PEARCE GERVIS

of Emirs and Pagans

The story of Nigeria's colonisation and subsequent independence sounds an optimistic note in a world conditioned to the bitterness, political wrangling and racial violence that throws such a dark shadow on the African scene. Conquered by the British at the beginning of the century, Northern Nigeria has already been granted complete independence; and this without any of the rancour and dissatisfaction that exists in other parts of the Continent. On the contrary, the Nigerians are eager that British ways and ideals should play an integral part in their newly won freedom.

In 1903, when the British Army subjugated practically the whole of what is now Northern Nigeria, they found a country despotically ruled by Muslim Emirs and Pagan Chiefs who sold into slavery the men and women captured in the interminable local squabbles, for here life was of little value; and to the outside world this country was nothing more than a prolific source of skins, ivory and slaves. Less than sixty years later, when the British granted Northern Nigeria complete independence, the account of the dramatic strides made in cultural, social and economic development reads like a fantastic success story—a story which continues without a break.

In this view of Northern Nigeria, Pearce Gervis relates all he has seen and heard in the four years he spent touring the country; with the added advantage of speaking Hausa—the *lingua franca* in those parts—he was able to mix with and speak to a wide variety of people. Thus he came to know the country well and to learn some of its earlier history. He was also allowed to witness and photograph the unique tribal rites—photographs which he has used to illustrate this book. For his previous books—on Kashmir, Sierra Leone and the practice of Yoga—Pearce Gervis has been praised for his particular blend of anthropologist, historian and travel writer; a careful balance which is beautifully preserved in *Of Emirs and Pagans*.

30/- NET

ıe story of Nigeria
ibsequent indepe
ptimistic note in a
› the bitterness, po
acial violence that
hadow on the Afric
oy the British at t
century, Northern
been granted com
and this without an
dissatisfaction that
of the Continent. C
Nigerians are eage
and ideals should
in their newly won
In 1903, when
subjugated practica
is now Northern N
country despotical
Emirs and Pagan
slavery the men an
the interminable
here life was of lit
outside world this
more than a pro
ivory and slaves.
later, when the Bri
Nigeria complete
account of the dra
cultural, social an
me:t reads like
sto:y—a story wh
a break.

In this view of No
Gervis relates all
in the four years
country; with th
speaking Hausa
those parts—he
and speak to a
Thus he came to
and to learn son
He was also al
photograph the
photographs w
illustrate this b
books—on Kas
the practice of
has been praised
of anthropologi
writer; a care
beautifully pres
Pagans.

Of Emirs And Pagans

By the same Author

SIERRA LEONE STORY

THIS IS KASHMIR

NAKED THEY PRAY

The story
subsequen
optimistic
to the bitt
racial viol
shadow o
by the Br
century, N
been gran
and this w
dissatisfac
of the Co
Nigerians
and ideals
in their ne
In 1903,
subjugated
is now No
country d
Emirs and
slavery th
the interi
here life v
outside w
more tha
ivory and
later, whe
Nigeria c
account o
cultural, s
ment rea
story—a s
a break.
In this vie
Gervis rel
in the fo
country;
speaking
those pa
and spea
Thus he
and to le
He was
photogra
photogra
illustrate
books—
the prac
has been
of anthr
writer;
beautiful
Pagans.

Mounted Emir with staff and umbrella — note folding chair.

Of Emirs And Pagans

A VIEW OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

Pearce Gervis

CASSELL · LONDON

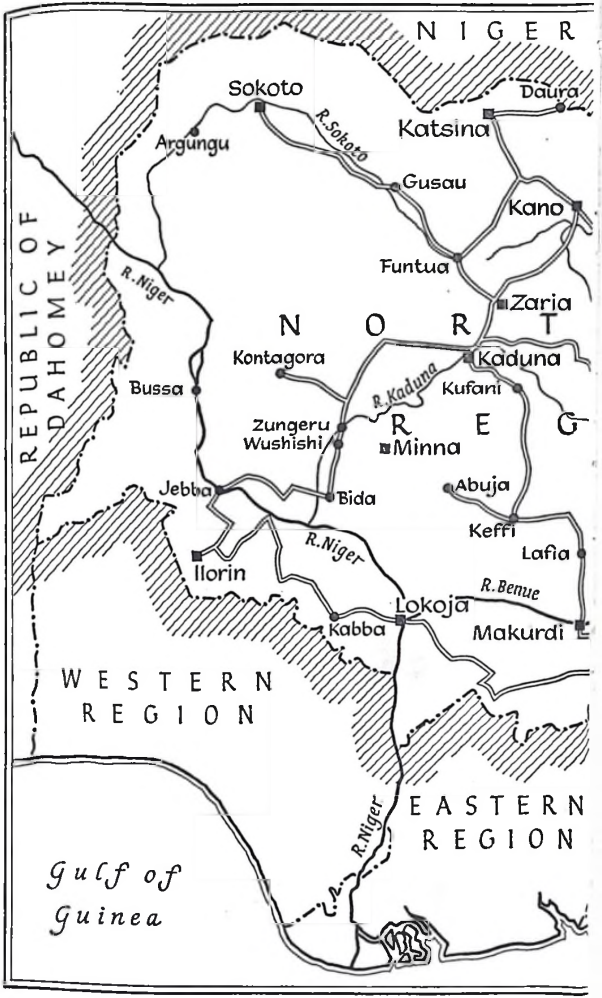
CASSELL & COMPANY LTD
35 Red Lion Square · London WC1
and at
MELBOURNE · SYDNEY · TORONTO
JOHANNESBURG · CAPE TOWN · AUCKLAND

First published 1963

Set in 11 pt. on 12 pt. Imprint, and Printed
in Great Britain by Cox and Wyman, Ltd.
London, Fakenham and Reading
F.863

To My Father

for whom
His Highness The Emir Umaru Maidubu of
Kontagora gave me a message—a forecast.


NIGER
Sokoto
Daura
R. Sokoto
Katsina
Argungu
Gusau
Kano
REPUBLIC OF DAHOMEY
R. Niger
Funtua
Zaria
N O R T
Kontagora
Kaduna
R. Kaduna
Kufani
Bussa
R E G
Zungeru
Wushishi
Minna
Jebba
Bida
Abuja
Keffi
R. Niger
Lafia
Ilorin
R. Benue
Lokoja
Kabba
Makurdi
WESTERN REGION
EASTERN REGION
R. Niger
Gulf of Guinea

Map illustrating the author's journeys

Contents

Illustrations

Foreword

In 1900 a British Army unit moved up from the southern part of Nigeria into what is now known as Northern Nigeria; their purpose was to subjugate the country: by 1903 they had taken over practically the whole of it. Until that time, but a handful of British explorers had visited that part, which was practically unknown, unmapped.

Now, as the British went forward they found a land peopled mostly by pagans who were either under the absolute rule of Muslim Fulani Emirs, or Chiefs, who were often at war among themselves; a land where men and women were captured and sold, or used by their masters as they willed. It was a land where terrible punishments and cruelties were inflicted by both Muslim and pagan; where the pagans practised cannibalism and human sacrifice; where life was of little value and where pagan subjects were held by fear, not only of their rulers, but also of their own witch-doctors.

It was a land without roads; there were bush paths, but none of these led to the south and the coast. A land of which the world knew little except that from it were exported thousands of slaves, much ivory and great numbers of skins, and all by way of the camel-tracks across the Sahara Desert.

Once the British had subjugated the country, they tried the bold experiment of Indirect Rule, by which the Emirs and the Chiefs, having been stripped of their sovereign rights, were given back many of their powers and, still retaining their titles and their

palaces, permitted to remain in office, but responsible to the British High Commissioner, and later the Governor, who had his resident representative in each of the capitals. Any Emir who would not agree to the terms of his reappointment was deposed, and another member of his family took his place. From the beginning the experiment was a success, and good will was established between Nigerians and British.

Other factors contributed to the success of the experiment. The Christian Missions played a considerable part, but theirs was no easy task, for the British had declared that the Missions should be permitted to convert only the pagans; the Muslims also had their missionaries, who mostly came from the Sudan, and had the advantage of being dark skinned. The Christians always seemed to picture Jesus Christ as a white man; but was He, coming from the Middle East? The Nigerian was therefore caused to imagine of God as the Father of a white son, and as such He became the white man's God. The Muslim is permitted four wives and as many concubines as he can afford to keep; the Christian can have one wife and no concubines, the pagan often has more than one wife; if he becomes Christian, what happens to his other wives? But in spite of these difficulties and the attraction of the picturesque Muslim festivals, the Christian religion gradually filtered farther north. A terrific task lay before the pioneer missionaries, and those who followed them, in entering a country unknown, among a people speaking a language unknown, with unknown customs; a land with terrible climatic conditions and many diseases for which there were no certain cures. But although many of them died, others went on tenaciously to lay the foundations of the excellent educational, medical, and welfare services now open to all, whether they be Christian, Muslim or pagan.

Nigeria became a Republic within the Commonwealth in October 1963. In 1959 the British granted Self Government to the Northern Region, and in less than two years, in 1960, they gave complete independence to the whole of Nigeria. The Prime Minister, Premiers of the Regions, and Ministers were by that time all Nigerians, and among the officers of the Armed Services and the Police Force were also many Nigerians, some of whom had been trained in Great Britain.

The Northern Region was handed over to able Ministers

who by then had experience in duties through which they had been guided by the Governor and by British Permanent Secretaries, who also had the task of training their own Nigerian successors.

Britain gave back to the people of Northern Nigeria a land free of slavery, cannibalism and human sacrifice; a land in which there was no longer fear of Emirs and Chiefs, and where the powers of witch-doctors were fast fading; a land with trunk roads, railways, and airlines, to all parts including the south and the vital sea ports; a land with postal, telegraphic and radio communications; a land with new industries, with agriculture and mining developed; a land in which every man, be he Muslim Emir or pagan peasant, has one vote in order that he may elect whom he wishes to rule over him; a land with hundreds of schools and colleges, dispensaries and hospitals and welfare centres.

The Northern Region Government, consisting entirely of Nigerians, asked Sir Gawain Bell, the British Governor, to remain in office until his normal tour of duty was finished, well knowing that this would not be for almost another two years. And even after he had gone in 1962 and his Nigerian successor had taken over, at the Government's desire there still remained some British Permanent Secretaries and senior officials.

And all this had been achieved without rancour or bloodshed. Northern Nigeria is an example of Colonialism as the British have always intended and desired that it should work, by being founded on mutual respect and confidence.

This book is a record of my two tours covering about four years in those parts. The first was during the last great World War; the second, nearly twenty years later and over a period from before Self Government until after Independence. I have named only a few of the many people I met; and they are but a small proportion of the administrators, doctors, and missionaries I was not fortunate enough to meet. Among these were men and women who were honoured with knighthoods or decorations, as well as those who worked officially unnoticed deep in the bush, although they will not be forgotten by those they served. All these people, who have now retired after years of service, are back in their homeland, listening and watching as the Northern Region takes its place in Commonwealth and world affairs, for these achievements and

successes, just as bungling and failures would have done, reflect their patient labours and training.

Within these pages I have quoted several historical facts. I found that there was very little written of the history of the Northern Region prior to the arrival of the British. Most of that which remained—for it is said that much was destroyed by victorious kings as they came to power—was written at their direction to their glorification or that of their dynasty. A few foreigners, including Britishers, travelled that part and wrote of what they had found. I think these writings can be relied upon, providing it was fact and not hearsay. To add confusion, frontiers and borders have changed from time to time, towns have been built and destroyed, and in translations names have been changed. I have therefore given here the historical version generally accepted and that fitting in with known history.

PEARCE GERVIS.

Kaduna

KADUNA. The name faced me in foot-long letters of white on a chocolate-coloured railway-station board. I heard the porters shouting 'Kaduna Junction' and around me there was a sea of faces—black faces.

As I left the train, a Canadian nursing sister who had occupied the compartment next to mine for the journey and who was going on to Kano, exclaimed: 'Kaduna. Now that's a pretty name. Just like a Red Indian one. Like Rippling Water. I wonder just how this town got that name?' And airing my poor Hausa I was able to tell her that it was the plural of the Hausa word 'Kada' meaning crocodile. Kaduna spreads across the River Kaduna, a tributary of the great Niger.

It had taken a day and a night to get from Lagos to Kaduna. The town was not entirely new to me. I had known it about twenty years before when, during the war years, I was stationed in West Africa. Now, returning for a longish tour of duty, it was my intention to travel through all the provinces, most of the large towns, and many of the villages.

Although at that time independence had been promised to Nigeria, I had no idea that this independence would go down in history as the first gained by a British colony without rancour or bloodshed. What had been more amazing was that the Northern Nigerian leaders had decided that they were not quite ready for the preliminary stage of independence known as Self Government, which the other Regions had enjoyed for some time, and until the

Northern Region accepted it, complete independence for the whole country could not be granted.

It was Sunday afternoon when I arrived, and there were few white faces among the black. It was no novelty to Europeans to see the 'Lagos—Kano Limited Express' disgorge its passengers; for them the open-air swimming-pool by the river held a far greater attraction. Then from among the bustling, clammering crowd, I saw a European raising his hand to me as he pushed his way forward. I welcomed his help in retrieving my baggage from the compartment, and the nine boxes from the brake-van, as I had no idea in what part of the train these boxes had been placed. In addition I had heard that there was no hotel in Kaduna, 'Only a Government Catering Rest House. That's usually fully booked up. Northern Nigerian Government officials have priority.' Well, I wasn't one, so I just hoped for the best.

Within half an hour we had found my baggage, finally settled the porter's 'dashes'—tips, and I was on my way in a utility truck—known there as a Kit-car—being driven at a mad pace through the town. The main street was a mass of people on Sunday parade, many coming out from the small chapels by the wayside; goats were leaping in all directions, and dogs lazily moving out of the way of the truck at the last moment.

I remembered that the road from the station into the town used to pass over a bridge which also carried the one-track railway line. Trains held up road traffic for half an hour or more at times, and when the bridge was opened there was a mad rush of cars, trucks, cycles and people, as well as cattle trying to get over before the gates were closed again. But since then a new wide, concrete road bridge had been built, and all the confusion was over, although for the first quarter of a mile from the station we still passed under a canopy of flame-of-the-forest trees, then in glorious bloom.

Once over the bridge much was the same as on my previous visit, the only difference was that the main road had been tarred down the centre; the great overhanging trees under which sat the cold-drink and fruit sellers were still there. Behind them were the grey shops of unpainted wood, with rusting galvanized roofs. Most of these were bungalow style, with open fronts over which wooden shutters closed at night to be secured with enormous padlocks. In the middle of the town there was a two-storied building, an hotel,

with cotton curtains fluttering from open upper windows; but all I could see of the inside ground floor were plain tables and hard chairs—obviously an African hotel.

Outside stood some dilapidated cars, the drivers asleep on the back seats with a leg out of each window. One was then being loaded with baskets and bundles being tied on the roof and on the back while an enormous woman was pushing her way into the back door. Where she expected to sit in a car already overcrowded I cannot imagine.

'Our Kaduna taxis,' I was told. 'No buses here. In Kaduna all Europeans own a car. Never seen one in a taxi. You've got a car coming, of course?'

I had, and seeing this was certainly glad that it should be arriving in a day or so.

On we went, through the old European quarters, between rows of great mango trees. A small boy was trying to hide behind the trunk of one as the truck passed, but his companion, unwarned in the branches above, sent down a shower of mangoes. Later I was to see the contractors' men gathering millions of these fruits from the trees. Gangs of pickers go from tree to tree, first scattering beneath them trusses of dried grass; the climbers then shin up the trees and shake the fruits down, leaving hardly one on the branches by the time they have finished their 'picking'. The mangoes are gathered up and piled high in great saucer-like skips; another skip forms the lid; these are tied up and carried away to lorries, most of which go to the Sahara towns where the fruits fetch a good price. I found these were not like the fleshy mango of India. The Nigerian ones are stringy and taste slightly of turps; they make excellent chutney though.

A room had been booked for me at the Rest House, and having seen me in, unloaded my baggage and arranged for the temporary storage of my boxes, my escort said: 'See you later, old man. I'm sure you'll be glad of a wash and brush up and a rest.' And with that he fled from the room, no doubt back to the swimming-pool and his waiting wife.

Having bundled my luggage into the chalet, the room-boy asked 'Master want tea?' I was frankly surprised to hear the address 'Master'. I had rather expected that with independence on the way this would have died out; but I was to find it remained in all parts,

and still does among servants as well as among those who seek favours.

Only when he had gone could I sit down and recover from the past hectic tiring hours, for the long journey in the train, although in a compartment cooled by fans, had left me black with soot which seeped in from the engine through the wire mesh shutters; even through the cracks when the doors were shut. The heat and stuffiness had been almost unbearable when the car attendant, with wide-open eyes, had advised me to lock myself in and fix tight all windows at night because 'Tief mans, him very bad this part, Masser!' The blazing sun on the teeming mass of perspiring Nigerians on the station had left me gasping for fresh air. Here in the Rest House I had found it, and enjoyed it all the more after a shower and a change. Here I could sit on the veranda and enjoy the cool evening air at long last.

In the North, Kaduna was not the only town without a European-style hotel. Kano and Jos could boast of them; but in all the other large provincial towns there are Government Catering Rest Houses, each containing a large central dining-room, lounge, often with a bar, and numbers of chalets, each with its fully furnished bedroom, lounge, bathroom and large veranda scattered among great spreading trees in the grounds round the main building to which winding roadways lead. Here you can also get full board and at quite reasonable prices. But bookings are heavy; you are often faced with the alternative of sleeping out or sharing a twin-bed chalet with a complete stranger of any nationality.

That evening I was not to enjoy the perfect quiet undisturbed, for during the late afternoon there are always many traders streaming to the chalets. These men usually come well dressed in Hausa gowns, gay Sokoto or Kano skull-caps, carrying a few leather handbags or 'something very special, I bring this especially for the master'. They greet you as though you are an old friend. Later, when you have been inveigled into making a purchase, however small, you become 'My very old customer'. They are often followed by one or two porters, poor young lads in tattered clothes, each carrying on his head a load fit for two donkeys, contained in gigantic oblong baskets with other items tied on top of the load.

Before you can protest, the goods are spread out at your feet.

'What for is master looking?' 'I have here one very good thing—just what the master is wanting.' Their sales chatter is matched by carefully watching glances and expressions of their victims; quickly they push aside anything in which he obviously has no interest while pressing the sale of some item he happens to hold a little longer than another. Among them are rogues—if you can call those who make from two hundred per cent profit a rogue, but you soon get to know the correct price is at most half the first price, and even when they have said 'This be the last price' it can still be knocked down.

Among them are some who are not rogues, and after a time you get to know those who can be trusted. One such I knew. He was a quiet man, a Muslim from Sokoto, who carried only goods of high quality; each piece was perfect. He had no porter, and brought his load on the back of his bicycle. Often he left things for me to keep for a few days to decide whether I wanted them. Then, on one occasion, I happened to visit the Blind Institute School and found him there. He was instructing the blind boys in mattress making. During the late afternoon, after the Blind School was closed for the day, he travelled round the Rest House chalets and the private bungalows selling his goods. A dignified, quietly-spoken man.

The Rest House had once been the Brigadier's house—the Army Commander in the North. Next to it stood the Deputy Governor's house, a most attractive old Colonial place with verandas which had first been made into rooms and later had extra verandas added outside. Similar extensions took place with so many of the houses built for Government officials and Army officers when they started to bring out their wives and children. I found that, however large the houses appeared to be, hardly one had more than two bedrooms, one for the officer and one for a guest. But with the discovery of antimalarial tablets, the families joined them and more rooms had to be added.

My companion in the Rest House bar that evening was an old Colonial official, 'One more tour of duty, old boy, then I'm fifty and due for retirement. I shall miss it, you know!' type. He could hark back to the time when most of the officers were housed in mud buildings with thatched roofs, a kind in which many are still living in the bush. 'In those days the water came from wells and

streams, not out of a tap. We had thunder boxes—a bucket under the seat and another close at hand filled with earth. None of your fancy flushes or chemical closets then, old boy!' At night, the rooms were lit either by hurricane lamps or pressure lamps which drew all the moths and flying ants in the area. Large basins of water were placed under the lamps for the ants to fall into when they had shed their wings; this prevented them crawling all over the place. I heard that among some of the tribes these ants are considered to be a luxury when fried in oil, and one European in the railway service told me how his boy always watched eagerly as the large bowl filled up with coffee-coloured fat ants; at that time of the year he would always light up all the lamps he could lay his hands on.

When I arrived the grass was green and the gardens a blaze of colour with great clumps of white, pink and red canna, just like giant gladioli, filling the large beds round the bungalows. The verandas and the hedges were a mass of bougainvillæa which shot gigantic sprays of varying shades of mauve and heliotrope towards the sky; while grape-like clusters of Orange Flowered Stephanotis dripped like honey from the eaves of houses and bungalows. The majority of the older Colonial houses had their compounds under the shade of enormous frangipani; the pink and apricot posies of blossoms appearing like rocket fireworks glimpsed as they burst. And here and there were glorious trees and bushes of white gardenias, blushing magnolia and delicate mauve jacaranda flowers. Most of the hedges of shining dark-green leaves were splashed with red and pink hibiscus flowers. There were also many grapefruit, oranges, mandarine and quince bushes as well as banana and paw paw palms.

