very clever way of building a farmhouse for his family. First he drives poles into the earth. Then he weaves thick vines among the poles to make a sturdy, rectangular frame. Next he packs red clay on the frame. The houses are small and low and have no windows. Their sloping roofs are made of dried

banana leaves. Often the surrounding trees and bushes almost hide them.

In one district near the big market town of Onitsha, there is a very special kind of dwelling. It is an almost square house of very bright red clay. Its roof is a beautiful pyramid of thatched straw. The straw is piled 25 feet in the air. The house looks as though it were wearing a great shaggy wig.

A high clay wall encloses what is called a "compound" round each house. A door opens into the compound through the front wall. Drooping over the top of the walls are the wide leaves of big banana trees that grow inside.

Enugu, the capital of Eastern Nigeria, is in startling contrast to the region's villages. Long avenues, parks and public buildings have been planned and built in an orderly way. All the streets are wide and straight. Nothing is crowded. In the centre is the Parliament and the official buildings of the Eastern Nigerian Government.

You would never think of Enugu as a coal mining town. But it is! The only coal mines in West Africa are right in the outskirts. Most of their output goes to run the steam locomotives on the railways of Nigeria and Ghana.

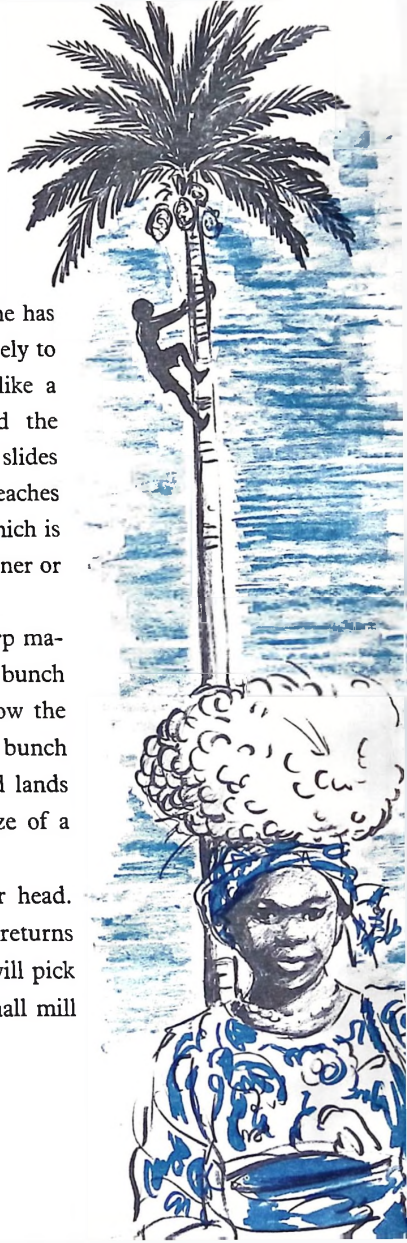
Nigeria has 1,903 miles of railway. This is a great deal for an African country, but even more is planned.

From Enugu, a railway runs south into Nigeria's densest oil palm country. The landscape is thick with the trees which grow wild. Look! There is a man climbing straight up a palm as easily as a cat. How can he do it?

When you are closer you see that he has faced the tree and bound himself loosely to it with a thick rope. The rope is like a hoop passing round his body and the trunk. As he inches up the tree he slides the hoop along with him. When he reaches the top he leans back on the hoop which is like the safety strap of a window-cleaner or a man fitting telephone wires.

Now from his belt he takes a sharp machete. He hacks away at a big round bunch of ripe palm nuts growing just below the fronds. When he has cut it free, the bunch falls to the ground. It is heavy and lands with a thud. The cluster is the size of a small water-melon.

A waiting woman puts it on her head. She takes it to the roadside, then returns for the next cluster. Soon a lorry will pick them all up and take them to a small mill in a grove near by.




The mills break the nuts from the big stems and press the oil from their shiny, orange-red skins. A small, hard kernel is taken from each one. The kernels are put in bags. The oil is poured into large steel barrels. Both kernels and oil are shipped to Europe.

In Europe palm oil is widely used to make soap. The kernels give another kind of oil used in margarine. What is left of the kernel when the oil is gone makes good cattle feed.

The oil and kernels are shipped from Eastern Nigeria at Port Harcourt. Here the oil is cooked before leaving. Then it is piped hot into ships with heated tanks. The heat keeps harmful acids from forming in the oil.

Another kind of oil has recently been found in Eastern Nigeria. It is petroleum. British and American companies are drilling still more test wells. They hope that soon the country will produce a much greater amount of crude oil.

It will also produce more rubber. One of the largest single rubber plantations on earth is near Calabar in Eastern Nigeria.

The most interesting way to travel from Eastern Nigeria to Northern Nigeria is to fly from Calabar to Jos. Looking down from the sky during your trip, you will have an unusual geography lesson.

You fly over Nigeria's dark green forest belt, then over its palm-covered plain. In another hour the river Benue is in sight. It is a wide silver ribbon on the ground.

The Benue is the border between Eastern and Northern Nigeria. Beyond the river the landscapes begin to change. Soon brown mixes with the green that up to now has been unbroken. The grass is tall. The trees are small and scattered. There is no longer an oil palm in sight. The land is dry and becoming dusty.

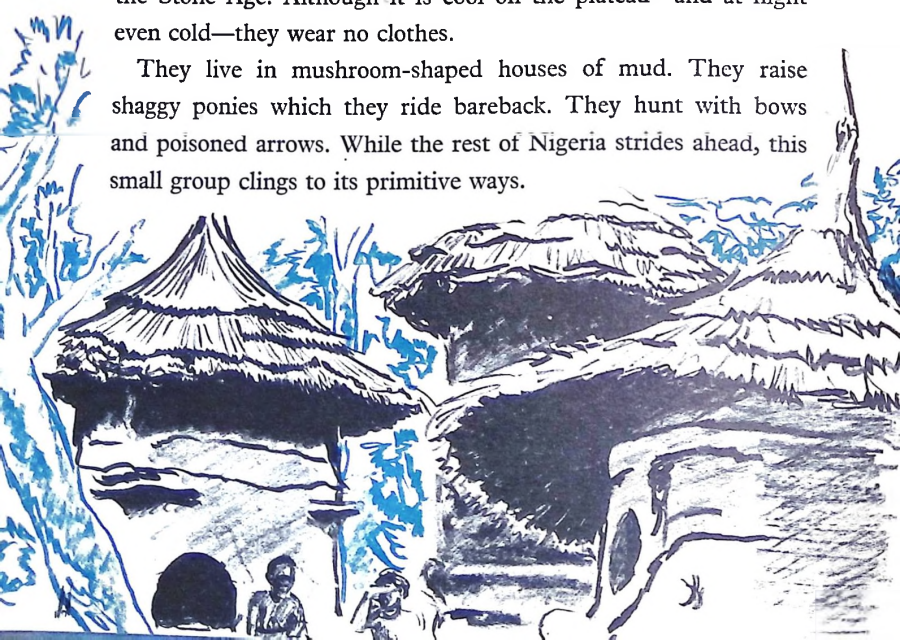
Suddenly you see a gigantic table of earth looming up from the plains before you. The sides of the table rise almost straight up into the sky for thousands of feet. You are approaching the great Bauchi Plateau. On its far edge you soon will see the town of Jos.

Though the plane does not change altitude, the ground below at once becomes very close as you fly in over the plateau. This is because its flat top rises up 6,000 to 7,000 feet above sea-level. You can easily study the features of the new landscape. It is almost level and tree-less except where groves of eucalyptus have been planted.

In some places the earth is covered with short grass. In others it is bare. Piled high on top of each other, or rolled across the land are thousands of great rocks and enormous boulders. They are the home of baboons and leopards. The scene reminds you of a stage set. Surely this is an imaginary land!

This strange part of the world is inhabited by two strange tribes—the Anga and the Tangale. They still live as men did in the Stone Age. Although it is cool on the plateau—and at night even cold—they wear no clothes.

They live in mushroom-shaped houses of mud. They raise shaggy ponies which they ride bareback. They hunt with bows and poisoned arrows. While the rest of Nigeria strides ahead, this small group clings to its primitive ways.