The front of the Rest House was almost alight with glorious flame-of-the-forest trees which sheltered it. This festival of colour would go on for a few more weeks, and then, as the dry season advanced, the blossoms of many would fall like carnival confetti, to be replaced on the trees before the Rest House by black locust-bean pods, some nearly two feet long; on others, the flowers of which were the yellow, the seed-pods look like hanging wax candles; hence the name, candle tree.

I afterwards saw the long bean pods being gathered up by the boys. They are opened, the beans inside boiled down to make

soap. The pods are used as firewood—which is costly for the working people to buy, yet a necessity, for Nigerians prefer a cooked to an uncooked meal, and some of their favourite dishes take a lot of cooking. Even in those towns where electricity is available, the working people's homes and the small shops are still lit by oil lamps. In much of the older part of the towns tiny lamps like nursery lights, made from empty cigarette-tins and beer-bottle caps, are used on the trays of the women traders who sell cakes, bananas, oranges, mangoes, as well as matches by the dozen sticks, single cigarettes and sugar by the lump, while in the backyard, kitchens pots of water and soup are boiled and pans of fat fried on low wood-fired stoves made of clay, before which the women squat on stumpy stools fanning the flame with a plaited rush fan.

Kaduna is a fairly new town. Fifty years ago it was a mere handful of mud huts. There can be few, if any, people who can describe themselves as natives of Kaduna, for this part of the Region had been almost completely devastated by the slave raiders by the time the British arrived to occupy and administer the country. The British had taken over the Northern Region in 1900, and moving from Lokoja had, about two years later, set up the Government offices in Zungeru in the Niger Province—in the southern part of the Region—and Army Headquarters in Zaria, some fifty miles north of Kaduna. The distance between these two headquarters was about two hundred miles. Communications in those days were poor and as the climate of Zungeru was not too pleasant, Lugard, the British High Commissioner, looked round for a more suitable centre. What better than Kaduna, in parklike country, with a not unpleasant climate, almost in the centre of the Northern Region, and also on the railway line which was opened up from Lagos to Kano in 1911? But although the Army Headquarters moved to Kaduna in 1913, it was not until 1917 that the Government followed. Forty years later Kaduna was officially designated as the capital of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria.

As I arrived, Kaduna was a town in a hurry to become a dignified Regional capital, and it looked like a cross between a Wild-West movie town and an exhibition ground, with mud-walled and wooden shack-like buildings being propped up while impressive

new stone and concrete ones were hurriedly being built to replace them. The main shopping centre was only just developing, yet that part which contained the brick- and stone-built Government offices was already being referred to as 'The Whitehall Area'.

The United Africa Company, one of whose predecessors had been the old Royal Niger Company, had secured for themselves one of the best positions in the town for their offices and warehouses. I watched the traders making their purchases and paying their bills there. The so-called small traders are mostly women, and have in the past been referred to as the backbone of the commercial life of the country. They must do a considerable amount of business, for they were pulling out from beneath their skirt cloths great wads of notes from which to pay for the goods they bought wholesale. Few of them will yet trust banks, besides which cash payments both ways avoids the question of income-tax payments and 'I no get trust for dem banks. Dey belong for Government. Dey der go tell for tax man.'

In front of the Rest House is the race-course. Northern Nigerians are great horse lovers and also great gamblers. The polo ground in the centre is always in use. Also within that area is the Kaduna Club, with its tennis-courts and golf-course, and on the outer side of the great ring road which encompasses them all there are large houses built for senior Government officials and Army officers, each standing in nearly two acres of land.

On the far side, with a great tree-shaded circular lawn, is the green-domed Lugard Hall, where the Parliaments of the Northern Region—the Northern House of Assembly, corresponding to the British House of Commons, and the Northern House of Chiefs, corresponding to the British House of Lords—hold their sessions. This is a lovely building, especially during the festivals, when its arched verandas are lit red from within, its green dome floodlit, the whole framed between trees covered with thousands of electric fairy lights which twinkle as the leaves round them move in the night breeze. With independence this has now been considerably enlarged, but the original frontispiece, which was designed in a Moorish style, still stand unblemished, the newer parts having been carefully blended into it.

A few hundred yards to the left stands a relic of the past. This is

a tall cream-washed column which was originally the guard-room of the first Government House built by Lugard as the first High Commissioner of the Northern Region. But this is no longer used as a guard-room. A road still runs under its central arch, but on the top, cleverly concealed, is a gigantic water-tank which controls the supply from this highest point in Kaduna to the houses of important citizens living in that area.

Only a few hundred yards away, in the garden of the house of the Chief Justice, stand two gate-posts which formed another entrance to the original Government House grounds. Yet I was unable to find anyone, not even the Chief Justice, who could tell me exactly where the old house had stood, although I was shown a doorstep, but whether this was to the front or back of the house was anyone's guess—yet that house had been in use only about forty years ago. So it is with many of the 'ancient monuments' of Northern Nigeria. Most were built of mud and, for want of repair, fell back to become heaps of earth; or, if of wood, had been attacked by termites and only the stone foundations remained.

The new Government House is about a mile away, a long, lowish white house with a red-tiled roof. Dignified yet unostentatious, it stands on secluded, slightly raised ground. The gardens surrounding it are delightful, with trees now mature and lawns kept emerald green even in the driest season. At the entrance are Nigerian Army sentries. Flanking the gates are two of the cannon which had been used by the British in their attack on the Emirates fifty or sixty years ago. On one side is the white guard-house; matching it on the other side is the gatehouse containing the visitors' book, which, anyone hoping to be favoured with an invitation to Government House, rushes to sign on their day of arrival.

This visitors' book vogue has caught on with the Northern Ministers also, and at the entrance of each of their official residences is a small sentry-box containing the Minister's own visitors' book. It takes over half a day to go in a car from one to another signing them. I know, because I 'did the rounds'. Each of those Minister's newly-built cream houses is in its separate large compound which has behind it a high-walled set of quarters for the servants and their families. Most of the Ministers are Muslim and permitted four wives each, besides which they are expected to house and provide

for their many relatives who come to visit them and who sometimes 'accept hospitality' for months at a time.

On a Sunday, the day on which I arrived, there was no sign of the grandeur of the Emirs who were once feudal rulers and still, to some extent, are the rulers of the Northern Region of Nigeria—being members of the House of Chiefs. No sign of the peoples of the smaller towns and villages, nor of the Emir's distant kinsmen, the Fulani herdsmen and owners of the millions of cattle roaming the country; nor of the pagans who, by their efforts, provide the cotton, ground-nuts, the tobacco, the corn and yams, which together with the tin mines and dried hides provide the economic background for this newly independent region with its ever expanding capital city and its ever-increasing industries. But only now are the ordinary village people beginning to appreciate the importance of education for their sons and daughters in order that they may be fit to replace the Britishers who had first brought together the warring Emirs and tribes, and who then led them towards that independence.

Since I was last in Kaduna a large mineral-water factory had been started up and was producing three quarters of a million gallons of sweet drinks every year. The greatest demand from it was for a brownish sweet drink said to contain, among many other ingredients, the syrup of the Nigerian-grown kola-nut, and sold as far distant as Sokoto, Maiduguri, Yola and Ilorin.

There had also sprung up the great Kaduna Cotton Cloth Mill, financed to a considerable extent by the British, under British management, and employing close on a thousand men in an effort to consume the millions of pounds of cotton grown in the region.

But on Sundays both factory and mill are closed. The younger men working in them parade the town dressed in snow-white slacks, brown and white shoes, and gaily coloured shirts; they dart about the roads on new bicycles which have their blackened parts covered with paper to protect them from being scratched. The older men laze spread-eagled on deck-chairs outside their homes, the doors of which are open so that all the world can see their possessions and enjoy with them a blaring gramophone or radio.

During that week the House of Chiefs met. I watched the Emirs

and Chiefs invading the town, being driven fast in their large American cars which they favour because a wide front seat is necessary for the driver, the secretary and the attendant to wedge themselves in; while the Emir or Chief sits quite alone, often on a velvet rug, in the centre of the back seat. Everyone knows the great man is coming because each of them flies on his car a flag, as do the Ministers. You can also at once tell their class or grade because First Class Emirs and Chiefs have silver-knobbed staffs and Second Class ones have brass-knobbed staffs; these are always held by the attendants with the knobs sticking out of the nearside front window. The Emir of Kano had a tuneful bell-note hooter fitted to his Rolls Royce—the only British car I saw an Emir, Chief or Minister using when I was there—so that everyone knows who is coming; he is usually followed by an impressive stream of other official cars.

Before they had arrived in Kaduna (where most of them have their own houses which are usually made of mud with galvanized iron roofs), lorries had come from their palaces in the provinces, loaded with carpets, cushions, beds, chairs and all the furnishings and kitchenware needed for their houses in the town. They also have houses in the principal towns in their domains, and few of these are furnished.

Some of the lorries carried many iron drums which did not, as I at first imagined, carry oil and petrol for the vehicles, but water brought from the Emir's country; they believe that much of the sickness they suffer away from their homes is brought about by the change of water. (A belief also held by some members of Royal families of the Western world who have bottled water sent ahead of them when they tour in other lands.)

Before roads had been built and motor transport had been introduced into the Region, all this paraphernalia was transported on the heads of scores of slaves. That was before the British came and abolished slavery; afterwards it went on the heads of porters—probably the same men. It took weeks for an Emir to travel round his country, he and his senior-most officials on horseback, the porters and the juniors of his *entourage* on foot through the bush paths.

On the top of the lorry loads are servants and messengers all dressed in colourful uniform gowns—each Emir has his own

colours. They have come ahead so that their master will find his house waiting prepared for him. Immediately following his car will probably be one with his Prime Minister (one Emir, quite aged, had even brought his own physician). His personal servant would be there, for he has charge of the wardrobe of the dozens of gowns which the great man will wear; seldom are Emirs seen in the same gown twice during a visit. This is not as extravagant as might at first seem, for as fashions have not changed much over the centuries, the present-day Emirs are able to wear the gowns of their predecessors. This is fortunate for their owners, since some of the velvet or silk alkyabbas—cloaks—are beautifully embroidered in gold and silver thread and would cost hundreds of pounds.

Seen in public these great men are always gorgeously dressed. Beneath the alkyabba is a voluminous riga—a type of all-enveloping gown. Only in the privacy of their own homes do they change into a simple long white cloth gown known as a kafstan, and removing the silken rawnni—turban—replace it with a simple fez-like hat. When you are privileged to meet them in this informal dress, you know that you will be referred to as 'my friend'. It takes months, sometimes years, for that stage to be reached.

Having watched their arrival at the House of Chiefs, I drove through the town again, towards the south bank of the river where stood the earliest of the Government offices. On the way I came upon a long line of Gwari women; they are from a large pagan tribe, and many live in the area. The women walked barefoot to the side of the road, and were bowed down under their heavy loads. Many of them had their babies tied to their backs, their dark blue or red striped village-woven cloth folded over their breasts, round the baby seated on the mother's behind, and, finally brought forward to be tied in front, thus securing the child. Many of the babies were fast asleep, their little heads—covered either with woollen knitted caps or poke bonnets—bobbing about as their mothers stumped forward. From the women's wrists dangled small calabash for water; some had a cloth in which would be some chop—food—for the day, or maybe a few eggs which she would sell in the market. One woman had twins; one she carried on her back, the other straddled on her hip.

Each of these women carried on her shoulder, slightly to the

back, a basket set in a half calabash. Into the basket had been stacked an enormous load of firewood cut into lengths of about two feet six inches, and each piece split to the thickness of a man's arm. It took two to lift this load on to the woman's shoulder, for each weighed close on a hundred pounds—double the porter's recognized load. Some of them had tramped ten or fifteen miles with these, having started before daybreak; as they trudged up the long slope from the bridge to the market where they would sell the wood, I could see them hoisting the, by then slightly-slipping loads, back into position. Until the day I left Kaduna I could not watch them for long; I always feared that one day I should see a load slip and decapitate the sleeping baby directly beneath. Sometimes they sell the whole load to a trader, but more often they sell it by the stick; when all has gone, they go into the market and buy what they want in the way of ready cooked food and any goods they need to take home.

It is only the Gwari women who carry their loads on their shoulders. The women of other tribes also bring wood from the bush, but this is tied in bundles ten to twelve feet long and eighteen inches thick, probably weighing the same as the others' loads; theirs is the easier task, for they carry the load on their heads and can tip the bundle forward and rest the end on the ground while they regain breath, whereas the Gwari woman cannot let down her load unless there are helping hands to get it back into position.

Quite often I have come upon these women, only a mile or two on their way along the road out of the town, as the evening light was fast fading. Then they were all together; but, whereas they were silent as they trudged along in the morning, they were now shouting loudly to each other; probably louder still as night fell and they had to keep their thoughts from what might pop out from the bush.

It is interesting to see the quite small girls, with their mothers, carrying loads; as they get older the loads are increased in size. The surprising thing is that the very old women among them, shrivelled up, with breasts flapping like straps, and with spindley legs, carry the heaviest loads. They say it is not the load that matters, but the way in which it is carried. These Gwari women, none of whom could be described as good looking by either

European or African standards, gradually assume a stooping position as they age. Two I saw were so old that I am certain that without the sticks they clutched and leant on as they went their way, they would have doubled up as they moved slowly along.

Zaria

ZARIA, which lies about fifty miles to the north of Kaduna, is the capital of the province bearing its name; it completely encompasses the Kaduna Capital Territory, which, until 1956, was a part of the Province.

Zaria has an interesting past. The old city was founded in the sixteenth century and covered an area surrounded by nine miles of high, thick, mud-baked walls so strong that, although not repaired for sixty years, much of them remains to this day. The old gateways to the city from the European settlement, railway centre and commercial town have been preserved, and as one enters through these, fields spread out on both sides, for the city was built to be sufficiently self-contained with water, grains and cattle, to withstand sieges lasting years.

Zaria's history runs back through women, its Queens. Tradition tells that in about 1536, among the Habe Chiefs there reigned for about thirty years a warrior Queen, Bakwa Turunku. She had two daughters, the first was named Amina, the second Zariya. Zariya married the Chief of Zazzau, but tiring of him, she fled, together with her friends and retinue, from the town in which she lived to 'a site in the virgin country to the north'. The husband's emissaries failed to persuade her to return to him, and so, still passionately in love with her, he decided to join her encampment, and took with him all his people. One day one of his hunters returned to the encampment to tell his Chief that he had discovered a wonderful fertile land set between two rock outcrops. To this place the

Chief went with his wife and their peoples, and built a village which he named Zaria after her.

But the elder sister Amina, unmarried, became jealous of her younger sister's successes. She went to war, became the Queen of Zazzau, and for the next thirty-four years spread her kingdom, making its centre Zaria and extending it to the banks of the River Niger. It is said of her that as she captured each town she took a lover from among the bravest men who had defended it. To him she remained faithful until she again went forward with her armies; but before finally leaving the town she had her lover strangled as he left her couch for the last night that she would be there. According to the *Kano Chronicle*, an ancient Arabic manuscript, 'she conquered all the towns as far as Kwararafe and Nupe. Every town paid her tribute. The Sarkin Nupe sent her forty eunuchs and ten thousand kola-nuts. It was she who first brought eunuchs and kolas into Hausaland'—the northern part of Nigeria. It goes on 'She died at Allagana in the Bassa country. Here her tomb is preserved and greatly revered by the pagans who to this day resort to it to pray for a fruitful harvest.'

I was told these two stories by an old and very learned Zaria Muslim teacher who was wrinkled like a withered orange and bent even as he sat, but who still had a twinkle in his eye as he exclaimed: 'What a strange pair of stories. That this Queen should have enjoyed her lovers to the full, and yet be given the credit for having introduced men useless for the bed into our country. It goes to show how selfish and jealous and inconsistent women were even in those days.' Personally I think the Sarkin Nupe, obviously knowing her amorous reputation, had a greater sense of subtle humour than that with which he was credited.

Kola-nuts are grown in the southern provinces of the Northern Region. They hang from the tree in a green case which looks rather like a flat drumhead cabbage. One or two nuts are within each of the several segments. To look at, these nuts are rather like a skinned horse-chestnut; the flavour is similarly bitter and drying. They must be kept moist for once they dry they become bullet-hard and useless. For this reason they are transported from farm to market quickly and in damp sacking which is tied up in enormous cacoons close-netted with thick rope. In the markets the sun is not

Sokoto trader who taught in Blind School

Above: Men fishing with dragonfly-wing nets
Below: A fisherman on calabash and baiting hooks

allowed to shine on them, and they are laid out between pieces of wet sacking.

To offer a kola-nut is a sign of good will. Many times I had to bite one offered by a host who had broken it to share with me. The flavour is spoilt if it is cut; therefore it is broken between the two thumbs. The nut is said to have amazing sustaining properties because it stimulates the nervous system. A man can go on walking and working without food or water for long periods after eating one. The syrup from this nut is contained in the drink so popular with Muslims who, on religious grounds, are not permitted to drink spirits.

The Fulani conquered Zaria in 1804. It was an important centre for slave raiding, its market being famous over all Nigeria and the Sudan. About one hundred years later Zaria was occupied by the British. The Fulani Emir came out to receive them. At first he was permitted to remain in office, but not for long, for he found it impossible to resist the temptation of the considerable profits which came to him through the slave market and from slave raiding; so he had turned a blind eye on the dealings and the raidings within his domain. He was deposed by the British and banished to Lokoja, in the southern part of the Region, in 1907; and on the advice of the Sultan of Sokoto, who had been Paramount of the Emirs, the British appointed Aliu, a grandson of Musa, the first Fulani Emir of Zaria, as his successor.

The slave market in Zaria was said to have been the most horrible in all Nigeria, second in size only to the one in Kano. Zaria was not too distant from the Sahara for Arab dealers to attend. It was also conveniently placed for slaves from the southern parts, who were sent, in many cases by their own people, for having offended against one of the tribal laws. Many arrived together with their families, only to be torn one from the other in the market. The families of criminals who had been executed, or of one who had fled from justice, were always sent there.

In Zaria, the town to which Queen Amina had sent the first eunuchs, it is said there were gelding sheds where, at the bidding of their buyer, so called 'experts in the craft' turned the most magnificent of the men slaves into eunuchs for the Arabian and Middle East markets, as well as those of the Sudan and Egypt. One can imagine the terror of these slaves, who had been justifiably

proud of their manliness, when they realized that they were being dragged into the ghastly shed which stank with the sour sweat of fear, and from which issued deep-throated shrieks after a while turning to gurglings which finally faded away to complete silence.

'Many of the uncircumcized boys who entered these sheds had been told that they were going there to have that done, and while they were being firmly held by his assistants, the barber operator gripped the whole of the sexual parts and with a quick stroke of his razor-sharp knife slashed off the lot. Boiling butter was used to stem the flow of blood and the boy bound up. Only a tenth of them survived'. These smooth-cut eunuchs were in great demand not only as harem guards for the Sudan, but also in Arabia since there was no possibility of their satisfying the women who then appreciated, to the full, the attention of their masters.

The road from Kaduna to Zaria passes through some areas of savannah country, but at times there are fertile fields with guinea corn, millet and sugar-cane rising to a height of ten feet or more; there were long ridged banks from which grow red-stemmed cassava, the white tuber roots of which are eaten; and smaller ridges of ground-nuts, as well as sweet-smelling beans and great stretches of cotton bushes; below the granite escarpment are acres of onion fields. When I first went along this road the sides had patches of pink wild flowers much like gypsophila and, here and there, pinky-mauve sweet peas.

One bend of the road I shall always remember, for here I came upon a crocodile-like animal the size of a small pig, rushing across the road. It was an iguana, a large fawn-green coloured lizard. It is a vegetarian and harmless, but startling to anyone suddenly coming upon it. The skins are tanned and make excellent leather goods; the white flesh is said to taste like spring chicken.

On another occasion, at that same spot, I saw a falcon fly overhead with a snake dangling from its claws; it was the nesting season, and, no doubt she had chicks to feed. I once killed a falcon as it rose from the road where it had been feasting on a honey bird —a tiny bird with a long trunk-like slender beak—not until then did I realize how lovely the falcon's colouring is, the breast shell-pink, the back and wing feathers coffee-coloured shading to chocolate.

Just as I came upon the eroding pink laterite mud walls of the

old city, I saw on the other side of the road a great mound of earth with yard square holes cut down into it. This was all that now remained of the first British Residency which, as with all other buildings made by the British in those days, had been in the style of the Sudan, with thick walls of mud; those with flat roofs being supported on poles resting from wall to wall and then covered with matting to carry the earth. This one had been thatched. Rumour had it that the armoury had been beneath the old Residency, and efforts were being made to discover the truth of this. In the new Residency, which must now be about fifty years old, I saw a photograph taken in 1908 of its predecessor. It looked a cross between a T-shaped barn and a haystack. Built of mud, it had a great roof, the eaves of which were deep to protect and cool the upper rooms, the private quarters of the Resident, and surrounded by a veranda. The lower part was fortlike, the base being built outwards. The entrance was through an archway shaped like the silhouette of a giant button mushroom; I imagine that this was to permit pack horses to pass through. The building looked more like a church than a Residency from which came British guidance to the Emir regarding the administration of the Emirate.

The Emir of Zaria's palace is in the centre of the city; near its entrance stands the old mosque which has been described in the past as the most beautiful in all Southern Sudan. In the old Habe Empire days, if a King was especially pleased with any building erected for him, he had the architect-builder put to death to ensure that he would not build its equal for one of his enemies—or friends. But the builder of this mosque so delighted his King with his work that he escaped being put to death; instead, his King, being merciful, had his eyes put out so that he could not see to build another so lovely. This story I heard from the Emir.

At the time of my arrival the Emir of Zaria was old. He was known to be devout, and, a few months after I got there, he went to Kaduna to attend a meeting of the House of Chiefs. On the Friday morning he bade his farewells to the Emirs with whom he had for many years worked happily, and returned hastily to Zaria in order to be in time for the service at the mosque. As he stepped from his car and looked up towards the entrance of his beloved mosque, he collapsed, and died without ever recovering consciousness. He would never have wished to have passed on at any other time.

An Emir's son does not always succeed his father as do the kings of Europe; nor is it necessary that any of the sons should do so. The King Makers—elders and councillors in the Emirate—are called together and it is they who decide who is most suited, usually from the ruling family, to take the late Emir's place. In the days of the old Fulani Empire the King Makers would then inform the Sultan of Sokoto, as Sarkin Musulmi and overlord, who they desired to be their new Emir; and he finally decided who was to be appointed. In these days the King Makers, now officially and unpicturesquely called 'the traditional selectors', inform the Council of Chiefs, which includes the Sarkin Musulmi as well as the Premier of the Region, of their selection; it is they who finally approve. The Governor confirms the appointment, and instals the new Emir.

The Emir holds office only as long as the Government is willing that he shall do so. If he should prove himself unworthy of the post, then he is deposed and the King Makers are asked to suggest some other member of the family who should follow him as Emir. Usually the new Emir will be related, however distantly, to the old one, but this is not always so. In Zaria he may be chosen from one of three families who are associated with the past history of the Emirate, and this is how it came about.

When the great Muslim leader Sheikh Usuman dan Fodio declared a Jihad in the Northern Region, he sent a Fulani Mallam named Musa to capture the country. This he did, and the Chief, or King, of Zaria, Makkam, fled south to Abuja. Mallam Musa, established as the first Fulani Emir of Zaria, ruled for fourteen years; he was succeeded by a comrade in arms, a Bornuese Fulani, Mallam Yanmusa, who was succeeded by a Katsina Fulani. It was from these three families that the Sarkin Musulmi, the Sultan of Sokoto, had selected each successive Emir of Zaria. The present Emir is Alhaji Muhammadu Aminu.

The installation of a new Emir is a great event which calls for a day's public holiday in the Emirate. All the Emirs of the Region are invited to attend, together with their elders, and only if it is known that the invited Emir or Chief is either ill or too old to travel is he excused from accepting; then he sends his most senior official to represent him. The Premier of the Region, together with his Ministers who come from that part, will also be there, and on those

occasions when I had the good fortune to be invited, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria, a Northerner, also came. But most important of all is the Governor. It is he who will place the letter of appointment in the Emir's hand after lifting the glorious velvet or silk, silver- and gold-embroidered alkyabba over the new Emir's shoulders and hand him his staff of office.

In the northernmost provinces thousands of horsemen take part in the ceremony. First there is the parade past the new Emir and his guests, then the display of skill and horsemanship. Finally the 'jahi' (the traditional charge in honour of the Emir), when line after line of the horsemen charge towards him as he remains seated, either on his horse or on the dais; their horses are pulled up on their haunches at the very last moment as the riders raise their clenched fists in greeting before wheeling off, hardly seen from within the clouds of dust.

The palace servants all have new uniforms and rigas; rooms are dismantled and the old furniture stacked away to make room for the new to replace it. Walls are distempered and painted, the ceilings whitewashed and the beams painted with stripes and wide snakelike scrolls of every colour imaginable, an art peculiar to the North. Among the medieval furnishings such as the priceless carpets, rugs, cushions, and velvet cloths which turn the palace into one from the *Arabian Nights*, now appear modern innovations like telephones, electric fans and desk lamps. These are set on each side of the Emir's couch and close at hand, although a secretary or attendant is always near by to answer the telephone or adjust a fan or lamp.

The outside of the palace is completely redecorated; the embossed mud scrolls on the cement-faced outer walls of the great gateway are again picked out in bright colours; the courtyard made up; the gardens of the Emir's private apartments relaid with doob-grass roots planted to cover quickly all the ground except the paths and the flower-beds which are filled with pot-plants—still in the pots. Some of the old Emirs fail to realize that their palaces are getting aged and dilapidated, musty and gloomy, and the gardens bare and overgrown as the years pass.

Soon the Audience Chamber will be entirely redecorated, the Council Chamber enlarged, sprays of modern electric lights will be

installed, new windows will be cut through some of the feet-thick walls to lighten dark and dingy passages. The inside of the palace will become unrecognizable to those who before had known it; but the main structure will remain as it has been for centuries.

Here in Zaria, as in many other northern provinces, there are to be found reminders of the medieval past, for the Emir is supported by the Sarkin Yaki, a title meaning War Chief; while the man who holds office equal to a Prime Minister is known as the Waziri; in some provinces like Sokoto there is a Sardauna, he is captain of the bodyguard and has a rank parallel to the Waziri; there is also the Madaki, a title meaning Master of the Horse; the most important of the civil servants is the Chief Scribe.

The parts of the Northern Region, often referred to as the Nigerian Sudan or the Southern Sudan, comprises almost all of Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, the northern part of Zaria, Bauchi and Bornu Provinces. In Zaria City, and parts of the town now grown up outside the old city walls, there are many houses of the design favoured in the Sudan. These are two-storey buildings with straight mud walls which continue round the compound to a height of eight or more feet. The houses face directly on to the street; the roofs are flat and surrounded by turrets with long water-spouts from each corner which throw the rains well clear of the foundations. The outer walls are covered with embossed decorations, often coloured, and in these days cement-faced, to save their destruction by erosion. The small windows consist of an opening with double wooden-shutters which are closed and held tight by a wooden bar fixed within; those on to the roadway are iron barred. These are the town houses of the Muslims.

The round mud houses with thatched roofs reflect the architecture of the southern part of the Region. Muslim ones have an entrance porch called a zaure, the room through which all those who enter the compound must pass. This is the room, sometimes with a wide veranda before it, in which the heads of the family and the adult men entertain their friends; the women are in purdah and no man, other than those of the family, may see them. In the towns the gardens are not very large, but there is often a well and usually sufficient space for a few chickens and a goat.

Zaria is full of a mixture of both these types of houses, and in the Sabon Gari—the Strangers' Quarters, in which live people from

other Regions—the houses are close to one another, often adjoining; the windows and doors are usually open when the occupants are at home, for the women are free to move around as they wish. Then there is the distant old Army Cantonment and European Quarter built round the Residency; each house is within a large garden, the servants' quarters being at the far end of this. Occupants here vie with each other to possess the most lovely garden and all have a gardener on their staff: behind is the vegetable garden, in front and at the sides are tree-shaded lawns. All is quiet and still; it is as though one is suddenly struck deaf as you enter that part of Zaria. There are none of the smells from drains, rotting fruit and vegetables and sweating bodies. As always there is the Club, founded by and for Europeans, but now with many Nigerian members. There is also the race-course with the polo-ground; polo is one of the most popular games in the Southern Sudan, where horses seem to be the only commodity which has not risen in price over the last few years.

There is also, of course, the Church of England. In Zaria I met a grand old African clergyman, the Reverend Miller, who had been one of the first Hausa to become ordained. He had been brought up by Dr. Miller, who, with his sister, then living in retirement in Kano, were among the earliest of the Christian missionaries to come to the North. Dr. Miller had become famous for his translation of the Bible into Hausa as well as by the number of boys he adopted and educated, some of whom have now found posts of prominence and influence in the Northern Region. The Reverend Miller, now a white-haired old grandfather, but still working and preaching, had been his first success; now the old man's twin daughters were starting careers as teachers to make their contribution to their newly independent country and its people.

In Zaria, in the commercial town, a large tobacco factory has been started up as a subsidiary to a British-American concern. Here, tobacco grown in the area, which is favourable to its production, is brought in by the farmers, graded and made up into cigarettes. Not long ago farmers thought of tobacco-growing as a side line, now they are increasing the acreage given over to it; they have discovered that it is a most profitable cash crop, even though they have to build drying sheds and spend time watching over the leaf while it matures.

Just outside the city walls there is the Institute of Administration, the envy of many emerging African countries, and admired by all European and American visitors. This developed from a Clerical Training College, and now has facilities and staff, under a British principal, for training not only the clerks for the Government, but also Local and Central Government officials. The syllabus covers accountancy, secretarial duties, administration, legal subjects, co-operatives, police and Local Government procedure. Here most of the students wear native costume, and, surprisingly in a Muslim country where wives are in purdah, women students are also admitted. A great number, including Emirs and Chiefs, come to this Institute for refresher courses, for here they are taught the foundation which is essential for Nigerians to efficiently replace the British officials who are leaving because of Independence. It was appropriate that the first Nigerian to replace a British Resident should be appointed to Zaria; he was Alhaji Ali Akilu; this happening just before the date of Independence for all Nigeria.

Outside the city, and on raised ground, stand the large cream buildings of the Gaskiya Corporation, at that time the only printing and publishing organization of any consequence in the North. Gaskiya means Truth. From this flows newspapers, pamphlets, books and posters, both in English and many of the languages spoken in the Region. Here are to be found the most modern Linotype printing presses and others capable of producing superb colour reproductions. The buildings contain one section which must surely be the dream of every editor anywhere in the world; in the centre, rising from the corner of an enclosed and cloistered lawn, is a tall tower. I was told that it was the brain-child of the first editor-cum-manager. At the summit is a single room, his room, to which he could escape from all the distractions and interruptions while he penned his editorial for the next issue. Very few would take the trouble in that climate to climb the hundred or more steps to worry him with some item he could deal with later on.

This large block of buildings stands among fields of guinea corn, maize and sugar-cane. The earth is light brown, but farther out, beneath the escarpment where onions grow in profusion, it is almost black. From this great rock barrier the hunter of old looked

down and returned to tell his King of the fertile land, which is now Zaria.

Near this escarpment, between Zaria and Kaduna, is a Leper Settlement, with hospital wards and a school for the child patients. It is said that snakes live among the rocks, some of which are pythons. One of these was the cause of my finding Sister 'Kim' Hardacre in tears for her sole companion, a great Siamese tom cat, which she believed had been swallowed by one. Kim was a dedicated woman who worked in the North; she had before been a repertory actress who had at last achieved what all hope for—a London casting. Then, after visiting an uncle who was doing mission work in Nigeria, she threw up her acting career, qualified and returned as the Sister in charge of this lonely settlement among the rocks and rotting disease. Now it is her whole life.

I had heard rumours of snake worship and of a pagan witch who suckled them, but was quite unable to find any confirmation on the spot of this. Kim, with her new-born hatred of snakes, would have been sure to have discovered it, but she knew of none.

Looking up at the great granite rocks one can readily understand how a primitive pagan people could be convinced of the supernatural; on the summit of many of the enormous elephant-grey smooth boulders another, often as large as a house, can be seen balancing; and in one case I saw yet a second one balancing on this. It was as though massive billiard balls were being made use of by giant jugglers.

Water oozed from great horizontal cracks near the summit of some of these solid rock hills. The explanation given me was that these hills of granite are hollow, within them are lakes, the water from which is siphoned up by the intense heat of the tropical sun beating upon them. Below these cracks, bushes and trees have found root to embellish the drab escarpment so that with its many shades of grey, it had now become quite lovely, especially at dawn and sunset.

A snake did, however, feature in Zaria's history, now referred to as legend by educated Northerners. In the telling of this story there is a divergence of details such as names and of those who took part. The one usually accepted concerns Bowa, the father of Gunguma,

the first Chief of Zaria. At that time 'in the land of Daura', which is now in Katsina Province to the north-east of Zaria, a Queen, who was the successor of three queens, was ruling. Her people suffered from a curse upon the land in the form of an enormous snake which had taken up its abode in the only well in her city. The snake had become famed throughout the land and had been named 'Sarki' by the people, whom it permitted to draw water from the well only on a Friday. One morning when the people passed the well—it not being a Friday—they saw lying near by the great snake's body; it had been decapitated, but the head was missing. Then an old woman told those who rushed to see it that the day before she had seen a stranger, who arrived on an animal which was 'like an ox to look at but was not an ox', go to the well to draw water. She had warned him that within the well lived 'Sarki' who would not allow him to draw water because it was not a Friday, and then she left him. The stranger must have attempted to draw water from the well, and the snake come up in the bucket and tried to kill him, at which the stranger must have struck off his head and, taking it with him, left the place. The Queen heard the story and 'marvelled at the bravery of the stranger. She declared that if indeed alone he had killed the snake which had held her people in terror over the years, she would share her kingdom with him'. The stranger was found, he showed the Queen the snake's head and the sword with which he had struck it off, and she married him.

'Now he was the son of Baijidda, son of the King of Baghdad, and his mother was the daughter of the King of Bornu, and people spoke no more of the Queen, but of the Makas Sarki, meaning the slayer of Sarki, and that was the beginning of the reigns of the Kings of Daura.'

Here the stories vary, for one says that 'by his Queen who had married him Makas Sarki had one son who was named Bawo, who in turn had several sons who became the kings of Daura, Kano Zaria, Gobir, Katsina, Rone and Zamfara'. The other story is that he had two sons by a slave woman whose descendants became kings of those countries.

This story is contained in an old manuscript in the archives in the palace of the Emir of Zaria, and entitled *Daura Makas Sarkin*,

but, much embellished and dramatized, it must have entered thousands of homes in the Northern Region in locally printed, sensationally illustrated books, as soon as the people were able to read.

Sokoto

TO the north of Zaria Province lie the provinces of Kano, Katsina and Sokoto. All of these have a part of their southern borders adjoining Zaria, while their northern borders form the frontier between Nigeria and the Niger Republic, previously French West Africa, and the Sahara.

Sokoto, the capital of Sokoto Province, lies two hundred and fifty miles to the north-west of the city of Zaria. The railway line from Lagos divides in Zaria, one line going to Kano and the other following the road to Sokoto for about half the distance until, at Gusau, it branches away to the north.

The main road between the two capitals is therefore quite an important one. During the dry season, between November and April, it is reasonably good, but when I first travelled it, which was during the wet season, the seventy miles between Funtua and Gusau were really bad going. The road was made of laterite on a stone foundation, but when the heavy monsoon rains come, wide and deep ruts soon appear in the slush where the six-wheel lorries, with trailers, and loaded high with dozens of passengers and their luggage, go. If this heavy traffic is permitted to continue, the road soon becomes a deep mud-track with water-filled wheel ruts so deep that no car can follow for fear of having its underpart torn away. To save this happening hinged booms are let down across the roads to prevent the passage of such traffic. It is not at all unusual to come upon a mile-long line of lorries waiting at the boom, their crews and passengers patiently sitting

under whatever cover they can find, cooking meals, and refusing to understand why they cannot go on when high-slung light utility trucks are permitted to take a chance. There are three villages between the two towns, but none have Rest Houses, and in the event of a breakdown, or hold-up by a bridge being washed away, there is no alternative but to sit in the car until help arrives.

I had pointed out to me on the way, about ten miles before Gusau, the Kwatarkwashi rocks, which rise one thousand feet sheer above the plain. Here live the vultures which are said to be the largest in Africa. And near here the British force, advancing from Kano to Sokoto in 1903, met the army of the Emir of Kano under the command of his Waziri.

The one thing I remember about Gusau is a small aircraft flying in and landing some distance from the Rest House on an airstrip constructed during the last war. When I went over to it I was surprised to find the pilot was a priest in the Roman Catholic Centre there. He had before been an American Air Force bomber pilot. Gusau is now the base from which British flying doctors operate, adopting the same techniques as those used in the Australian bush. There are only about twelve doctors in this whole area of Northern Nigeria which has a population of approximately three million people.

I then heard that one or two of the other Missions have aeroplanes in the North. These they find necessary when, during the wet season, the out-stations are cut off—sometimes for weeks. What a difference to the stories told of the pioneers who had to travel on foot, using bicycles on the better bush-paths; or, very occasionally, borrowing a horse.

Until now the drive from Zaria had been through mixed country and uncultivated fields in which great herds of white and brown cattle, all with humps on their shoulders and enormous widespread horns which, in some cases, were as large as elephant tusks, grazed in the nearby bush. Watching over them were boys of the Cattle Fulani tribes. They were each clad with a goat-skin tied around his waist, the four legs of which dangled, I should imagine, most uncomfortably. Each boy had a leather satchel slung over his shoulder, together with cords on which were tied small leather charms. Some had sheathed knives and small bottle gourds for drinking water. Their hair was done in tousled plaits with cowrie

shells, and sometimes, wire and tenth-of-a-penny nickel coins tied into them. They stood, leaning on their long staffs the size of broomsticks, without which no Cattle Fulani is ever seen, watching over the cattle. When they walk this staff is laid across the shoulders, behind the neck; the hands rest one at each end.

These boys are born and brought up among the cattle. They talk to them and the cattle understand. On the first occasion I saw these large herds grazing with Fulani boys guarding them, it was early evening. The sun was then setting, the reflexion of its pink and orange colouring the underpart of white clouds set against a pale blue sky made them appear like gigantic mother-of-pearl shells; the bush was then a young, fresh green, on a small hillock stood a great tree of mauve jacaranda, against which a herdsboy was lounging, holding his long stick in the crook of his arm as he played on the reed pipe which is carried by most of these boys, while the finest of the cattle with enormous white horns were grazing near by. Here was the perfect colour picture for my camera. I stopped the car and quickly jumped down to catch the scene before it was spoiled.

Immediately the boy was alert; his tune ceased abruptly. He looked at me, then at the truck, as I went towards him. Then I heard him play one shrill note on his pipe. At once the cattle lifted their heads and, turning, scattered into the bush, while the boy fled like a deer from me. In a few moments there was no sign of boy or cattle, they had lost themselves over a wide area of thickening bush. The boy must have imagined that I was a tax inspector; cattle are taxed by the head. It would have been impossible to have counted the number in that herd. It is said that these cattle have been so trained that they will even break away at the sound of a voice in a language other than that of their master's.

These fair-skinned, straight-haired, feminine-looking cattleboys are shy of strangers and run away if approached, especially by Europeans. Even when they grow up they remain with the herds and the other men. It is the women of the tribe who go to the markets with the milk and butter and cheese, and there sell it to buy the simple needs of the family. Often you will see these women in twos or threes, half running as they make for a village or a market in the area. Unlike the boys, they are often quite brazen and laugh

provokingly. On their heads they carry large cream-coloured half calabash, usually cut or burned outside with patterns. These contain skim milk in which float great lumps of butter. The women wear a cloth wrapped like a skirt round them, some lift this to cover their breasts, or wear a short blouse, but many are naked above the waist. Their hair is worn with one long plait hanging on each side of the face; into the real hair are worked false plaits which are usually heirlooms and have pure gold bound round them. They also adorn themselves with many bracelets and ear-rings, all of pure gold, for they are by no means poor.

These Cattle Fulani are a nomadic people, wandering the country with the changing seasons in an effort to find pasture and water for their great herds which together number many millions in the Region. Their homes consist of long canes which are carried from one grazing ground to the next on the backs of bullocks which also carry the few household needs of the people, including chickens which are first tied by the legs. On reaching the new grazing ground the sticks are bowed over and each end is stuck in the ground to form a circle; this frame is then covered with leaves or reeds and the resultant home looks much like a large thatched beehive. From here the herds move out, the cows being kept close at hand for milking by the women.

Despite their large herds these people eat very little meat. They might do so during the festivals, but their normal diet is milk, cream, butter, cheese and eggs, with a little grain. They have a rule that milk must never be taken on the same day as meat.

These Cattle Fulani differ from their brothers of the towns in that they have kept their blood fairly pure; only a small percentage among them have the frizzy hair which shows negro blood in their veins. I have never seen one who was fat; they are a tough, wiry, thin people. They are a mystery race, no one knows their origin, but it has been suggested that they have Semetic, probably a mixture of Arab and Jewish, blood; they certainly practise circumcision as do those people.

The toughness of these cattle-boys and men may be judged by a sport in which I once saw them indulging. It is a form of bull baiting. The bull's forelegs are tied together, not too tightly, with a rope which is held firmly by men standing at a distance in front of the animal; the hind legs are likewise tied and held behind by more

men; thus between them they have control of the animal's movements; only its head is free. The bull's challenger then squats on his haunches, before the beast, within range of its horns. He teases and taunts it and when it butts dodges out of its way. When the animal has been worked up to a state of intense frenzy, he leaps on to its head and holds on by the horns. The animal chosen always has long, pointed horns. With the champions among the men, the baiting finishes with the bull being thrown, and then allowed to go free to play another day.