Before landing at Jos you fly over wide, deep pits scraped in the earth. They are surface mines that produce two very important metals—tin and columbite. Both are valuable exports. The tin is sent to our country. Almost all the columbite found here goes to the United States. It is used to make extra-hard steel.

As the plane nears Jos you see a big 1,300-acre experimental farm at Vom. It is run by the Nigerian Veterinary Research Department. In Northern Nigeria, cattle raising is widespread and important. Scientists have for years studied ways to control diseases that attack the cattle and to improve the quality of livestock.

At the little Jos Airport you will be pleasantly startled by the crisp, dry air as you step from the plane. Then the sight of familiar flowers will surprise you. Along the pavements are phlox, petunias and larkspur. On the Bauchi Plateau the climate is temperate, and many plants will grow here.

The three biggest tribes of Northern Nigeria are the Hausa, the Fulani and the Kanuri. Except for the primitive groups on the Bauchi Plateau, all of these Northern tribes have a very important characteristic in common. They are all Moslems. Almost 1,000 years ago zealous missionaries came across the northern deserts to convert them.

Five times a day, no matter where these Moslems happen to be, they drop to their knees to pray. Again and again they touch their foreheads to the ground. While praying, they always face in the direction of Mecca. That is the Arabian city where the Moslem prophet, Mohammed, was born.

For five centuries, almost all Northern Nigerians have practised the same faith as Arabs in North Africa. For even longer, Northern Nigerians have traded with the Arabs.

As a result, these Nigerians have adopted many Arab ways. Instead of Obas or chiefs, their tribal rulers are sultans, emirs and sheiks. These leaders and their courts dress in flowing robes and high turbans straight out of *The Arabian Nights*. With tasselled scimitars dangling at their sides, they dash about on prancing stallions.


The dress and many daily customs of ordinary citizens also show an Arabic influence. So do their houses and mosques. They even use many Arabic words in their language.

The Hausa is the largest of the main tribes. A Hausa father and son wear long, plain robes which pull on over their heads. The robe has long sleeves and is white, cream-coloured, or very light blue. Sometimes the little boy's robe may be only knee-length. Father and son wear skull-caps, or soft felt caps like fezzes cut in half with no tassel. The skull-cap is white, bright orange or blue. The felt cap is dark red.

This is an everyday costume. On special occasions, a man's robe is of finer cloth and much fuller. It is often embroidered. Over the robe he may wear a cloak or cape of rich blue or green.

Hausa mothers and daughters wear plain blouses and skirts of very dark blue or black cotton. The cloth is rough. Mother probably made it herself on a hand loom. On her head is a long shawl of lighter blue crossed by black lines. One end hangs down her back almost to the ground. The other can be pulled over the lower part of her face like a veil. She likes shiny metal bracelets, pins and rings.

On the plains of Hausaland, the first thing you will notice is the shape of the farmhouses. They are perfectly round.

Their funnel-shaped roofs are made of thatched straw. The walls are sun-baked mud and have no windows. Round clusters of houses is a high fence made of stalks of guinea corn.

The guinea corn grows in near-by fields. The Hausa call it *dawa*. It is the chief source of food throughout the North. The tough stalks of this corn are 12 feet high. Farmers use them for fuel as well as for fences. They also cut them into long splinters to make mats and baskets. The leaves of the dawa make good cattle fodder.

Guinea corn does not produce big ears like maize. The grain grows freely in thick clusters high on the stalk. Women make flour out of it, by pounding the grain in big wooden bowls. Then they mix the flour with a little water and cook it over an open fire to make a tough cake. The cake is eaten with milk. Or it is covered with a hot oil flavoured with dried meat and hot peppers.

Besides dawa, you see millet growing in the fields and grasses with edible seeds. There are also cowpeas and sometimes onions.

The fields are full of "bush fowl". They look like quail but are as large as young chickens. They are very good to eat.

You may see farmers burning grass and bush to clear a new field. The fire has attracted twenty or thirty hawks. They circle overhead, darting back and forth through the smoke. Whenever

a mouse tries to flee from the flames, a hawk dives down on it like a jet fighter.

Between the fields, the wide, uncleared areas are covered with scrub oaks. The oaks are the home of many monkeys. Some are big brown fellows. Others are smaller and scamper across the road in troops of ten or twelve.