On congratulating them on their bravery, I heard that before a Fulani boy can be referred to as a man he must pass through a rite which is an ordeal called Sheriya, in which the boy is savagely slashed by one of his fellows with a stick much like those used on the cattle. That these effeminate, shy, skinny youths could stand up to such an ordeal seemed absurd. Besides, had I not heard that they were almost vegetarians and surely could have little stamina? When I pressed for more information, I was told by an elder that such beatings had been stopped by law. Next I heard that they did still take place, but in secret, and I imagined that to be deep in the bush. I had not, at that time, seen any of the no longer shy, now tough-looking men among them pull off his smock-like sleeveless coarse shirt to display the great weals on his chest.

The majority of these people are pagan. It is said that they practise a type of Pan worship of a mysterious bush spirit. As wanderers they claim nativity of no particular province, nor do they pay homage to any of the Emirs or Chiefs; they have their own Chiefs of clans among themselves.

As the road runs on from Gusau to Sokoto the herds of the cattle become less frequent; there is no grazing to be seen. Gradually, over long distances, there is only savannah and scrub with no respite or shade from the torrid, shimmering heat, for the scraggy trees and bushes are almost leafless. The reason for the lack of shade is soon apparent, for scores of the Sokoto goat, a small, short-legged light brown animal, run from bush to bush, standing up on hind legs to reach for the slightest sign of green. The famous Moroccan leather originates from these parts. Years ago it was found that the leather from the Sokoto goat was especially favoured by the merchants of Morocco, and it is a strange fact that only from the goats of this particular breed, grazing in this part of Nigeria, is the

Above: Gwari women with babies on back and wood load
Below: Fulani milkmaids on the way to market

Woman with a headload of guinea corn

leather of such excellent quality. Efforts have been made to rear exactly the same breed of goat in other parts where food and water are easier to obtain, but the leather is never so good.

On more than one occasion I felt certain the car would hit one of these wretched creatures when, at the last moment, hearing its mother's plaintive bleat from the other side of the road, a kid would skip across in front of the car, but always to escape. It was either a stupid sheep, a donkey, or a dog, which had been killed by a car and lay on the side of the road hidden among a great flock of raw-necked kite-hawks or vultures with red bare heads, dishevelled shaggy slate-coloured feathers and drooping wings dragging on the ground, wallowing about and fighting each other for the corpse.

Only when you have seen the millions of flies covering the meat and fish in the markets, and crawling over the faces of the sleeping babies and playing children, who appear to be insensitive to the tickles, do you appreciate the law which protects these repulsive-looking scavengers from being killed.

Small Hausa boys and girls tend the sheep and goats, and often there are old women also; they usually do some 'small trade', sitting by the roadside selling guinea-fowls, tied by the legs, and guinea-fowl eggs, while screeching to the children and drawing their attention to a wandering goat. Large numbers of guinea-fowl are to be seen hereabouts, both wild and tame; in season their eggs are sold for as little as twenty for a shilling to passers-by, I am told they can be bought for thirty a shilling in the bush villages, while a good plump guinea-fowl can be had for half a crown.

Later on I was to be reminded of another commodity which used to be famous in that part. The son of an Agricultural adviser showed me an animal like a young leopard; it was a civet cat. From glands under the tail a white foam called 'turare' is milked. This smells revolting but is the base for many expensive scents. At one time turare was almost as famous an export as the Sokoto goatskin; it was collected and sold in cow horns; it then looks like brown treacle. These animals are fed on bananas and beans as well as meat; the more meat the more turare it makes, but they must be kept quiet; if excited they release and waste the precious substance. When I saw its non-rectractile claws, I declined the offer to hold it.

As Sokoto came in sight, there were many fertile fields and large shady trees. You can always tell when a large town is near by the increasing numbers of people walking on the roadside, either coming or going; in the northern parts by the donkeys weighed down with sugar-cane, bundles of wood, or laden with sacks, at times completely hidden when the loads contain raw cotton. These small beasts of burden move slowly with unhappy heads down and look as if numbed to the bashing with heavy sticks across their behinds. On the way home there is no need for the thick stick, their heads are then up, and they trot along, the only load—for a chosen one among them—being the drover who sits far back on the animal's hindquarters.

The main streets of the city, which is built on what looks like a shelf, are wide and tree-shaded. In the distance can be seen the waters of the River Sokoto, which is joined thereabouts by the River Rima, to become a tributary of the great River Niger.

Here in the immense width of the valley the flow of the rivers is slow; there is no erosion. During the dry season they fade almost to streams; in the wet season their waters cover most of the flat alluvial valley plain which is called 'faddama', thus each year rejuvenating it with the summer floods. Here cultivation is intense, for the water seldom rises high enough to ruin the crops. In parts of the valley there are ponds which are ablaze with pink and white water lilies. Often by the side of the road in the Northern Region you come upon ponds spread with water liiies. Those bathing are usually men returning from work in the fields.

During the early sixteenth century a Moor, inflicted with an eight-syllable name which later, upon his conversion to Christianity, was changed, by his master Pope Leo X, to Giovanni Leone, travelled these parts. Afterwards he wrote *The History and Description of Africa*, under the pseudonym of Leo Africanus, the translation being 'Done into English in 1600 by John Pory'. Writing of what might well be the present Sokoto city area he said: 'Cattell are here, both great and small, but of a lower stature than the cattell in other parts. Here also great store of artifices and linnen weavers; and here are such sandles made as the ancient Romans were woont to weare. Likewise here is abundance of rice and of certain other grains and pulse. At the inundation of the Niger all the fields of this region are overflowed, and then

the inhabitants cast their seeds into the waters only. In this region there is a certain village containing almost six thousand families....'

In the older part of the city stand buildings and houses of mud enclosed in their high-walled compounds or with centre-guttered alleys dividing them. Many of these were built years ago, but are kept in their present good condition by repairs made after each wet season, during which the mud becomes waterlogged and so heavy that ceilings collapse together with their great beams.

Parts of the Sultan's palace have been rebuilt, and a modern European-furnished Council Chamber added; but in spite of this the medieval charm remains in the quiet and dignified old-world manners of the Sultan and those who serve him. His high-backed armchair, with a crown as its headpiece, is more like a throne; yet no longer is he the powerful feudal overlord of the Northern Region that his ancestors had been before the coming of the British. The people of Sokoto now offer him respect not born of the fear their forefathers had of the Sultan. They still take off their shoes before entering the Audience Chamber to seek his favours and kneel down, remaining on the floor as he listens or talks to them; then as they remove themselves, still on the ground, they face him until they are out of his presence; this they do as soon as he has shown, by his lack of further interest in them, that the audience is over.

I had sat close by and watched this happening. I listened to the Sultan Alhaji Sir Abubakar's searching questions, his modulated reproofs as sometimes he passed a case to one of his councillors. I also saw the speed with which his secretary or the Chief Scribe lifted the telephone or sent a messenger to seek those the Sultan wished to see or from whom he sought confirmation or further information. The displeasure of the Sultan of Sokoto, though it might not mean a fine or imprisonment, is something to be avoided, even though he might not be one's Spiritual leader; for a Sokoto man to loose face with him is still bad; to receive his favour or his confidence is like a Royal Warrant of Approval in Great Britain.

During the early evening of the day of my arrival in Sokoto, wanting to see more of the city, I drove out to the western part and from there looked down on the river. Here I saw a superb Arab

horse crossing towards another road, mounted by a young man in flowing white robes. I drove nearer so that I could take a photograph, and, seeing what I was endeavouring to do, he turned in my direction, then lifted his hand in salute as I thanked him. I turned to my driver—not a Sokoto man—and asked whom he might be; he replied 'Maybe a groom' to which I commented 'He rides like a prince.'

That evening I attended a party given by the Resident. The guest of honour was the Sultan of Sokoto. He arrived, followed by some of his *entourage*, and introduced his son who had that day arrived from London, where he had been studying in the University. I knew at once that I had seen this young man before, and then it dawned on me—he was the so-called groom. He had been looking round his home town as soon as he arrived back. He was indeed a Prince.

From time to time the Sultan called him to ask a question or to introduce him to someone, and I noticed that, as he replied to his father's questions, the young man did not once look his father in the face, while the Sultan had the advantage of being able to watch his son's reactions. This is a custom among the Sultan and the Emirs when talking to their sons. Neither displayed any emotion; never smiling or laughing (considered bad form among aristocrats), the whole time their voices were modulated, the younger man assuming a 'shy-boy' manner. This young man, although spending several years out of the country, had immediately become absorbed into the customs upon his return to it. Some weeks later I read some quite brilliant articles contributed to a Northern Nigerian newspaper, and was not surprised to find that he, whose study in England included International politics, was the writer.

Few of these one-time feudal rulers have less than the four wives permitted to any Muslim, in addition to an unspecified number of concubines, so that in many cases only those children born of the actual wives are known by name to their father; all the other children are accepted as sons and daughters, and claim their rights as such. To add to the confusion, when a man dies his children are often accepted as sons and daughters by his elder brother. And, to confuse one utterly, in many cases in aristocratic Fulani houses there are so-called sons who are in fact nephews, for it is the custom that children shall be reared in a brother's family,

since the Nigerian mother is prone to spoil her children. The pity is that usually they go to their foster parents when they are so young, and remain with them for so many years—the impressionable years—that the foster parents really look upon the boys as their own, and the boys think of their uncle as their father. Cousins are always referred to as brothers among those people: I never heard the words 'cousin brother' used, as it is in India.

Whilst I was in Sokoto there was a terrific stir among the people because, in an effort to reduce the growing prostitution, the Sultan had issued one of his periodic edicts that any woman over the age of eighteen who still remained unmarried within the week must leave the city. To the European visitor this sounded uncompromising, but with no register of births being kept it could be made difficult to prove a girl's age, and besides, a Muslim can always divorce his wife by little more than declaring that he had done so. Here was an opportunity for the youth who wanted a wife, to get one without having to pay the dowry always demanded of him, or his father, by the girl's parents. I wondered how many took advantage of the occasion; also how many divorces took place once the Sultan's concern over the moral welfare of his subjects had died down or become less apparent.

I was talking to the councillor responsible to the Sultan for the Native Authority Prison and Police, and he told me what a good prison they have. I said that some twenty years before I had visited one in Nigeria and considered it to be pretty grim; at this he suggested that, while I was in Sokoto, I might care to remedy that impression by looking over the one there.

Within half an hour I was at the gates. What was more, apologizing for not being able to accompany me, he explained that the Head Warder was sick, 'but I have arranged that there will be someone there to show you round'. So my visit was not 'fixed'.

The thick walls of the great prison must be twenty feet high. The gateway itself is a large room with iron grille entrance and exit gates. Within the compound are many single-storey buildings, made of plain mud walls with sheet-iron roofs, barred unglazed wood-shuttered windows, and thick iron doors. The ground between the prison dormitories, kitchens and latrines and

wash-houses is hard earth shaded by large trees, none of which grow near the walls.

I was greeted by a youngish man wearing a large village-woven camel-hair blanket round him. His English was perfect; he was my guide and as he wore no uniform I took it that he was a clerk in the prison. As we went round we were followed by a warder who, at his bidding, went back to fetch any keys required.

The compound was then full of prisoners, and some squads in charge of blue-uniformed warders were just returning from working in the city; the more fortunate ones as gardeners in the Sultan's, Resident's and other officials' gardens; others as scavengers, emptying house latrine buckets, public lavatories, or doing similar unpleasant duties. All wore the coarse white cloth uniforms of the prison which consisted of short-sleeved tunics, shorts and white prison caps. The fronts and backs of the tunics were stencilled with the initials of the prison. Most of them seemed to stand round alone; only a few were talking to each other.

Not until I was told then did I realize that there is no lunatic asylum in the Northern Region. Those people who are a danger to others as well as themselves are kept in the prison—in a separate section. The iron-barred cage-like gates to this section were opened for me and I entered. Here were a number of warders, the one in charge walked ahead of me, for I was told that many of the inmates are dangerous and unpredictable. Some appeared to be oblivious of my presence, but I was assured that they were watching my every move. Others certainly looked at me as though they would tear me apart if they but had the chance. Many were walking round and round the compound as though exercising on board a ship. I saw the single cells in which they were shut at night; two of these were still occupied by men who were dangerous, one sat clutching himself as he swayed from side to side moaning, the other was just like a mad gorilla, both in appearance and in his raving, as he shook the iron bars of his cell door.

Then I was taken into a large span-roofed shed with wide open doors on all sides. Within, at a safe distance from each other, men were tethered. One dribbling, babbling youth was seated by one of the thick centre roof supports. The majority of the men were stark naked; a few wore what must once have been shirts, but in most cases they were torn to shreds and hung like ribbons round them.

All of them were completely mentally deranged; they mostly came towards me jabbering, but what they said I had no idea, nor had my guide. Among them were others, like the youth chained to the centre pole, who cringed from me whimpering.

This pitiful boy looked well fed, of excellent physique and had an open childlike expression. As I stood there watching him he started to crawl towards me; the warder made as if to drive him off, but I asked him to let him come forward to see what would happen. Very slowly and cautiously he did so; suddenly he clasped my feet and, looking up at me, his face smothered with tears, whispered in English 'Master! Master!' Was there a story behind this idiot boy's madness, if so what was it? But that was quite enough for me. I left that part.

Not once had I seen any of the inmates cringe from the warders, none looked underfed, and the place, together with the inmates, was clean. But in the darkness of the night, with only the occasional visit by warders, it must be terrifying to anyone among them who, for even short periods, was not completely mad. Yet, as my guide pointed out, they were far better off here than are the so-called harmless gibbering or strangely silent ones you come across wandering the towns and, like scavenger dogs, haunting the food shops of the markets.

I was shown where the women were imprisoned; some of whom had their babies on their backs. There were wardresses in charge, women who looked tough enough to handle the inmate who shouted abuse at the warder with us and vulgarities at my guide. Unlike the men, the women never leave the prison to work outside.

I went to the kitchens, a great open shed in which convicts were cooking the meal on large wood-fires under giant cauldrons containing a glutinous mass like thick grey porridge. Men were coming with buckets to collect the ration for all the others in their shed.

In the dormitory sheds I found convicts sitting and lying on their rush mats which were placed side by side, head against the walls. At one end sat a man manacled hand and foot; he was feeding himself from a tin bowl. I asked if he had been misbehaving, since none of the others I saw were chained; I heard that he was awaiting the result of his appeal against the death penalty for

murder. If it failed he would be hanged. Until the day that they are taken away for execution, these condemned men are allowed to remain among the others, 'to keep them cheerful', my guide explained.

As we went towards the exit from the prison, more by way of making conversation, I asked my guide what work he did in the prison. To my astonishment, as he unwrapped his blanket to disclose beneath it a white prison uniform, he exclaimed 'Didn't you realize I am an inmate here?'

When I had recovered sufficiently to ask him how it came that he spoke such excellent English he explained 'I was a Member of Parliament before I was committed to this place.'

Then as I commented 'Oh I see, a political detainee,' he countered: 'Oh no, nothing like that, or violence. I was found guilty of misappropriation—wrongly of course.'

What a climax to a visit to a Nigerian prison! In the words 'inmate' and 'misappropriation', there most certainly was the politician. This careful selection of words was not uncommon in a country where they are ahead of the Indian who boasts of his 'Failed B.A.', for here it is referred to as 'Studied up to B.A.'.

I asked, and received permission, to take him some reading matter. To my surprise when I arrived with the books that evening I found him sitting outside the prison gates chatting with two of the warders. For good behaviour, and probably as a useful prisoner, he was permitted this privilege until sundown when he returned inside. 'He would never escape. Why should he? Where could he go if he did? He is known everywhere round about', I was told. So here in the centre of Africa I had found an experiment in open prison treatment within—or rather without—a high-walled and double-gated jail.

Sokoto Emirate is under a Sultan and not an Emir. Besides this title the Sultan is known as the Sarkin Musulmi; behind this title lies a hundred years of history of the once great Fulani Empire and the conquest, for the Faith, of the greater part of the Northern Region during the nineteenth century.

To this day the Sarkin Musulmi is the most important religious leader in the North; his followers, be they in his own or any of the other Emirates, number many millions (it is claimed that two thirds

of the eighteen millions or more in the Northern Region are Muslim). It was he who in the past decided who should succeed any of the Fulani Emirs who died or were deposed. He was the absolute overlord.

A Mohammedan writing in 1067 tells of the vast Kingdom of Songhay which covered much of what is now Northern Nigeria, including Sokoto. To the other side was the great Kingdom of Bornu, then enormous and 'renowned for its prosperity and its civilization'. It still remains, and in name also. But Songhay has gone. It is also known that immigrants came from the East over one thousand years ago bringing with them the teachings of Mohammed, and many of the kings of 'Negroland', now Nigeria, were converted to the Faith.

Later, in about the thirteenth century, nomadic herdsmen, Fulani, entered the country. Over the years men from among them became great in the land, occupying high positions in what were then Hausa states. Of the Kings we read little about their regard for this new-found faith, except that by the start of the eighteenth century they and their people had lapsed from the Faith, were worshipping fetishes and that the Chiefs had become dissolute, 'kept one thousand wives and sold the children of their people into captivity'.

In the year 1754 Usuman dan Fodio, a descendant of the Holy Prophet, was born. He became a Muslim teacher, and then a tutor to Yunfa, the son of Bawa, then King of Gobir, who had himself once been a slave; and 'with whom, although the King refused to renounce his evil ways, Usuman found considerable favour, and he acquired considerable influence over the King, for at his request the Fulani were permitted to wear a fez or turban without, as heretofore each individual of them, having to crave personal leave so to do'.

On the sudden death of King Bawa, before the King's brother could be elected to succeed him as was expected, Usuman had his pupil Yunfa made King. In gratitude the new King promised to grant to Usuman any favour he might ask, but 'gradually an estrangement grew between them, and Usuman withdrew to Dagel from whence he continued to spread the Mohammedan Faith, travelling to and fro over the land preaching consistently, and at

the same time acquiring widespread influence over large sections of the people.'

In 1802 news reached him that the Muslim men, women and children of Ginbona who had gone there for fear of persecution by the pagans, were to be taken captive before King Yunfa because a Fulani of that town had failed to do honour to one of Yunfa's war chiefs. Then Usuman sent to remind his late pupil, King Yunfa, of his promise upon his succession to grant him a favour, and asked for the freedom of the captives. The request was granted, but Usuman also let free all captives, pagan as well as Muslim. The King sent for Usuman to come before him to give an explanation for this. Usuman refused, and the King sent an expedition to fetch him. This was met by the Fulani who inflicted a great defeat upon them.

Usuman was now recognized as the Imam of the Fulani. He heard news that 'Yunfa's forces had been sent out in diverse directions against the Faithful', who had, from the previous year, been collecting arms in anticipation of this happening.

In 1804 the Fulani Chiefs raised the Standard of revolt. Under the leadership of Usuman dan Fodio (whom they had recognized as Sarkin Musulmi—meaning Commander of the Faithful—by each taking his hand as they knelt before him), a Jihad, or holy war, was declared.

As Sarkin Musulmi, Usuman addressed his followers; his words have come down in history. 'If I fight this battle that I may become greater than my fellow, or that my son may become greater than his, or that my slave may lord it over his, may the Karafi wipe us from the land.' With that he advanced towards the approaching army of Yunfa, which was described as 'a great host, horsemen clad in cotton armour, some with bows and arrows and others with swords and shields.' They were defeated by the followers of Usuman, who had no horses among them, armed only with bows and arrows, and who were clothed in traditional white rigas. 'Yunfa's hosts were slaughtered, his camp captured and he narrowly escaped with his life back to his capital.'

By this time the fame of the Sarkin Musulmi had spread far and wide. Chiefs and heads of clans of Fulani came from great distances to seek his blessing and beg authority to continue the Jihad against the pagans and the polluters of the Faith among whom they lived.

He granted their request, and handed to fourteen of them flags to carry the Jihad into their countries. It is noteworthy that none of these Chiefs, who were later to be made Emirs, were related to him.

These men returned to their countries to lead armies, and between them subdued almost the whole of Hausaland—now Northern Nigeria—the exceptions being a few pockets of pagans and infidels who held out against the invaders from behind natural hill-fortress walls, and also the people of Bornu. In Bornu another Muslim, Sheikh Mohammed el Kanemi, had seized the reins of power from the Bornu princes. He had gathered fame by refusing all titles other than 'Servant of God', and led his armies to withstand the attacks of the Fulani. In 1826 though, his armies were defeated by the Fulani in Bauchi, and 'he then arrived at terms of agreement regarding Bornu'.