Near a town called Zaria is a region filled with huge boulders like those you saw on the Bauchi Plateau. Here you will meet the monkey's cousin. He is a big black baboon. He is the size of a dog and has a face like one. He walks on all-fours and even barks.

Baboons usually travel in families. There is always a great male who is plainly in charge. With him are several wives, some with little ones riding on their backs. You often see them on the roadside ahead. As you approach they move into the bush a few yards. If you stop they will sit and scowl at you with a most displeased expression.

In the far north, along the border of the Republic of Niger, you will also see antelope and deer. They live in a region covered with thorn and baobab trees that stretches almost to the edge of the Sahara desert. Here, too, are beautiful jet-black birds of the cuckoo family with blue tails 2 feet long.

To the north-west, in the Fulani tribe's city of Sokoto, the most charming sight is the visitors from Europe. Every winter they come, leaving their nests behind on the chimney-tops. They are storks.

At night there are sometimes other visitors from the plains. If a dead donkey is left in the streets, hyenas will slink in to devour him. You can hear their short rippling giggles in the dark.

There are big sheep and goats all over Northern Nigeria. But you find a special breed in Sokoto. It is the Nigerian red goat. It


has big floppy ears and very short horns. Its skin is especially good for making leather objects. For centuries caravans have carried these goatskins across the desert to Morocco. There Arab craftsmen have turned them into bags, hassocks and book bindings. Throughout the world these Nigerian skins are known as "Morocco leather".

The Sultan of Sokoto is the *Sarkin Musulmi*—"Leader of the Moslems". He is the chief religious figure in all Northern Nigeria. It is he who sets the exact dates of the great Mohammedan celebrations.

Both Moslem and Christian celebrations are observed in all Nigeria's regions. The children are lucky to have so many holidays. Besides Christ's birthday at Christmas, Mohammed's birthday is celebrated in July. The Queen's birthday is another holiday. And now Nigeria has its own birthday to celebrate, too—every October 1st.

To the north-east, surrounding the Kanuri tribe's town of Mai-

duguri, lies Bornu, the cattle country. Some of the cattle are small with short horns. Others, like the red Rahaji, are very large with bow-shaped horns a yard long. One kind is white with big hollow horns that look like water-wings. All have humps just behind the neck.

Everywhere in Bornu villages you see big wooden frames propped upright in the sunshine. Drying cowhides are stretched tightly in the frames. Hides and skins are an important Nigerian export.

Wandering through Bornu and neighbouring provinces are the nomadic Bororoji people with their herds. Wherever the grass and water are plentiful they will go. You often see their houses like igloos of grass near the grazing grounds.

Children help to tend the herds, and you may hear the high, cooing cry of a Bororoji boy, calling to his cattle. At first, boy and herd are hidden by the thorn bushes.

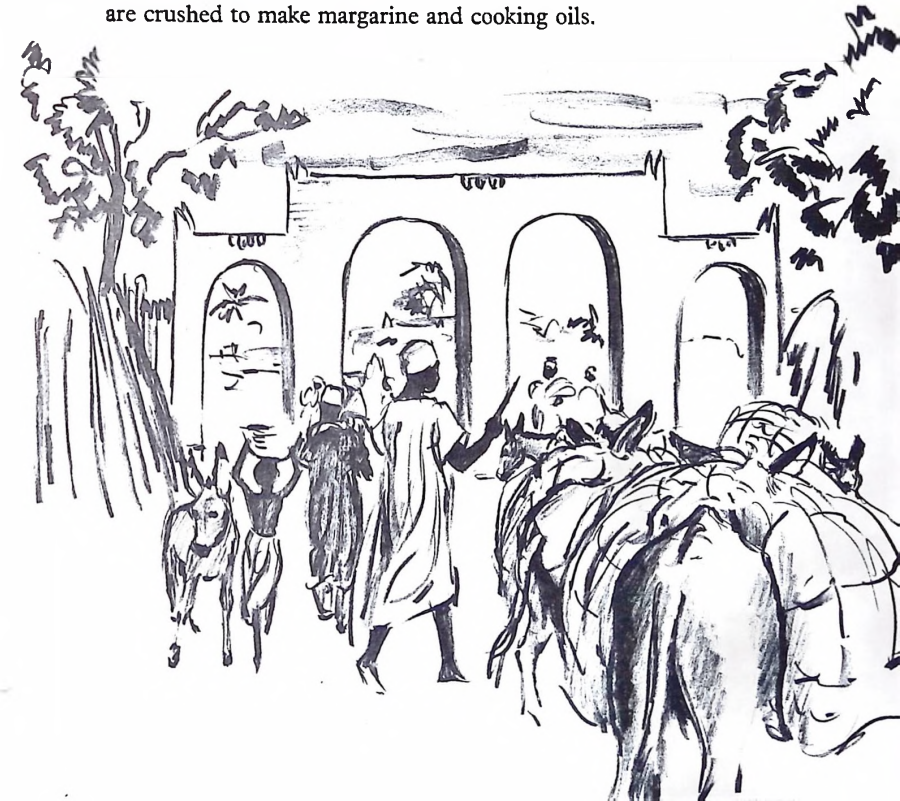
Suddenly they break into view. The boy's skin is the colour of copper. He wears a short leather tunic. His head is shaved except for two or three long, braided locks. He has big eyes with long lashes, a fine, narrow nose and very thin lips. On his cheeks and forehead are tattoo markings. He wears heavy ear-rings and beads round his neck. He is very shy. If you ask him his name he will only answer, "Bororoji".