Usuman dan Fodio died in 1817, but before that time he had withdrawn to live as a religious teacher, having divided his new empire between his brother and his son. It was his son Muhammadu Bello who in 1809 founded the town of Sokoto from which to govern his portion, the eastern provinces. Sultan Bello's reign is regarded as the greatest and the grandest period of the Fulani empire in Hausaland. Through his and his two brothers' line, and not that of his uncle, has come the title of Sarkin Musulmi, the spiritual head of all the Muslims in what is known as the Southern Sudan.

Muhammadu Bello died in 1837, and those who followed him made little effort to retain the power gained and to hold the great empire together. As the original flag-bearers died, many of their successors became slack; they conveniently lost sight of the simple and austere mode of life that their predecessors had taught and practised, and turned to the ostentations of the pagan chiefs who, in some cases, still lived among them. They forgot, or ignored, the historical words of the great founder of the Empire. It was said that 'they oppressed their own peoples, and even destroyed their subjects with a view to making their wives and children slaves. They became effeminate, expecting their pagan subjects and slaves to fight their wars, with the result that many of their pagan subjects refused to acknowledge their authority over them, they became haughty and avaricious, so greedy of power that some

among them questioned the authority of the Sarkin Musulmi in Sokoto.' Thus it was that when the British came, at the beginning of the present century, they found a deteriorating empire.

Before that event, the Fulani, who, it is believed, had come as one people, divided, some remaining as pastoral herdsmen, now known as the Cattle or Borroroje Fulani; and the others, who had made their homes in the towns, becoming the Fulani Gidda—gidda meaning 'house'. It was these Fulani Gidda who became the tax collectors, the district heads, and holders of similar posts; they were considered to be the ruling class. Now, although there is a racial connection between the House Fulani and the Cattle Fulani, the latter have no wish to mix with the others, and have indeed kept their blood far more pure than have those of the villages and towns where few of the Fulani are to be found with fair complexions and straight hair, although many have, in spite of intermarriage with the Hausa peoples, retained their aquiline features and thin lips. It is strange that although the intelligence of the Cattle Fulani would appear to have stagnated or perhaps deteriorated, that of the House Fulani has increased, and if there is any Fulani blood in the veins of a Northern Nigerian, that intelligence will show itself.

When the British took over power in Sokoto, a force of thirty-eight Britishers at the head of seven hundred Africans advanced towards the city after taking Kano. They were challenged by an army under the Wasiri of Kano at Kwatarkwashi, one hundred and forty miles before Sokoto City. 'The Fulani warriors showed great courage and fought hard. They fanatically charged the British square, but they were no match against the four guns, four Maxim guns and rifles they faced.' At the city gates there was no resistance to the High Commissioner, who entered Sokoto on March 16th 1903, to accept the submission of the chiefs, the Sultan having already fled.

That particular day and month was chosen in 1959 by the Government of the Northern Region as the one on which they should be handed Self Government by the Duke of Gloucester on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth; it being just fifty-six years later, an occasion brought about and due, as Sir Gawain Bell, the then Governor, said, to 'the administrative genius of the Fulani and their Islamic culture; next, to the missions who brought to the

peoples of the Riverain areas education and Christian faith; thirdly, to the British gift for empiricism and improvisation; and lastly to the trust and friendship which for over half a century has held European and African in a common bond—a bond which is not to be severed by Self Government'.

Kano

KANO, which lies to the north of Kaduna, is a name which has been known for centuries: long before schoolboys of the Western world found it on the atlas it had been marked on the giant globes, now antique, in great private libraries and universities. It is even better known since it has become an air junction for many who fly over the continent of Africa.

Kano is old. Air passengers are reminded of its medieval associations as soon as they land and see the great white camel mounted by one of the Emir of Kano's magnificently gowned trumpeters who blows a terrific blast of welcome on his six-foot-long silvered trumpet.

Kano is very old. As a city it is known to have existed as a great trading centre over a thousand years ago—before the Normans conquered Britain. As a city it has changed very little over those years, even though travel from the coast now takes a few hours instead of the weeks it would have done then. Practically anything can still be found in the great market, money from any country can be exchanged. The old slave market, known for hundreds of years throughout the world, in particular in the Middle East, would be missed by those who knew it sixty years ago. It was abolished by the British immediately they came to power in 1903.

Kano is the capital of the province which bears its name. Economically this province is probably the wealthiest in Northern Nigeria. Its waning prosperity of sixty years ago has been revived by the ground-nuts—known as peanuts in the Western world—

which are cultivated wherever possible in the province; evidence of the enormous quantity which come to Kano for transit to the port of Lagos by rail can be seen for several months of the year in the gigantic pyramids of sacks of these nuts on the railways sidings. It is surprising to discover how few Europeans realize that the nut is not grown on vines, but beneath the ground in clusters on the root rather like potatoes. Until fifty years ago none were exported from the North. Then in 1912, with the railway opening for trade through Lagos—just ten years after the British took over the country—two thousand, five hundred tons were forwarded as a trial shipment. Today, with an export of about half a million tons, ground-nuts provide the mainstay of the economy of the Northern Region, as well as supplying one of the basic foods for the people.

To Kano are also brought thousands of hides from that and the adjoining provinces. Scores of these, stretched out like tapestry squares on great wooden frames, are often to be seen in the tannery yards beyond the city walls.

Outside the gates of the old city, trading posts were set up by British concerns within a few months of their army having taken the city; these now great trading companies are still there, buying and selling every conceivable kind of merchandise, as well as encouraging production.

The road which runs from Kaduna to Kano splits into two when it reaches Zaria; one going off to the west and round by way of Funtua, the other, shorter by about sixty miles, running direct north, but this is a dirt road, classified as a 'dry-season road' because in the rainy season parts get flooded or washed away—referred to as 'wash outs'. The dry season is between November and May.

Only once did I travel that road—the journey took as long, at times it takes even longer, than by the other. I found little of interest in its few villages until I was getting near to Kano when, crossing a river by a newly-made concrete bridge, looking ahead I saw that a white house had been built on the far bank, a house with cool verandas surrounding it, with large windows, shady terraces and trees, with sloping lawns and flower-beds running down to the water. This is the summer house of the Emir, a haven from the turmoil and incessant noise of Kano City; and for him the never-ending stream of visitors to his palace.

I heard voices from below, and glancing down on to the river saw what at first appeared to be dozens of super-giant dragon-flies on the water; suddenly they disappeared for a while. I stopped the car and got down. Then I saw the wings appear again, and I realized that the body of the supposed fly was in fact that of a man, the wings a pair of enormous nets stretched on great bamboo canes. There must have been twenty of these in the water. They were farmers who had come in the early evening to fish. Walking out slowly and carefully into the water, they lower their nets, dive under the water and scoop as they go, netting the fish. On the banks stood large calabash in which they store the catch.

In Argungu, on the Sokoto River, a fishing festival is held each January which the Sultan, the Emirs and dignatories attend together with hundreds of spectators. Then, scores of fishermen, like those I watched, take to the water, floating these giant calabash among them as they dive. Often a family will dive in unison, and for a while all that remains on the surface of the river are the floating calabash, light brown and looking like enormous oranges.

Often I have stood on the banks of the Kaduna River just before sunset and watched a fisherman swimming, or rather floating, face down, with his belly resting on a large calabash, and using his feet to propel him as he moved along a line of a hundred or more hooks floating just below the surface, taking off the fish caught during the day, and with an odd wriggle lifting himself off the open top of the calabash to drop them in, afterwards rebaiting the hooks for the night's catch.

Unfortunately so many of these floating fishermen finish their lives blind, for a minute fly which attacks the eyes skims over the water during the evening. Although these men know what may happen to them, they continue with their work, and encourage their sons to follow them—protected only by a Juju charm.

Even on the longer road from Zaria to Kano, when I first travelled over it, bridges made of wood—since replaced by higher ones of concrete—were washed away, and then one had to turn back for a day or more while an improvised one was made.

About half-way on this longer road I came upon a village I had been told about by those who knew that part. In the centre was a large deep pool in which lived some enormous crocodiles. The headman took me round and pointed out the heads of the sleeping

crocodiles, which, he said, were from six to eight feet long; they were among water lilies, on the leaves of which crawled many of their babies, for it was the season when the eggs hatched. I watched women go down to a place in the pool where the water weed had been cleared, and scoop up buckets of water to carry away. The old headman assured me that although the crocodiles, which he insisted were sacred and worshipped by the people, had their eyes open, and at times leave the water to wander over the ground round the pool and among the houses; they had never been known to attack a human being, not even a crawling baby. 'When they come from the water, we know they are wanting food. Then we kill an old goat and throw it to them,' he explained.

Some months later when I passed that way I saw that a new village had sprung up immediately in front of the old one. Then I came upon the other and saw that it had been deserted. The medical authorities had ordered its evacuation after a spate of malaria had been responsible for many deaths in the village. There was no doubt that malarial mosquitoes were breeding on the pond, but it was one which was difficult to spray because of the crocodiles.

Quite frequently between towns you come across villages which have been deserted for some reason, maybe sickness, or maybe the people believe that a Juju curse has been placed on it. At times one comes upon what at first appears to be a deserted village, but it is just a place where a weekly market is held. These consist of an open space, often shaded by great trees, with straw coverings resting on stakes driven into the ground, as roofs for those who come each market day with their goods. It seems that it was suddenly decided that this would be a good spot for a market; and within a year a hamlet will grow round it. The acute fellow who first finds the spot and builds the market stalls, encourages dealers to come, and puts himself in charge; as such he is respected and turned to by all traders and buyers for a settlement of any market dispute.

I remember coming upon one of these on a market day. It was difficult to believe that the place I had before seen apparently abandoned could come to life as it had. Hundreds of people had arrived from great distances, appearing from bush-paths I had imagined were never used. They came in lorries, on bicycles, a few farmers on horseback; there were a few old men and boys

leading heavily laden donkeys; but mostly they came on foot, the women carrying head-loads. The traders came with porters carrying their goods.

The sellers of each particular kind of merchandise or produce, be it vegetables and fruits, grains and flour, ropes of tobacco, enamel dishes, bowls and teapots, aluminium kettles and saucepans, wools, beads, silk scarves and hats, cloth and ready-made apparel, or dozens of other commodities, get as near as they can to each other, not to cut prices, but to see that none of the others do! This is most convenient when you are in a hurry to make a purchase, for there is no need to wander through the whole market searching for the stall with whatever you want. Many have their goods laid out on rush mats, others make a display on low benches which they have knocked together from old crates and left under the crude canopies from one market day to another; no one would steal them.

The market opens at about nine in the morning, and in order to arrive there by that hour many will have had to start from their homes before dawn. By four in the afternoon few people are left, except maybe the odd customer waiting for a garment to be finished off by the tailor who will have carried his sewing-machine, often on a stand, on his head to the market, and placed it conveniently near the cloth merchants' stalls. The mammies who came with chickens, eggs, freshly dug and washed cassava roots, a few fruits or garden vegetables, cooked cakes or other cooked foods, will have started back home as soon as they had disposed of their goods. None of the women, and few of the men or boys, have any desire to be far from their villages and on a lonely bush-path after nightfall.

The noise of these markets is like the buzzing of millions of bees, for although none of the traders 'shout' their wares as some do in European markets, everyone seems to want to out-talk the other, and there is so much to be said to those now living the other side of the market, such as girls married to a man from another village. Besides which, a purchase is not something to be made lightly, it takes time; the quality of the goods offered must first be decried, then the starting price is crazily high; and anyway, not to bargain and hear the really final 'That be the last price!' would mean losing face before friends standing by and intently watching and listening.

Behind the market is the place set aside for the slaughter of goats dragged to the market to be sold for meat, which is either taken away fresh-killed or cooked and eaten there. Not far off are the wood fires built on months accumulation of white ashes. The meat is cut into strips and threaded on wooden skewers about a foot long; these are stuck in the ashes in a circle, stockade fashion, round the fire, each stick of meat being turned as a side gets cooked, and before the final roasting it is dipped into a batter of palm oil mixed with cassava flour and grated ground-nuts; the result is delicious to any palate, be it African, Asian or European—or American.

And always there are the water-sellers. In some places they still wander round the market with fresh water in goat skins. Mostly, though, they squat near a well they have dug, or in a place to which water is carted from a stream or a pond; they store it in large calabash, selling it by the small bottle full. In the old days it used to be a calabash full for one tenth of a penny—coins no longer issued; now it costs a halfpenny; or even a penny for the same amount, if water is difficult to come by.

As I neared Yashi, where the road turns off left to Katsina and right to Kano, I saw numbers of the most extraordinary trees which appeared to be half dead with age. They were grotesque, naked-looking giants, their grey bark shot with pink; the branches looked as if they were growths and not branches from the trunk; they were thick as they forked from the trunk but tapered off sharply. The few leaves were mostly on the ends of those branches, and from these hung seed-pods—balls on the ends of long stalks which look like velvet drumsticks; many are said to be incredibly old. There is said to be one on the Kano road west of Teshena which is called Gerazo, and greatly respected; the people say that the fruit has not been picked for well over a thousand years. I never did find Teshena, but it is said that the people of that place also live to be more than a hundred; but maybe the years there are shorter than ours.

The baobab is quite a useful tree. From the bark is obtained a fibre which is used for making string and ropes. The leaves are cooked as a flavouring for soup; they are also said to have healing qualities when bandaged over a wound. The fruit is used to sweeten soups and food. The rind is burned to make a flavouring like chilli;

and, when mixed with oil, is rubbed into the coats of animals to kill the ticks. The ashes of the burned seeds within the fruit-pod are used to bleach the native-made cloth. Only the soft and pappy wood is of little use.

Kano has always been famed for its donkeys and camels; not so many camels are now to be seen, but as you come within a few miles of the city, there are hundreds of pack donkeys trudging along on the side of the road, where they have worn for themselves a second roadway away from the motor traffic and close under the overhanging trees.

Kano is a city which has held the imagination and fascinated explorers and travellers in the past coming from North Africa, and the Middle East, and it still fascinates those who travel those parts; even if they only step off from an aircraft for a few hours to look within the ancient, crumbling walls enclosing the old city area of about seven and a half square miles.

The story of the history of Kano, contained in the *Kano Chronicle*, an Arabic manuscript, traces the origin of the people to a giant ancestor named Dalla, who settled on the hill bearing his name. His descendant set up an idol there and became Chief Priest of a pagan religion called Tehunburburai. His successors were elected from among those with whom he had lived, the choice being the men who best knew the ritual of the religion; but with the passing of time none remained who were fit to be elected.

There followed a long period of lawlessness, and finally the Chief of Daura was asked for his advice and help. The story then reverts to that snake in the well, of the Queen of Daura who married its slayer, and of their sons, for the Chief of Daura had his eldest son Bagauda made Chief of Kano. It is also said that in his childhood Bagauda had been a favourite of his grandmother Takano, and had become known as Bagauda son of Takano. Some say Kano is derived from a shortening of that name.

During the fifteenth century the Fulani people started to arrive in those parts; but before that, in the fourteenth century, the Islamic Faith had been brought in by the Wangara from Melle: it was accepted by the Chiefs, who had mosques built; although even prior to that, during the eleventh century, 'missionaries from the East had come through Bornu to Kano to preach the Faith'. The most important of those Chiefs had been Rumfa, and during

his reign the power of Islam became very great, but after his death it waned, the people slipping back to fetish worship.

At the time Usuman dan Fodio, Sarkin Musulmi, declared the Jihad, he gave a flag to a Kano man named Sulemanu, who had once been a slave, and was then Liman or priest in Kano. 'Sulemanu joined in battle with Alwali, Chief of Kano, and defeated him,' whereupon the Sarkin Musulmi appointed him Emir of Kano. When Sulemanu died, he was succeeded not by a brother or son, but by Dabo, the Chief Fulani Liman; it was he who founded the present dynasty.

In February 1903, 'a British force under Colonel Morland, consisting of twenty-four officers, two medical officers, twelve British non-commissioned officers and seven hundred and twenty-two African rank and file, having rifles, four guns and four Maxim guns', arrived at the gates of the city to find them closed and defended against them. The mighty walls of Kano were forty feet thick at the base, thirty to fifty feet high, and surrounded by a great moat filled with water during the wet season and by an entanglement of bushes with swordlike thorns, three to five inches long, at other times. The Emir Aliyu had gone from the city to Sokoto a month before, leaving two slaves in command of the army. His enemies said that he had fled; his friends, that he had gone on a visit.

The Zaria Gate of Kano City was attacked by the British without success. The troops then made an onslaught upon the next gate, and in this made a small breach through which a party, led by Lieutenant Dyer, entered the city and immediately took possession of the Emir's Palace, a maze of buildings covering thirty-three acres and surrounded by a wall twenty feet high on the outside and fifteen feet high on the inside.

With the capture of the Palace, all resistance ceased. The British sustained fourteen wounded. How many casualties the defenders suffered was not recorded, and was probably unknown; but from that time all was quiet. It was occupied peacefully. 'The peoples remained in their city. They brought food to the troops. The British Commanders saw that they paid for that which they took from them,' the then British High Commissioner, Lord Lugard's report on the occupation reads, and goes on:

'. . . a very striking testimony to the discipline of the troops'

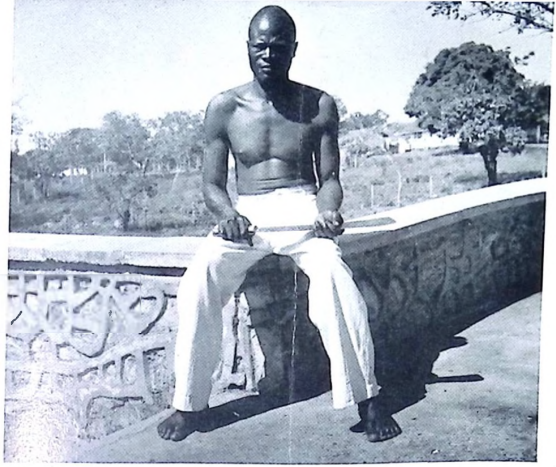
nineteenth century, refers to the eastern entrance of his house being 'guarded by eunuchs, of whom he has a great number, I suppose because the harem is on the eastern side'. The Yoruba—not Muslim—of whom there are large numbers in the south of the Region, also kept them, for Richard Lander, who travelled with Clapperton, tells how in that part 'free men, found guilty of larceny are operated upon, and retained by the King or his chiefs as guardians for their numerous wives . . . they are equal in value to five prime slaves'.

As I sat and talked to the old eunuch, he directed my attention with his chin—an odd way of pointing that some have in those parts—to a husky, begowned palace servant who was then passing and had saluted him, making the observation 'He is the son of my brother. My brother, who is now dead, he also was a eunuch here.' Then, as I must have looked bewildered, he added: 'He had a large family of boys.' To which I replied: 'Oh, I see, he adopted them all from time to time.'

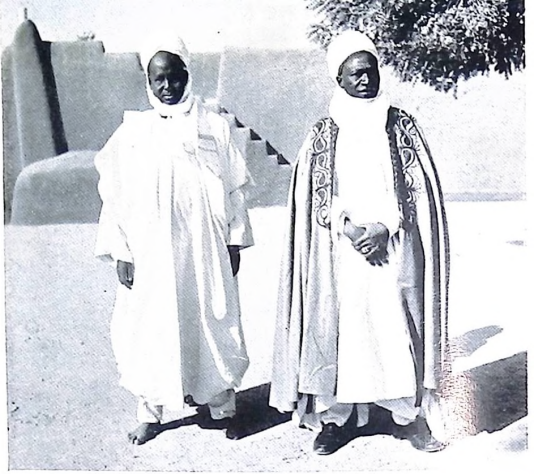
It was then that I heard something of the ghastly gelding sheds; the different methods undertaken there of either complete removal or crushing. So eager were these 'experts' to perform the money-making operation, and so long the waiting line of 'patients', that if in fear the testes of a young boy be withdrawn into his abdomen and could not immediately be forced down, only one was removed. 'The left is used for breeding; the right is needed to grow a beard and make hair on your chest. My brother did not grow a beard, he did not get hair on his chest, but for himself he made many strong sons' I was told. Well, I wonder if that is a fact, and if so how many men know it?

He told me that only about half of the boys and a quarter of the men survived the surgical operation—a higher percentage of successes than recorded in Zaria; but confirming the value of a eunuch in the Yoruba country. Probably these losses in the old Zaria were the reason for the non-surgical one being resorted to in Kano; maybe shock and pain does not kill. His knowledge of the effects, physically, physiologically and sexually, together with the methods resorted to in the 'manufacture' of eunuchs, which he had gathered over the years, was amazing. He always referred to the sheds as 'factories'.

The Emir's Palace stands in the same place as the one built by

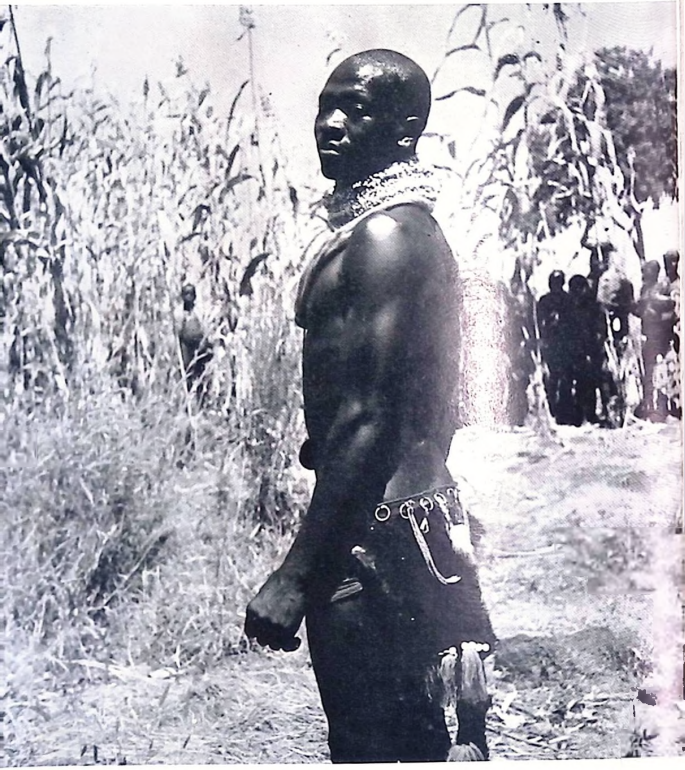


Above: 'Night watch' against 'tief mans'
Below: Entrance to Emir of Zaria's Palace



Above: The Emir of Katsina with his Chief Scribe
Below: The Emir of Katsina's grandson

Mounted Bornu horseman—note trousers



A Pagan buck dressed up for market day

Chief Rumfa when he moved from the hill of Dalla before the coming of the Fulani. The great brick gateway with its tower and adjoining rooms was built in more recent years, but the old walls stand as they always were, as do many of the buildings within them. Additions have been made to these, and some of the mud-built ones been made more permanent with cement facings, but the interiors of the Audience Chamber and the Royal apartments are much the same.

Before reaching the famous high-vaulted Audience Chamber, its lofty beamed ceiling and walls decorated with wide scrolls of silver and gold and many colours, its floors spread with glorious carpets over which a great lustred chandelier throws its light, the furnishings a mixture of ancient and modern—the golden throne flanked by gold Regency chairs, there are tree-shaded courtyards through which to pass.

When the Emir is in residence, his flag flies over the tower, and these courtyards are filled with many who seek an audience of him, either to make their salutations, or to seek his advice or favours; sometimes the latter wait for days. Standing round are many palace servants, bodyguards, attendants and messengers, all wearing the voluminous blood-red and grass-green patchwork patterned rigas, the two colours being divided by orange stripes; and the red swathed turbans, which form the uniform of those in the service of the Emir of Kano. Here and there stand snorting, stamping horses, many with gaily-coloured and silver-decorated saddles and trappings which tinkle like bells as, never ceasing, the horses swish their tails and fling their heads in an endeavour to free themselves from the hundreds of tormenting flies.

Turbans are worn by those of many countries, but the Northern Nigerian, who calls it a rawnni, winds his in a different way to the others, since he has to protect his face against the powder-fine red Harmatan dust-storms which sweep off the Sahara during certain seasons. The men of each province have a different style of rawnni; some winding them straight on to the head; others over a cap or fez foundation. The usual width of material used is about a yard; the length varies, normally it is five yards, but Emirs, Chiefs and wealthy men might use up to ten yards; when using fine muslin, twice that.

The Chief Rumfa introduced, into the palace ceremonial,

slippers which are decorated with ostrich plumes. They are still worn by the Royal family of Kano, and it is forbidden for others to do so. On ceremonial occasions the Emir carries two slim spears, about five feet long and tied together, as a mark of his rank, instead of the usual walking stick or staff. This originates from 1134 when twin brothers, Nawata and Gawata, reigned together. On the death of one, the other took his spear and tied it to his own. From that time all Chiefs, Kings and Emirs of Kano have carried the double spear.

The custom of the ruler wearing ostrich-feathered slippers and carrying the double spears died for a while. In 1807 when Sulemanu became the first Emir of Kano, he chose to sit on a carpet and not a chair or couch in his Council and Audience Chambers. But twelve years later, when Dabo succeeded him, he obtained permission from the Sarkin Musulmi again to wear the slippers, carry the twin spears and use a chair or couch to sit on. The Emir Dabo then added yet another custom, this being that while he scrambled up on his couch to seat himself in a dignified position, his attendants, standing before him, tucked their arms into their voluminous sleeves and raised them like great wings, thus screening him from the view of those gathered before him.

The most colourful spectacles, reminders of the medieval pageantry of the Middle East and the Sudan, in which the Emir participates in all his ancestral glory, are the Sallahs, the Mohammedan's principal religious festivals of the year. Of the two celebrated in Kano, the one referred to as the 'lesser Sallah' is the most fabulous. This takes place following the first appearance of the moon after the month's Fast of Ramadan, during which fast none of the Faithful may permit food or drink to pass their lips, or have sexual intercourse during the daylight hours (the light being judged either by being able to see the lines in the palms of the hands or by distinguishing between a black and a white thread).

At the feast following this self-denial, the Muslim puts on his finest gown and all of them go to the great Mosque. There, in the great open area surrounding it they await the arrival of the Emir and the Imam to lead them in prayer. Following the service, each man turns and embraces his neighbour, then the members of his family and his friends, and then all go to the Palace, led by the Emir mounted on a stallion and under his enormous State um-

brella carried by an attendant; ahead go his 'praise singers' or heralds, acclaiming his magnificence, his greatness, his strength and wealth. Flanking him are his drummers and trumpeters. Following him, all mounted on richly caparisoned horses with jingling trappings, and some with horse-mantles, are his councillors and important retainers; immediately behind him a riderless horse is led by a groom.

This riderless horse is a relic of the days when Chief Rumfa of Kano went to war with Katsina, and the horse on which he was mounted was killed beneath him. After that time, a spare horse was always available immediately behind the Emir. In these days an Emir's wealth and standing are judged by the number of unmounted horses following him; and those which are most popular for this purpose by the wealthiest among them are albino, the most costly of all in Northern Nigeria.

After the mounted procession come thousands of people. At the Palace entrance the Emir turns, the horsemen line up facing him at a distance. Then all together, with spears or clenched fists raised in salute, they charge towards him, to wheel off at the last moment. The Salla is over. The Emir enters his Palace. The people return to their homes to feast. Whole sheep, which have been fattened for weeks against this day, are eaten and parts given to the poor.

Then come the games. Wrestling, famous in these parts where in the old days the match did not finish until one of the contestants was dead or unconscious; dancing, and of course drumming, which goes on and on for hours, often the whole night through.

And for the older people, past dancing and wrestling, there is always the story-teller, an honourable profession; often through these men has come some of the history of the past. They are also clever actors, and if you are unable to follow the words, you can follow the story by the actions. Some even enliven it with a song. One of these old story-tellers, to whom I listened fascinated on more than one occasion, always finished off his recital dramatically with a proverb in Hausa. It was interesting to discover that not a few of these were similar to those I had before heard in English; probably they were left over from the Victorian age when the missionaries first came to the North. There were proverbs like 'Jini ya fi ruwa guibi', meaning 'Blood is thicker than water' or 'Rigakafi ya fi magani', meaning 'Prevention is better than cure'.

Some no doubt originated in those parts, like 'In ka ga mutum a rana ka gaishe shi', meaning 'If you see a man working in the sun, salute him' or one probably coined at the time of the abolition of slavery, 'Da, de ne, ko da talauchi ya same shi', meaning 'A free man is still free for all that he is poor'.

To one side of the outer walls of the palace, in a great open space dotted with large trees, stands the mosque. The one that I had seen there during the war years had been built about one hundred and forty years before; this was made of mud, as are the hundreds of houses which surrounded it. Then in 1943 the foundation stone was laid for the new mosque of which the people of Kano are now very proud. It is a magnificent cream building of stone and concrete; its great glazed green dome can be seen from all over the drab red-brown city.

From the top of one of the two beautifully designed minarets I could see far outside the city walls, over the whole of the grounds of the Emir's Palace, and between the buildings of which runs a covered way from the Royal apartments to the gate in the wall opposite the side entrance to the Mosque. I looked down on the round and square flat-roofed houses of the mud city below; from where I stood they looked like a box of children's toy bricks scattered on the carpet. They were like the houses I had seen in Zaria, but here so many of them had great spearhead-shaped decorations as upper corner stones shooting to the heavens. There were two gigantic pools called tanks, one near the mosque, and each surrounded with a waist-high, goffered, whitewashed, mud wall, while, in the green-covered water, boys were bathing and washing clothes. Towards the north I could see one of the largest open markets in the world, and one of the oldest. In this stand the long lines of flat-roofed, mud-built, open-fronted stalls as they stood maybe a thousand years ago.

Away to the east I could make out a great whitewashed gateway into the city, and to the north and south of this others of the thirteen old gateways. Just before, and near one gateway, the area is raised many feet above the ground level; on this are planted great straw umbrella shapes, under each of which a man sits on the ground patiently dipping lengths of cloth into the great dye pit which used to be filled with vegetable indigo dye, the plant grown in the country, now often containing chemical dye. The straw tops

used as sunshades by the workers form lids to the pits at night. From nearby sheds come thuds so regular that it seems a wooden water-wheel must be striking a base board. Here men will be found sitting on the ground and whacking, with great wooden truncheons, a length of dyed cloth being slowly drawn over a tree-trunk roller by a boy. This treatment gives the cloth the mottled sheen beloved by the wealthy men of the North for their rawnnis.

From not far away come great thuds as empty tar barrels are knocked into sheet-iron from which 'new' trunks are made, and in yet another part a gentle tap, tap as copper and silver is fashioned into everything from rings and bangles to copper trays and bowls for visitors to buy. Then there are more urgent hammerings from the many sandal- and saddle-maker's shops, and close by, the quiet is broken only by the mutterings of workers who hand-stitch dozens of decorative and useful leather goods ranging from wallets and purses to travel and handbags.

Still further, and outside the walls among the Europeans' houses, stands the solidly-built Residency surrounded by a shaded garden; with the visitors' book in a nearby decorative round-house which has a beautifully painted vaulted ceiling. Before reaching the Residency from the Zaria Gate, on an island site, is an old, large, unpretentious mud house within a high-walled compound. Often the Emir's Rolls Royce will be seen standing outside, for this is the house to which he escapes for peace and quiet. It is called The Emir's House.

I also met two quite famous British people who had spent most of their lives in that city or roundabouts. One was the Rev. Dr. George Bargery, a missionary who had come to the Northern Region on the heels of Lugard. His name will go down in history together with that of Dr. Miller, who translated the Bible into Hausa, for Bargery compiled the now invaluable *Hausa-English Dictionary*. I was glad that I saw him then, even though it was only as he entrained at Kano for Lagos on his final retirement. But what shook me later was to find how few educated Nigerians appeared to appreciate the great value of his work, especially now that they are taking part in world affairs and need English. None I talked to about him seemed to know that he had almost completed the Dictionary when it was lost in a fire, and he was forced to patiently start all over again. A very grand old man.

The other was Miss Ethel Miller, the missionary sister of the late Dr. Miller. She had first arrived in the North in 1907. She was famous in Kano of recent years because she still insisted on riding her bicycle round the town. This might well have been the one she rode from Zungeru to Zaria when, together with the Bishop on a horse, and his wife (who refused to use the hammock and trotted beside them along the rough and dusty new dry road), they were followed by dozens of porters with their head-loads. I had first met Miss Miller during the war years; she was a very busy woman then, but by now she was in retirement, living in the same bungalow on the edge of the town, a small three-roomed, flat-roofed one built of mud. Close by lived one of her past students who acted as a servant and 'kept an eye on her', not that she needed it, for although frail, she was most active. She had given a lifetime to Hausaland. I found her to be most interesting in her reminiscences of the past, when, although not a doctor, she was forced by circumstances to give what medical assistance she could to those amongst whom she worked and sought to convert and teach. I never failed to call on her when I visited Kano where she had become an institution among the British residents. A wonderful old lady who, at long last, most reluctantly, returned to England.

Katsina

AN all-weather road connects the capitals of Kano and Katsina. Along it passes a considerable amount of traffic, for the city of Katsina suffers from a lack of a railway and uses Kano railway-station to carry goods and produce to and from the south.

The province is one of the smaller of the thirteen in the Northern Region; its size roughly matches that of Wales, and it is as though clasped between Sokoto and Kano Provinces. But Katsina City was important even before Kano City as a terminal of the old great Trans-Saharan trade route coming from Agades and Tripoli. It has the distinction of being closer to the frontier of the Niger Republic than any of the others, being only twenty miles away.

That would never have worried the men of Katsina though. They are a tough race, and I can confirm this since my 'night watch' in Kaduna came from those parts, and he was a formidable-looking gigantic fellow who had seen service with the British Forces in Burma. He used to sit outside my house at night, wearing only white slacks and with an enormous ominous-looking macheti resting across his knees: the mere sight of him was sufficient to put off any 'tief mans'.

The members of the Katsina Royal family are not big, but they are wiry and among them, and also among the men of the province, are to be found some of the finest horsemen in Northern Nigeria. Very seldom is the Katsina Polo Team beaten, and a team can always be found from among the Emir's family. I was fortunate in that I already knew the Emir Alhaji Sir Usman Nagogo, having

met him in Katsina during the last war, and again in India when he was on his way to visit the Northern Nigerian troops in Burma. In a report made soon after he was called to the throne, I find him referred to as 'one of the most up-to-date and intelligent Emirs in Nigeria, who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca as well as many visits to the United Kingdom'. The same might well have been said of his father.

The pilgrimage to Mecca by a Nigerian Muslim confers upon him the courtesy form of address of Alhaji. Alhaji, like a Service rank, comes before a title, so that quite a number of Emirs and Ministers of the Region who have made the pilgrimage and also been knighted, bear the address and title of Alhaji Sir...

As with the other palaces, that of Katsina stands much as it was first built; but now with a few additions including a new brick frontispiece with a great gateway a short distance before the new Audience and Council Chamber. Outside the door squatted two husky bodyguards wearing the Emir's red and green colours in rigas; one had what looked like a cat-o'-nine-tails, the other, a large curved sword. They jumped up as, while I was mounting the steps, the young secretary of the Emir came to meet me. As he led me into the Council Chamber, the Emir, wearing a simple white riga and rawnni, came to greet me, afterwards introducing me to his councillors and advisers.

Most of them spoke most excellent English, as does the Emir, which did not surprise me, for it was in Katsina in March 1922 that Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor then in the Northern Region, opened the Katsina College for the teacher training of Muslims; it had actually been started in 1921. This particular city had been chosen for the project because it had always been referred to in the past as 'The University City', the student scholars from there 'being renowned for their erudition and piety'. It had reached its zenith in the eighteenth century. An old manuscript of the early eighteenth century referred to it as 'The chief city of Hausaland, pre-eminent in both learning and commerce.' Barth, a German explorer who visited the city in the middle of the nineteenth century, wrote in his journal 'here that state of civilization which has been called forth by contact with the Arabs seems to have reached its highest degree, and as has the Hausa language here attained the greatest richness of form and the most refined pronunciation, so

also the manners of Katsina were distinguished by superior politeness from those of the other towns of Hausa'.

The first principal of the College was G. A. J. Bieneman, whose mud house with its foot-thick walls is just across the road from his old college; still in use, it is known as Gidan Bieneman. The college buildings also still stand, the thick mud walls and rounded, turreted entrance faced with cement to prevent damage during the rains. The course of training lasted for five years. The first intake of students numbered fifty, and they came from all over the Region. In those days there was no motor transport; the nearest railway-station was at Kano, over a hundred miles away, so they had to come on foot or horseback; those who had been sent from places like Yola and Bornu having hundreds of miles to cover; from Sokoto, a distance of one hundred and seventy miles which took seven full days to walk. Some students brought their wives and children.

The staff consisted of four British and two African masters. The students had been selected by their Local Authorities, and so low was the cost of living in those days that their allowance of thirty shillings a month was considered sufficient to meet the additional expenses. Although they were grown men, corporal punishment was inflicted upon them and 'some future ministerial bodies stung hotly from the bulala wielded by a lusty and unsympathetic African member of the staff. The emphasis of the training was on the shaping of character. The purpose was to train leaders.' And this was certainly attained. Through its portals passed Nigeria's first Prime Minister; the Northern Region's first Premier, its first Nigerian Governor, its first Nigerian Resident, and many Ministers, including of course the Minister for Education, Alhaji Isa Kaita, OBE—a Katsina man; in addition, the permanent Representative of Nigeria in the United Nations.

One seldom makes a mistake when you comment 'You must have been to Katsina College' on hearing a now middle-aged Northern Nigerian speaking beautiful English, for he will always tell you that he never left the Region for his education. The rich deep African inflexion in the English spoken by certain political leaders from the North is referred to as the 'Golden voice' or the 'Silver voice' on the Nigerian Radio. Much of the credit for this goes to Gerald Power who 'showed his students how to use tongue,

lips and mouth in order to acquire a faultless manner of speech.' Proof of his success is now heard when his past students speak at conferences or on the radio, not only in their own country, but all over the world.

A record I discovered described the first prize-giving when 'Mallam Ahmed Mettenden Kano received a bicycle for his high standard of spoken English'. Well, that saved him footslogging the hundred and eight miles back to Kano each holiday or at the end of the course. He must have been the envy of many, including 'Mallam Zailani Zaria who was given books as a second prize.' Poor fellow, he had nearly twice as far to go by road.

In the old days Mallam was an address reserved for Muslim teachers, and Alhaji replaces Mallam after the pilgrimage to Mecca. In these days it is given as a compliment, flattery, to Muslims, just as Esquire is added to the names of those in most countries where English is spoken.

Through these teachers trained in Katsina, that 'superior politeness', referred to by Barth, has spread throughout the Northern Region. During my last tour I found it often, even on occasions which those Europeans who had lived there for some time might have overlooked. For instance, if during my tours a Northerner asked whether there was anything he could do for me, and said that he was at my disposal while I was in his part of the country, he really did mean it. Also I found that until those I stayed with discovered that I could understand their language, they never, in my presence, spoke other than English; if I happened to enter a room, they would change their conversation from Hausa to English.

The inner part of the palace which contains the Royal apartments, within the old wall, is kept in a fine state of preservation, especially the private Audience Chamber and study of the Emir. The whole of one wall of this room consists of a glass case crammed with the silver cups and trophies won by the Emir and his family at polo. On the walls above the great case, forming a dado, are old prints of polo scenes. All around are easy chairs and settees, the floor spread with priceless rugs: a room which might have been lifted from an old English hunting-lodge.

Polo has become the wealthy man's sport in Northern Nigeria, much as it was in Northern India. There is not a male member of

the Emir's family who does not ride. When I was there his favourite grandson (obviously the favourite of the bodyguard also), the son of one of his daughters married into the Royal House of Kano, had his own polo pony and was being taught how to ride by his grandfather. The boy looked about three years of age, but no Shetland pony for him.

I was shown round the palace after examining the cups, pictures and guns. We went from the room through inner and outer courts; all a complete maze needing a guide. In the courtyards the Emir's superb horses were each tethered to a stake in the ground; they had worn circles as they went round and round. We went through inner chambers where the walls were hung with beautifully maintained harness; some used for ceremonial occasions and others, for the polo field. Then we came to the end of the passage at the top of which were the Emir's personal apartments. At that moment the bodyguard, who had gone ahead of us, stopped and opened a large, heavy wooden door in the high, brown mud wall at the side.

The sight within was breathtaking. A great courtyard of the old palace had been transformed into an English garden. In the centre had been built a modern white bungalow with a red roof, its deep veranda, led to by wide steps, had standing on it a canopied garden settee and gaily striped chairs were spread about. Designed by a Britisher who had lived for a long time in the climate of Katsina, this bungalow had incorporated into it all that one could wish for in order not to suffer as he, and other Europeans, had done in the past. The lovely garden had been laid out by a retired British Major who, although then in Nigeria, had lived and served in India for many years and discovered which of the English flowers would flourish in a tropical climate, flowers like zinnias, verbena, salvia, balsam and petunias. The bungalow had been furnished, carpeted and curtained by London's most famous stores. The servants were Katsina men who had long served British officials, and must then have been the envy of many a European official's wife.

Although it had been constructed for only a short time, the garden was already established; flowering creepers like honeysuckle and broken hearts, which have delicate white flowers with blood-red centres, were fast covering the drab high mud walls surrounding it; climbing roses fast hiding the arches and making a secluded

arbor. A large fountain was then being completed in the centre of the garden so that its clouds of spray could cool the still air.

Birds had already found the garden, probably attracted by its glorious colours and the fragrant scent from trusses of white jasmine. Among them, as always, were the doves, small, sleek and grey with an undershade of shell pink; a pair of Barbary shrike, blue and amusing in their almost drunken rolling flight; hornbills, with parrot-like thick yellow beaks; also large numbers of tiny wrens, among them dozens of Cordon bleu with brown backs and Cambridge-blue breasts; with them were some nervous tiny red minivet who spent their time in darting flight under the eaves of the bungalow and in the arbor, catching flies.