Life in Kaduna, the capital of Northern Nigeria, is a big contrast to that of the nomads of Bornu. Kaduna is the home of a big new cotton spinning and weaving mill.

Dotted across Nigeria to the east and west of Kaduna are small fields of cotton. In the past Nigerian women have spun and woven most of it in their homes. Only a little has been sold abroad. Now the fine Kaduna factory can produce 12,000,000 yards of cloth a year. It employs 800 people. Soon a lot more cotton will be sold to other countries.

As you leave Kaduna and make for the interesting old Hausa city of Kano, you discover another of Nigeria's most important crops. The round farmhouses are surrounded by peanut patches.

You see droves of little grey donkeys loaded with sacks of peanuts. A Hausa farmer runs behind them with a stick. The donkey is taking his load to the outskirts of Kano. Here the sacks will be stacked in enormous pyramids. The pyramids stand in lines along the railway sidings. Finally the farmer's peanuts will go by train to Lagos, to start their journey overseas to Europe. In Europe they are crushed to make margarine and cooking oils.



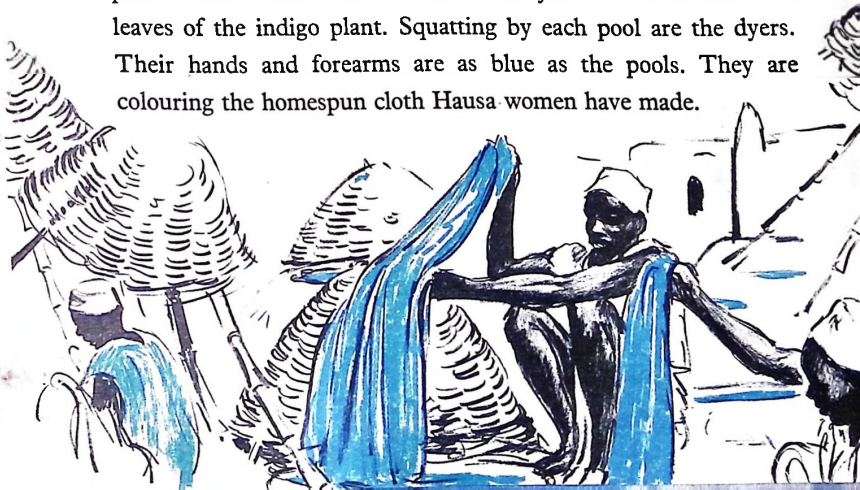
Kano is an ancient city. Surrounding it completely is a high mud wall reminding you of the Middle Ages. High gates open into the wall at intervals. In the old days they were closed in case of enemy attack.

A great mosque stands in the middle of the city, in a big open square. Built of gleaming white concrete, it is very beautiful. Its central dome is covered with green tiles, and it has two slim minarets.

In another part of Kano is the big market place. Heavy wool blankets are for sale here. When the *harmattan* blows they will come in useful.

The harmattan comes in late November. For two months this north-easterly wind brings a thick haze of dust from the Sahara. During the day it is very warm. But after sunset it is as chilly as late autumn.

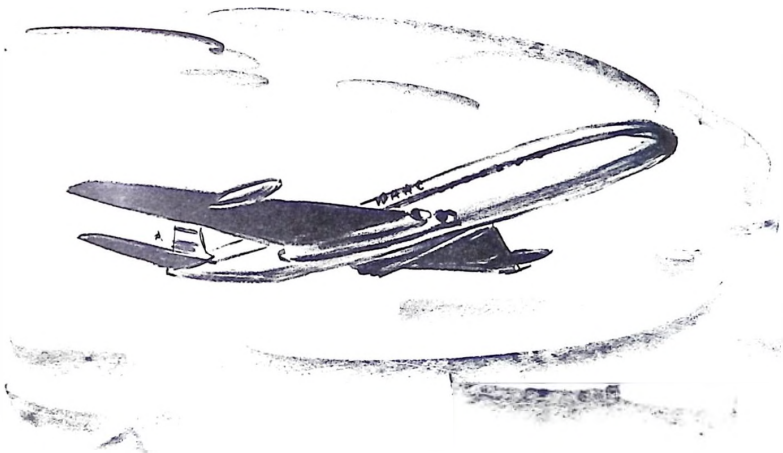
In another section of Kano are the vats of dye merchants. On the wide top of a low, flat bank of earth are many small round pools. Each is filled with a dark blue dye. It is made from the leaves of the indigo plant. Squatting by each pool are the dyers. Their hands and forearms are as blue as the pools. They are colouring the homespun cloth Hausa women have made.



Outside the walls of the old city is an up-to-date business district. Two miles away is the huge Kano International Airport. It has beautiful buildings, long runways and the latest refuelling equipment. It is one of the chief crossroads of modern Africa. Aircraft travelling in all directions call here regularly. It is a great contrast to the ancient walled town not far away.

As your plane roars down the big runway at Kano for take-off, look towards the main airport building. There astride a big white camel is a messenger from the Emir of Kano. He is swathed in white robes and wears a high white turban on his head.

With cheeks puffed he is holding a slim trumpet to his lips. The trumpet is 10 feet long. His blast is to wish you a safe journey home. What a friendly thing to do! It is a last warm gesture from a warm-hearted people whose welcome you will always remember.



# History

About 600 B.C.—Hanno and other Carthaginians on voyages to West Africa to trade for gold.

A.D. 1000—King Bagoda of Daura ruler of Hausas at Kano.

A.D. 1030—Kanuri tribe in Bornu converted to Islam by missionaries from Egypt.

1463—Mohammed Rumfa, greatest King of Kano, makes the city a trading centre of vast importance; he builds a new wall with seven gates.

1472—Portuguese mariners led by Ruy de Sequeira arrive at Lagos.

1493—El Maghili and other zealous Mohammedan missionaries from North Africa convert Northern Nigeria to Islam.

1553—First English ships arrive at Benin.

1562—Beginning of period of active slave trading along Nigerian coast by Portuguese, French, Dutch, Danes, Brandenburgers, British, Swedes and Spaniards.

1788—African Association formed in Great Britain to explore Africa and determine the course of the Niger.

1796–1806—Mungo Park, young Scottish doctor, discovers headwaters of the Niger in Guinea on First Expedition. Park perishes in rapids at Bussa, Nigeria, on Second Expedition.

1807—British outlaw slave trade and begin efforts to suppress it along West African coast.

1824–1827—Lieutenant Clapperton of the British Navy travels overland from North African coast to Kano; returns by same route. Later he travels to Sokoto, where he dies.

1830—Richard Lander and his brother, John, journey overland from Lagos to the Niger at Bussa. Then they go by boat downstream, finally determining its course—a mystery for centuries.

1844—First school in Nigeria—Roman Catholic Grammar School—founded in Lagos.

1849—Mr. John Beecroft appointed first British Consul in Nigeria.

1861—Lagos becomes a British colony.

1880–1885—Coastal chiefs sign treaties with Britain.

1886—Royal Niger Company formed and begins administration of central Nigerian regions for the Crown.