Here the Emir of Katsina compliments his personal friends and certain of his official guests by offering them hospitality within his palace, even though there is quite a good Catering Rest House just outside the city walls.

The old walls of the city of Katsina still stand—gigantic in parts; it seems that the winds and the rains will never destroy them. I was taken round the city by a dignified, elderly and friendly Muslim who was introduced to me by the Emir's secretary. He explained that the secret of the hardness of the walls lay in their having been built of mud mixed with bullocks' blood; certainly they were darker in colour than those I had seen elsewhere. He showed me the house where Lugard had first lived when he entered the city after its capture, and the Kofar Yandaka gate through which he had passed: outside the gate is a block on which is mounted a plaque to commemorate this. My guide told me that together with his brothers, then all small boys, he had stood on the wall and watched the British troops march in. His father had been the Emir of Katsina, and confirmed in his appointment by the British, but later deposed in favour of a member of a rival family; the new Emir had proved to be a less satisfactory ruler, and was deprived of the office. A representative of a Fulani clan, not a member of the hereditary dynasty, was then appointed to the post.

I next had a surprise much as I had experienced in Sokoto at the prison gates; he told me that although the Emir is of that family, he, my guide, the son of the deposed Emir Abu Bakr, was now the Emir of Katsina's trusted Chief Scribe. What an example of the

amazing tolerence of the Northern Nigerian; surely in few places in the world could this happen.

Next he took me to another historical building which has been protected by cement facing from the ravages of time. This is the Gobirau Minaret. It was made of mud, and the craftsmen who built it are believed to have done so in the fifteenth century. It is a high tower tapering from ground to summit, with an outside stairway winding round and leading to an entrance near the top. This is all that remains of what was once a large Habe Mosque said to have been built on that site by a revered saint who, legend relates, was able to see Mecca from the top of the Minaret.

In the old European settlement outside the city gates, there still stood several of the mud, two-storied houses which had been occupied by British officials until well past the end of the last World War. Most of them were empty, for the ex-patriots, as the British are now called in Nigeria, had moved into modern bungalows, and the Nigerian officials, who were gradually taking their places, often felt that they would lose face by moving into houses discarded by their predecessors. So now most of those old gardens, which had been the pride of many a Colonial Civil Servant and his wife, are overgrown; the drives lost among weeds; while the gardens of the modern bungalows occupied by those Europeans who remain are a blaze of colour.

Yet when I talked to the Britishers who had before lived in the old mud, thick-walled houses, they all agreed that they were cooler and 'to an extent more comfortable with their lofty ceilings and vast floor space. The disadvantage was that when they were modernized vermin appeared to be attracted to them.'

If by vermin they mean beetles and flies, I can agree, for it will be many years before I forget a dinner party at which I was a guest in one of these old houses in Kano which still stand and are occupied. It was then the season for cantharides beetles and flying ants. The dining-room was invaded by these beetles, commonly known as Spanish fly. These are bright, iridescent, bluish-coloured flying beetles over half an inch long. I felt one crawling on my neck, and quickly brushed it off, but not before it had spat its acid on my neck and hand. Thinking little of it, and thankful that I had not been stung, I just wiped the place with my handkerchief and left it. Next morning when I woke up the places were sore and

covered with water blisters. I had to walk round for days with them painted violet by the doctor who afterwards bandaged them to prevent the water bursting from them reinfecting other parts. It took over an hour to swat all the flying beetles in that room; there must have been a hundred of them.

It is from this particular flying beetle—but not, I imagine, from the acid—that a powerful, costly aphrodisiac is produced or manufactured; one very popular in the Middle East. I was told that Katsina and Kano periodically suffer an invasion by swarms of cantharides beetles. Maybe the traders who are there have not yet heard of that potential Middle East market, for I heard of no export of them from Northern Nigeria.

Katsina was one of the old Hausa states which, in the past, had one of the sons of the King and Queen of Daura (who were involved in the snake story) as its Chief. The capital of Daura, the smallest of the two Emirates of which Katsina Province is composed, is the place where the episode of the evil snake in the well took place. I was shown the well in which it is said to have lived to terrify the people. I was also shown the sword with which the Makas Sarki slew the snake. It was his son Kumaye who founded Katsina City.

The Emir of Daura, Alhaji Abdurraham, on January 31st 1962, at the age of eighty-two, celebrated his golden jubilee. He was then the last survivor of the Chiefs appointed by Lord Lugard, the first British High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria. On this jubilee occasion, those who came to visit him were shown the letter of appointment he had received fifty years before, together with the Emir's first alkyabba and, of course, the famous sword.

But the city of Katsina is not to be outdone by Daura, and I was shown another sword there. This had belonged to Korau, who succeeded to the throne of Katsina after he had slain King Sanva in a wrestling match centuries ago.

Jidda Yaki was the last Chief of the first period of Katsina history. 'He was killed by guile at a feast by his successor, a Mallam who was a Mandigan, and who gave to the language a number of words and also names.'

There appears to be little doubt that the Wangara reigned from the middle of the fifteenth century. The ruling Sarki or King was never allowed to die of old age or ill-health. He was killed by an

official called Kariagiwa. The new King was elected 'by throwing a spear into the ground; if the spear remained upright whilst the name of the one among the chosen candidates was called, then it was he who would be Sarki'. Which of course meant that he who cast the spear must have collected some wonderful bribes in his lifetime.

The new King was then carried to a couch and a black ox was slaughtered above him, the blood drenching him. The skin of the ox was taken to the palace and into it was put the body of the killed King. It was dragged to the burial place; the body placed in an upright position.

After some time this selective method was set aside and the new rulers were nominated by three Chiefs who selected them alternately from the two dynasties. It is interesting to find that in one of these dynasties, the Durbawa, descent passed through the female line.

Bornu

HISTORY records that, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Katsina was disputed between the Kingdom of Songhay to the west, and the Kingdom of Bornu to the east. Bornu is the fourth of the provinces of Northern Nigeria with a frontier on the Niger Republic.

It is now but a remnant of the great empire that it once was, 'embracing all the land between the banks of the Nile to the east and the Niger on the west, from Fezzan in the north to Dikoe in the south—Bornu's influence extended over the whole of the Sahara. A kingdom was certainly well established there by the eleventh century, for then a copy of the Koran, together with a turban, sword, spears and shields, bows and arrows and rich armour was sent to the ruler of Bornu by Umaru, second successor to Mohammad the Prophet. The messenger was received with honour, and sent his Arab companions to preach the Faith in Kano and Katsina.'

The history of Bornu goes back through successes and failures, victories and defeats; the capital being moved from one place to another as the empire extended, and then retracted with Chiefs declaring their independence.

Early in the nineteenth century the Fulani, in the course of their Jihad, attacked Bornu, and the King fled from his capital. It was then that the powerful Sheikh Muhammad El Amin El Kanemi came to his assistance and defeated the Fulani, thus saving the kingdom for his master, although the capital city was never recovered.

In 1814 El Kanemi founded Kukawa as the new capital of Bornu, for by that time, although he would take no title other than 'Servant of God', he had become the real ruler of the country; yet permitting the effete Sef King to retain his title. On the death of El Kanemi, the King tried to reassert himself and called on the Wadaians, who had been his traditional foes, to overthrow Omar, El Kanemi's son and successor. But the King's forces were defeated, and he was captured and executed in 1846 as a traitor to his country. His son, the last of the Sefs, was killed in battle; with his death there ended a dynasty which had reigned for close on twelve hundred years.

Omar then succeeded as Shehu—or King, and Kukawa, the capital of Bornu 'became an important trading centre'. But bad times were ahead for Bornu, and in spite of 'a standing army of seven thousand warriors, the Wadaians ravaged the country. In 1893 the country fell an easy prey to Rabeh,' a ruthless lieutenant of Zubehr Pasha, a notorious Sudanese slave raider, 'who routed the Bornuese army and advanced on Kukawa, the capital, utterly destroying it—one of the largest cities of the Sudan'. Today it is but a small village; among the ruins, which have almost disappeared, there remain the graves of the past Shehus of Bornu.

It was then recorded that 'The coward Sheikh Alaimi fled before them, but was assassinated in punishment for his poltoonery by order of his cousin Kiari who then, as self-appointed Sheikh, marched against Rabeh and inflicted a defeat upon him. Unfortunately the army scattered to loot, and Rabeh, reorganizing his men, turned defeat into victory. Kiari was captured and put to death; his entire army was utterly destroyed; and still Rabeh's vengeance was not complete until he had utterly exterminated the whole population of that district.' I quote this passage to show how absolute and merciless was war in the Southern Sudan in those days.

The terrible Rabeh now reigned over Bornu. He could only be described as a War Lord for, out of an estimated population of one hundred thousand, he kept a regular army of twenty thousand, and, of these, nearly five thousand carried firearms, 'parading before him on every Friday morning'. But 'in 1900 Rabeh was defeated by the French in a battle near Kusseri. There he lost his life. His son Fad El Allah reformed what forces he could, but he too was killed the following year.'

Meanwhile the dynasty of El Kanemu, 'the servant of God', in the person of Garbai had been restored to the throne, an appointment made by the French before they evacuated the country. In 1902 the British 'effectively occupied the country', and in 1904, when Sir Francis—later Lord—Lugard, as British High Commissioner, visited Bornu, he formally installed Garbai as Shehu. The capital was then moved to where it now stands, Maiduguri.

So it was that Bornu was never a part of the great Fulani Empire of the nineteenth century. It remained apart, but gradually shrank. Those travellers who passed that way in the middle ages told of its fabulous wealth, of gold plate in the Royal palace, of its great armies with wondrous equipment; the men and horses protected by quilted cotton and chain armour.

Again quoting Leo Africanus's journal written after he had been there in the sixteenth century, he said of the King of Bornu: 'The King seemeth to be marvellous rich, for his spurres, his bridles, platters, dishes, pots and other vessels wherein his meate and drinks are brought to the table, are all of pure golde; yea and the chaines of his dogs and hounds are of golde also. Howbeit this King is extreemly courteous, for he had much rather pay his debts in slaves than in golde.' And in another part of his journal he tells how 'The King of Bornu sent for the merchants of Barbary, and willed them to bring him great store of horses, for in this country they used to exchange horses for slaves, and to give fifteen and sometimes twenty slaves for one horse.' But when they delivered the horses, the merchants of Barbary had to wait until the King returned home 'conquerour with a great number of captives and satisfied his creditors for the horses'.

There are records of the King of Bornu's thousands of slaves and eunuchs, many of whom held positions of trust. Caravans of captives moved north from there to the great slave markets in Tripoli, two thousand miles away by the old slave route.

And what of that fabulous kingdom which 'covered all that country between the Sudan, Egypt, the Middle East and Negroland'? Where is it now? It has shrunk to become one of the thirteen provinces forming the Northern Region of Nigeria; it has but a fraction of its former power and fortune. Yet to this day few Fulani, other than Cattle Fulani who wander there to find water and graz-

ing for their herds, are to be seen in the province, the people of which speak their own tongue, Kanuri.

On my first visit to Maiduguri, during the war years, I had flown in from Kano to an airstrip which was then being constructed as a staging post between Lagos and the Middle East. I recollect that I bought a pair of crocodile shoes made by a Maiduguri shoemaker 'trained in London fashions'; for these I paid him one pound, not having the time to bargain with him. I still have them, perfectly made apart from the soles which were waved like the sea, and I had to have them resoled in England before I could wear them.

My second visit to Maiduguri was made by road, when I went through from Kano. On that particular tour I recollect seeing great clumps of white lilies with violet stripes, these beautiful Crinum lilies grow on short stems out of the bare ground, which appeared smooth and like hardened silt; it was in low-lying country, just after the rains. In the North, just before the rains start to bring life and green back to the bare gardens, the borders of many bungalow drives are brightened with golden-orange lilies much the same shape, but these will have been planted there. These are called Harmatan lilies, since it is at the time of the year when the hot, dry, powder-like orange-red dust is being blown down from the Sahara over the Northern Region by the Harmatan winds that these always appear.

Also on that tour, stopping in a village, I noticed a man sitting on the ground with two short horns apparently growing out from just under his shoulder-blades. I got out of the car to examine this freak of nature, only to discover that he was the patient of a barber-doctor who was then drawing 'bad blood' from this farmer who, he told me, was suffering from a 'weakness'. It was obviously the listlessness or utter exhaustion of one who was middle-aged and could not appreciate that he was unable to undertake all the duties, whether for work or pleasure, that he had previously found so easy to perform.

The patient was bare to the waist. The 'doctor' had placed, over the part he complained of, the end of a cow's horn, six or seven inches long, with a hole bored in the tip, and pressed the trumpet end hard into the skin. Bending down, he then started to suck hard at the hole, and continued to suck until each time his cheeks

disappeared between his cheek-bones and jaw. After a while he removed the horn to show all who stood round watching the operation, and apparently to the patient's delight, how great an amount of 'badness' must be there to have made such a large mountain. Into this he made a deep incision; blood oozed, and again he placed the horn over the cut and started to suck; after a while he took his lips away and deftly stuffed the hole in the tip with a small wad of cotton wool. The horn remained on the patient's back for about a quarter of an hour before it was carefully removed, the thick congealing blood it contained being poured away into a hole scraped out of the sandy earth close at hand. 'This be bad blood,' the 'doctor' assured me. 'I know this black blood. Him be getting plenty bad sickness out from this boy. This sickness, him all done finish now!' The patient declared that he felt strong again and gladly paid the fee demanded, a few pence, which he took from the cloth round his waist; and, picking up his heavy load, lifted it on to his head and went striding away. These doctors cannot be called humbugs, for they really believe that they have done the patient some good. I saw one patient, quite an old man, sitting with five horns on his back. I suppose 'Him was getting past all bad blood'!

Maiduguri is a city which, together with the European quarter, has its streets lined with great neim trees. The leaves of these are much like those of the willow. Probably it is the fluttering of these slim leaves in the slightest movement of air which keeps the air cool beneath it. These leaves are said to have certain medicinal qualities when boiled. Europeans dry those which fall and pack them among any rugs or carpets they are storing away for the Harmatan season or sending home, since they are known to be an excellent insecticide.

During my first evening there I drove round the town's outer fringe. Here the roads are wide, the square mud and thatched houses set far back within high-walled compounds and among the trees. What struck me was the number of women standing at the entrances of those compounds with such friendly smiles; it was such a change from the indifferent attitude of the women of other cities. It was some time before I realized that they were 'inviting smiles'—that I had been going through 'a certain quarter', as one Nigerian official I dined with that evening called it. But I wonder if

the morals of Bornu have really changed much since the days of Major Denham who, between 1822 and 1824, together with Captain Clapperton, led an expedition into Bornu. Then in his journal he wrote 'Adultery is not common; the punishment is very severe if caught in the act and secured on the spot; and this is the only evidence on which a conviction is granted. The guilty couple are bound hand and foot, cast on the ground, and their brains dashed out by the clubs of the injured husband and his male relations.'

The people of Bornu are Kanuri. Their women wear full smock-like sleeved tunic blouses and wrapped cloth skirts. They have a distinctive fashion of hairdressing; their frizzy hair is done into hundreds of tiny plaits; those in front and at the side hang down like a fringe of black spaghetti, while quite often an extra-thick one, looking like a tail, hangs over the forehead and on to the nose. The hair on top of the head is also plaited, but drawn up to form a cock's comb. Women who can boast of a good head of hair have these cocks' combs at the sides of the head also. They always wear gold ear-rings.

That evening I again saw the shoemaker who had sold me those shoes twenty years back on the airstrip. But now he had a smart shop in the city. He still sold crocodile skin shoes, but had since discovered their worth, and his prices were sky high. The soles were no longer like the waves of the sea.

Just round the corner from his shop were other shoemakers; they were dissecting the layers of rubber and cord from old motor tyres; and making them into sandals, cutting the treads as soles. These shoes looked even more uncomfortable than my wavy ones, for so fashioned from the treads they were boat-shaped. Thousands of them are sold in those sandy parts of the country.

The palace of the Shehu is, like all the other oldish buildings, made of mud, and has, like the other palaces, recently had a completely new frontispiece built before it, the red-brick turreted central tower having set in it an enormous clock; one which had stopped at nine o'clock for many weeks; so large is the face of this clock that it appears to dwarf the tower.

The white-bearded, benevolent-looking Shehu Alhaji Sir Umar Ibn Elkanemi was elderly and had failing sight; but, unlike the kings of old, knew that however aged, sick or blind he might become, his councillors would support him; and, since the British

came to power, none would think to put him to death in order to usurp his position.

Although then frail and almost blind, the Shehu had insisted, during the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Nigeria, that he should ride before 'my Queen at the head of my Bornu contingent' at the great Durbar given in her honour. Later, at the time of Northern Nigeria's Self-Government celebrations, I watched him at the Kaduna Durbar being led to the dais to sit with important visitors and political leaders supporting the Queen's representative, the Duke of Gloucester; I heard how annoyed he had been that his doctors had forbidden him to join with the other Emirs and Chiefs who again rode past the Royal party. But when Princess Alexandra of Kent came to the Northern Region at the time of Nigeria's Independence, the Shehu, then nearly ninety years of age, had no need to go to Kaduna; for two Durbars were held in her honour; one by the Sultan of Sokoto in his capital city, and the other by the Shehu in Maiduguri, where he was able to receive the Queen's representative in his own palace. By that time the giant clock was again working.

The Durbars in Bornu are especially picturesque, for then all the medieval costumes and accoutrements are displayed; the gowns of the riders expansive and a mass of flowing colour; as are the mantles of the horses, many of which also wear trousers, and are built up with sheep-skins over the saddles so that their shape is all but lost beneath it. Most interesting of all is the chain armour, some of which is believed to have come down from the Crusaders of old.

One Katsina College voice will seldom be heard in Maiduguri now. When I last visited that city he was Waziri of Bornu. Sir Kashim Ibrahim has since become the first Nigerian Governor of Northern Nigeria.

The River Ngadda, which finds its way into Lake Chad—a part of which comes into Bornu Province—runs through the capital, but almost disappears during the dry season. Water has, however, been found not too far below the surface, and bore-holes have been driven into the ground for artesian wells. Hot water occasionally comes up from these. As I arrived, a bore-hole with hot water had been tapped in a place between the city and the old European quarter. Realizing the value of this, the town council had washer-

men's ghats built in concrete, rather like a salmon ladder, with a six-inch inflow pipe leading to the top section, and the water flowing down through the others. During the evening, when the washing is finished, these become a seething mass of naked, shouting men and screaming boys bathing, while farther down cars and lorries are washed, the dirty water soaked up by the sandy soil around.

Although, because of lack of water, there are large tracts of unproductive soil, Bornu grows considerable quantities of millet, cotton and ground-nuts, while ground unfit for cultivation is used for grazing cattle; this results in the export of large numbers of hides and skins. Like Sokoto and Katsina, Maiduguri suffered from the lack of a railway, and, until recently, the nearest stations were a greater distance away than those of the other most northern provincial capitals; the result was that a considerable amount of produce was exported by lorries to the north through the old French territory.

For the traveller to leave Bornu without seeing Lake Chad would be unforgivable. This great inland freshwater lake is eight hundred feet above sea level, and fed by two large rivers; one from the south and the other from the north, as well as several smaller ones. Only in the southern part is there any depth, and then seldom more than about eight feet. I first saw the lake from the air during the last war when flying from Maiduguri to Fort Lamy. It did not impress me.

The next time I saw it I went by Kit-car. There were no large villages close to the water; only a few huts built under trees growing on mounds which would survive the floods brought by the strong winds occasionally blowing over the lake from the north. There are sandy shores, reeds of all kinds everywhere and plenty of waterbird life, like duck, stork, red-crested crane and huge prophet birds; there are scores of covies of partridge and hundreds of guinea-fowl. The fishermen are physically a grand bunch, with strong, wide shoulders and backs developed by poling the craft over the waters; I am told that they earn a fair living from the lake. These Chad fishermen use canoes which they make from papyrus reeds lashed together, shaped much like a gigantic truss of straw scooped out in the middle and with rounded bulwarks tied every foot of the length, and the prow turned up. Their life can be but a few

months. I confess to being scared that the craft in which I went would not keep afloat for long; the muddy water of the lake looked, and smelt, most uninviting and was doubtless full of many crawling creatures and probably even snakes. Although as a lake boat kadyas have survived the centuries, I still cannot understand how, loaded with the two or three fishermen which they usually carry, they do not become waterlogged and sink within the hour.

Often I saw these boats, looking like great floating straw mattresses, staked with up to a dozen sacks of dried fish, being poled by a couple of fishermen towards the great tree under which I was sitting, having made the journey of twelve or maybe fifteen miles over the lake. Only those men who live on the lake can find the landing-places, or backwaters from which paths lead to the main road. They told me that they were guided by the trees, for each tree, even though it be of the same species, has its own individual shape. Here also, in the event of a storm, they know they will find a few feet of higher ground on which to shelter until the weather changes.

Considerable quantities of fish are dried on the lake shores, and then, tied up in man-size grass-matting bundles, carried away on pack donkeys over the tracks from the lake to waiting lorries and sent all over the province and the country.