1892—Benin becomes a British protectorate.

1896—Nigerian Railway begun.

1900—Protectorate of Southern Nigeria proclaimed; administration of Royal Niger Company ends and Protectorate of Northern Nigeria proclaimed.

1914—All Nigeria united under one central government for first time.

1916–1918—Nigeria Regiment sees service in Tanganyika and Palestine during World War I.

1939–1945—Nigeria Regiment campaigns in Ethiopia, the Middle East and Burma during World War II.

1951–1954—Revised constitution gives more autonomy to regions, creates more representative legislatures, and grants Nigerians a full share in shaping government policy. A second revision further increases regional powers, enlarges Federal House of Representatives and declares Lagos a Federal Territory.

1956—Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh make a royal tour of Nigeria.

1957—First Federal Council of Ministers constituted and the first Federal Prime Minister appointed.

1957–1959—Western, Eastern and Northern Nigeria attain full regional self-government.

1960—Present—Nigeria becomes an independent state. Its government concentrates on economic development and education: more roads, dams, railways, harbour facilities and schools.

# How to Pronounce Foreign Words in this Book

| *Word* | *Pronunciation* | *Word* | *Pronunciation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| agbada | ahg-*bah*-dah | Bini | *bee*-nee |
| Alake | ah-*lock*-ee | Bornu | born-*oo* |
| Anga | *ahn*-gah | Bororoji | boh-roh-*roh*-jee |
| Apapa | ah-*pop*-ah | bubas | boo-*bahs* |
| Awujale | ah-woo-*jol*-ee | Calabar | kah-lah-*bar* |
| Bauchi | *bowch*-ee | Cameroun | *kam*-er-oon |
| Benue | *ben*-you-ee | Chad | chad |

| *Word* | *Pronunciation* |
|---|---|
| cocoyams | *coh*-coh-yams |
| Dahomey | dah-*home*-ay |
| dansiki | don-*seek*-ee |
| dawa | *dah*-wah |
| Ebute Metta | ee-*boot*ah-*met*-ah |
| Efik | *eh*-fik |
| Egba | *egg*-bah |
| Emir | *aim*-ear |
| Enugu | ee-*noo*-goo |
| fila | fee-*lah* |
| Fulani | foo-*lah*-nee |
| gari | *gah*-ree |
| gele | jell-*eh* |
| harmattan | *harm*-ah-tahn |
| Hausa | *house*-ah |
| Ibadan | ee-*bah*-don |
| Ibibio | ee-*bee*-bee-oh |
| iborun | ee-boh-*roon* |
| Ife | *eef*-eh |
| Ijaw | ee-*jaw* |
| Ijebu | jeb-*oo* |
| iros | ee-*rows* |
| Jekri | *jeh*-kree |
| Jos | rhymes with "toss" |
| Kaduna | kah-*doon*-ah |
| Kalabari | kah-lah-*bah*-ree |
| Kano | *kah*-noh |
| Kanuri | kah-*noo*-ree |
| Kukuruku | koo-koo-roo-*koo* |
| Lagos | *lay*-goss |
| Maiduguri | my-*doo*-goo-ree |
| Niger | *ny*-jer |
| Oba | *oh*-bah |
| Ogun | oh-*goon* |
| oja | *oh*-jah |
| okura | oh-*koo*-rah |
| Olorun | oh-loh-*roon* |
| Oni | *oh*-nee |
| Onitsha | oh-*nit*-shah |
| orishas | oh-*ree*-shahs |
| Oyo | rhymes with "yo-yo" |
| Rahaji | rah-*hah*-jee |
| Sapele | *sap*-ill-ee |
| Sarkin Musulmi | sahr-*keen* moo-*sool*-mee |
| Shango | rhymes with "bongo" |
| Sobo | rhymes with "hobo" |
| Sokoto | *soh*-koh-toh |
| sokotos | *shoh*-koh-tohs |
| Sopona | shoh-*poh*-nah |
| Tangale | tahn-*gol*-ee |
| Tiv | rhymes with "give" |
| Urhobo | your-*oh*-*boh* |
| Vom | rhymes with "tom" |
| Yaba | *yah*-bah |
| Yoruba | *Your*-oo-bah |
| Zaria | *zah*-ree-ah |

# Index