The Plateau

IT IS seldom many months before the European, newly arrived in the Northern Region, finds his or her way to Jos for a short spell of leave, particularly during the Harmatan and the dry season.

Jos is the headquarters of Plateau Province, and stands 4,250 feet above sea level. There are roads from north, south, east and west leading to Jos, which is practically in the centre of the Region. Railway lines from Port Harcourt and from Lagos run to Jos; here is to be found the highest airport in Nigeria. Jos is a modern town; here none of the old crumbling city walls are to be found, for, but sixty years ago, it was just a village which had grown from a wayside market then called 'Guash'; a name corrupted to Jos by the Hausa traders who first went there.

The Plateau was one of the strongholds of the pagans. Jos has a Chief, not an Emir, and one who, though a Christian, is not ashamed of his pagan ancestry. He is not a spiritual leader as are some of the Emirs. The costume he wears is dignified, but has none of the flamboyance of those worn by the Sultan and the Emirs with whom he sits in the House of Chiefs. He has no palace; his Chief's house in Jos might be the home of any wealthy Nigerian trader.

Jos is said to have been sited where it is because of its superiority of beauty to the landscape of Bukuru; this is really the heart of the mining industry, upon which the Plateau's prosperity is based. Here in Jos, among the great silver-grey volcanic and granite formations, are fertile fields and vast tracts of grassland, not

unlike those of the moors of England. And among these have been built some of the most delightful bungalows and houses in the North, with seemingly ever-flowering gardens shaded by glorious trees, among them many clumps of pines. It is a joy to get away from the heat of the plains and to enter a house with a fireplace which really can be, and is, used.

Hill Station, one of the few hotels in the North, is more like a country house with its thatched roof and lovely garden. It created in me, and I am sure it does in most Europeans who visit it, a nostalgia for home as one breathes the flower-scented, clean, cool air and gazes for far too short a time at the glorious sunsets seen through the soothing valley of smooth elephant-grey rocks set in a backcloth of green broken, here and there, by clumps of blue firs and orange-flowering bushes. Sitting on the hotel terrace with a drink at one's side and yesterday's air-mail edition of a London newspaper in your hand, it is easy to forget the heat and frustrations of the plains such a short distance away.

The road from Kaduna makes a pleasant run, except during the wet season, when those parts which are not tarred down the centre turn from corrugated red laterite, over which you must skim to save being bumped up and down, to a slithering mass of mud. It passes between large fields of corn, yams, cassava and ground-nuts; in the lower parts there are fields of cotton and tobacco, for here the land and climate is suited to both these crops and is also convenient for the markets of Kaduna for cotton and Zaria for tobacco. In the cotton-picking season, when the women move from one bush to another with loose collecting bags hanging like sacks from their shoulders, temporary collecting centres are set up near the markets. To these, the farmers bring their cotton crops in enormous pokes carried on the backs of donkeys. In the grass-matting walled compound the cotton is examined, graded by an expert and after weighing resacked and stacked under a grass-mat roof to await the cotton-mill lorries.

As it reaches the foothills, the road starts to wind, running between large old trees, round hills of weathered rocks, among thick scrub and bush, over small single-track bridges, many safety rails having been broken by lorries, especially where they are on a bend in the road, where many have been sited. You pass a large mission station, then on towards the crest of the escarpment;

coming out over it you see ahead the snaking brown road running through coarse grass-covered moorlands to the town of Jos away in the distance; easy to pick out with the roofs of its bungalows and shops shimmering like silver in the sunlight.

It is not until you reach Jos town, after going over a tricky single-track bridge with a double turn on it as it spans a deep rock ravine, that you come upon the glorious gardens of the Europeans' houses with climbing roses, delphiniums, lupins, stocks, antirrhinums and great bushes of lavender which you had found it impossible to grow on the plains. Here apples and pears and strawberries are cultivated, as well as many sub-tropical fruits. The precious potato grows here also, and from the Plateau large quantities of them are sent all over Nigeria, even down to Lagos. Here grow cabbages and lettuces—with hearts—spring greens and brussels sprouts; all so much appreciated after months of eating the tinned peas or heartless lettuces you get so excited about when you have managed to germinate and grow them in Kaduna.

Here also can be had cows' fresh milk and cream. Only those who have lived for months on dried milk can appreciate what this can mean to a European who would never think to buy milk from the Fulani herds after having heard that the women, after washing the calabash, rinse it out in cow's urine to encourage the curdling of the milk. This pure milk and cream comes from Vom, not far off from Jos, with its Government Agricultural centre and great herds of cows producing hundreds of gallons of milk which are turned into butter. The skim used to be run off into the gutters until someone had the idea to turn it into dried milk for its protein content value to the child clinics.

In the area around the Governor's cottage, the Rest House, Hill Station Hotel and the Residency, there are dozens of European houses and bungalows. English children play in the gardens; white babies sleep in their cribs under trees or on verandas. And then suddenly you realize that you are in Africa, reminded of it by a string of pagan African women passing with head-loads, and black babies tied to their backs. But they are different to those seen in Kaduna, Sokoto, Kano or Bornu; these women have shaven heads, many of them smoke pipes, have large holes bored in the lobes of their ears; into these have been pushed sticks thicker than a

cigarette and half as long. They walk barefoot; and wrapped round their bodies from above the knees to the chest are lengths of unbleached cloth; these look most strange and give them an ostrich-like appearance, for from behind and under the cloth, stems of green leaves protrude.

These women belong to one of the many pagan tribes in the Plateau Province. Their natural dress is just a bunch of leaves behind them, if they are married; if not, one in front as well. They believe that clothes are prejudicial to childbirth, the one thing in their lives that is necessary to ensure happiness, for of what use is a wife who cannot bear her husband's sons? But the Government, in all its wisdom, decided that visitors might be shocked, and so—in Jos anyway—these women have to wear cloths to cover themselves. But as you pass them in the fields just outside the town boundary, you see them at work, bending over and hoeing and digging and planting, and then, impatient of the encumbrance of the wretched cloth, they will have cast it off; and there they work naked, with only their behinds covered by a bunch of leaves.

None of the Europeans take the slightest notice of them after a few weeks in the country. These women are most particular about their 'dress' though, for each day they gather fresh leaves; you will never see half-dead ones being used. Just like the Gwari women who walk daily to Kaduna, these naked pagans have sometimes come from miles around with wood and vegetables or baskets which they have made, knowing that Jos is a good market.

Besides being a hill station holiday resort, Jos is more famed outside the Northern Region as the tin-mining centre. Yet sixty years ago the secret of where the Hausa traders were finding tin was a closely guarded secret. The first Europeans went to the Plateau in search of it at the beginning of the century; in 1902 the Niger Company Mines Department, hearing rumours of its source, sent two expeditions to the Plateau in search of the tin metal they were then purchasing from the traders; but these expeditions failed in their task of discovery. Then a year later Colonel Laws became the first European to climb to the top of the Plateau. He spent Christmas in Bukuru, nine miles from Jos.

The tin traded by the Africans at Iba had come from smelting

furnaces constructed at Lireien Delma and Lireien Kano by a guild of Hausa smelters. It was run off from the furnaces into moulds which had been made of damp ashes pressed round a number of straws set side by side. The rods of tin which came from these were about a foot long and of course a straw thick. They were tied in bundles of one hundred and sold for prices varying from eighteen hundred to two thousand cowries—something like one shilling and twopence or one shilling and fourpence. Cowrie shells were then the currency of the country. In 1903 fifty-nine pounds of tin was purchased; by 1957 the production of the mines was 13,600 tons.

Most of the mines are worked by large companies, but here and there lone miners who hold a concession are to be found. The only indication that one such small mine might be at the other end of a track leading from the main road is a small board at the entrance of it bearing the owner's name. Following this you come upon a clump of trees, within it a bungalow, usually having a surrounding veranda, and with buildings behind; still farther back is the open-cast mine. I am told that these miners are far from poor; and if their wealth can be judged from the cars outside the bungalows, there is little doubt about it. In these one-man mines the owner is an expert in all branches, including marketing.

The majority of the large mines are on the Bukuru side, south of Jos; the place to which Colonel Laws had come. Here a town has grown up, with its railway-, lorry-, and bus-station, and many European houses, mostly in their own reserved areas. As in Jos there is a club and also a swimming-pool. Life in either of the towns can indeed be good with these facilities and the pleasant climate.

The open mines can be seen from great distances; they are easy to pick out with their giant walking-type of drag lines, the lattice structures set at an angle and stretching to the sky. From the end of these hang the grabs with steel teeth which cut deep into the sides of the quarry and scoop the ore to lift it into waiting trucks. Fortunately there is usually a plentiful supply of water with which to wash the ore. In many places there are great ponds where the ore has been excavated and water has collected, thus forming reserve tanks from which to pump in times of shortage. I watched the Africans, both men and women, carrying the ore in flat pans

like inverted dustbin lids on their heads; watched men raking the ore through the sluices. Most of these people are pagans. The younger men wear shorts and sleeveless shirts, the older men just have loincloths; all go barefoot; the soles of their feet must be harder than leather, for they appear to be immune to any pain from banging their toes on rocks.

Most of the mining companies have set up complete villages for their workers; these are built much like army lines, with a canteen and a club for the men. But there are other workers who prefer to live in their own villages, of which there are a number in the area. In these, each house has its own compound surrounded by a six- to eight-foot-high hedge of thorned cacti, so that the entire village becomes like a barbed-in fortress, with narrow lanes only just wide enough for a small truck to pass through. These cacti have a small wax-like blossom which pushes its way out among the thorns growing from the edge of the long vertical buttress that forms this pole-like cactus. To extend the hedge, all that is necessary is to pull off a branch from the main stem, push it into whatever ground can be found, and in a few days it will have rooted. Although these stems can be broken off like ripe rhubarb stalks, the long thorns which stick out make a perfect protection against human and animal intruders.

Within Plateau Province there are two Emirates, each with its own Native Authority and its own separate Treasury. One of these is at Wase in the Lowland Division, the other in Kanem in the Pankshin Division, which with Jos is set on the high plateau. Pankshin town is better known to Europeans, especially those who live on the plateau, for here the Government maintain a lovely garden which has long been a favourite spot for picnics and popular during week-ends.

On the way to Pankshin I had to pass through Panyam. Here the Government have a great fishery, with about two hundred and fifty acres of water from which twenty tons or more of fish are caught each year, fish which are choice eating; of their kind there are none to be had elsewhere in Nigeria.

I had taken the wrong road from Bukuru; the only signpost I found had been knocked down, and two of the shafts, including the one marked Panyam, were missing. Neither the driver nor I knew the other place-names, nor were they on our map. We drove on;

and then in the distance saw three people working in the fields; the road turned, and soon we were close upon them. We stopped and called to them, and the two men came towards us, leaving the woman to carry on with her hoeing. Only then did I see that, whereas one of them wore a pair of tattered shorts, the other was completely naked except for a plaited-straw penis sheath. Regardless of his nudity, both came up to the car. They were able to direct us on our way, the naked one offering to accompany us to our destination, saying that he had an uncle living there. I wondered what my host, and more so my hostess, would have said if, on unloading my luggage, I had also disgorged this fellow on the doorstep. I was afterwards to discover that she would not have been shocked after having lived for many years in that area.

I then asked the other one why he was not 'dressed' as his brother, at which he immediately retorted that he was, but he also wore shorts because his last master—since returned to England—had insisted that he wore them when he was working. I could well appreciate this, since the pagan had been a gardener in a European household in the heart of Jos.

I was not the only guest in the bungalow. The other was an American who announced his profession simply as an anthropologist; one of many I had met with among the Americans in Nigeria. He was then travelling on a scholarship, assigned to him by one of what must be a large number of Trusts or Foundations formed in U.S.A. for those fortunate ones who can manage to secure their help.

My story about the naked pagan immediately brought forth the most amazing and fantastic stories from our host about pagans on the Plateau; and opening a drawer in his desk he displayed the most interesting collection of different designs of sheaths carefully laid out like delicate butterflies in a collector's show-case. He explained that he was getting these together for his brother, a doctor, who was writing a thesis on the subject, reminding us that Nigeria was only one of the many countries in which they were still worn.

My suggestion that many displayed were no longer in use was brushed aside. The following day, being a market day in a large village not many miles away, we were taken there in his utility

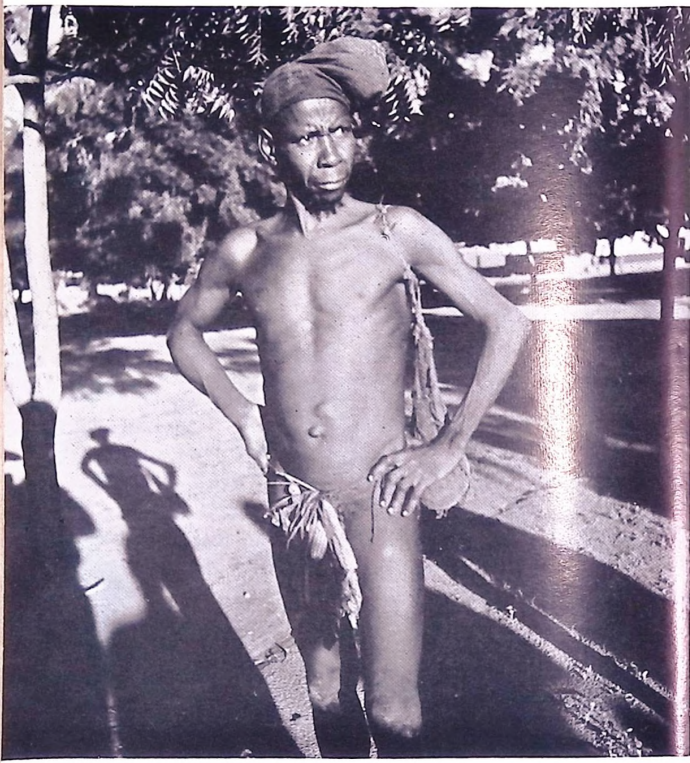
truck over what proved to be a track along which, in line, we followed a number of lorries which got stuck in the mud every few miles. Yet these lorries made that journey every week, for in this market were to be bought large quantities of potatoes at about a third of the price they would fetch in Jos, and a tenth of what they would be sold for in Lagos. They had gone to carry traders with cloth and metal or enamel pots and pans and to fetch potatoes; we to see the naked pagans, not, as I explained, that I was particularly interested; but I carried my cameras with me, as always.

I doubt if Europeans go to that market other than occasionally; if one went to the village at any other time, it would appear just like any other Plateau village; the people all clothed, though in the differing costumes of the tribes. It is only on market day that the naked pagan farmers from miles around come to sell their produce and buy anything they need; the only item of clothing they are likely to buy would be a blanket as protection against the rain, although I did see one wearing a tattered jacket: another wore a slouch hat, carried a walking stick, had a knapsack over his shoulder, and that was all—except for a sheath.

What amazed our American friend (who was unique among his countrymen abroad, in that having used up all his special films and anxiously awaiting a new consignment from U.S.A., he carried no cameras) was that these pagans were delighted to be singled out to have their photographs taken. Many were so anxious to become targets that they pushed forward; one returned with a friend he had found in the market who did not want to be missed; I discovered that he had been encouraged to do so by having seen others through my reflex camera viewfinder. In all they were most co-operative.

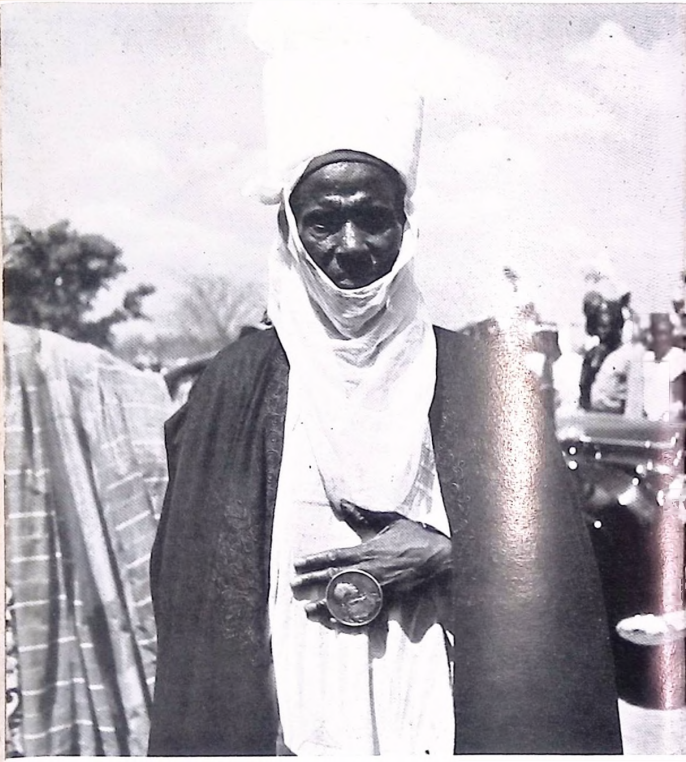
Such designs of sheaths and improvisations I had never imagined could be used for the purpose. There were, among the most favoured, the top of a cow's horn; several had a foot-long antelope's horn held alert by a cord round the waist to which the tip was attached; a few used the curved stalk end of a calabash gourd; one had found the most suitable to be the cut-off neck of a wine bottle—complete with cork; many had chosen to use a large leaf folded like a bell-tent and held together with a long thorn. No one in this part of the Plateau favoured the plaited-straw type I had

Above: A duck-billed woman with baby on her back
Below: The primitive rock paintings



The Yola pagan

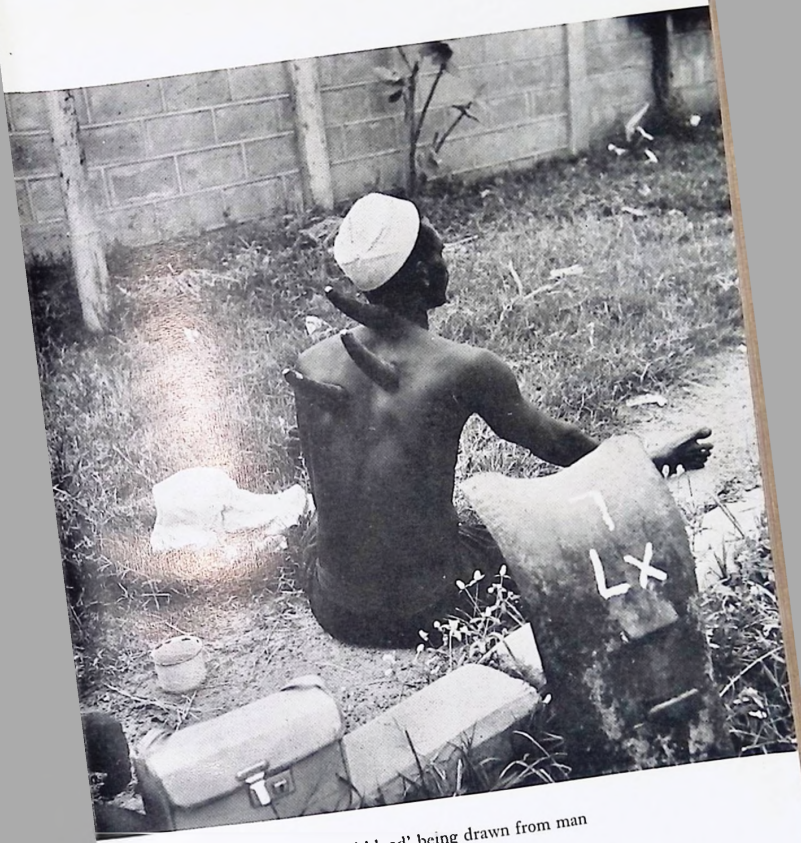
Above: Hausa children eating mangoes
Below: Pagan village children



The Emir of Borgu with Mungo Park ring

The Emir Umaru Maidubu of Kontagora

Above: The Emir of Lafia trying a pagan for murder
Below: Kola nuts



'Bad blood' being drawn from man

A young Pagan tribesman

seen before; but one old man, who came from a few days' journey away to visit his daughter, sported a similar pattern made of leather.

Although without his camera, the anthropologist was determined to have some proof, as he referred to it—'some souvenir'—of his visit, and had our host's driver make a bid for one of these; but though the man asked many of the pagans, none would part with theirs. In the end he was offering such a high price—something like two shillings—that one man was on the point of changing his mind when his friends protested and he immediately refused. The reason? 'These men all say for him, how can he walk about afterwards in this market and on his way home all naked?' And the anthropologist had to be content with finding out how the leaf type, in particular, was held in position. 'The thorn stitches it to his pecker!', he had in all seriousness explained to me.

As far as I am aware there is no written evidence of their methods; but we managed to discover their secret. The organ is pressed into the abdomen; the leaf, already shaped and stitched with the thorn, is placed over the part; internal pressure then forces the organ to be released to grip itself within the sheath. It is as simple as that.

The reason for wearing them brought varying explanations. Some gave the usual answer 'It is our custom', others simply said that they did it because their fathers and grandfathers had done so just as soon as they reached the age when they were fit for marriage. One said they were to protect 'the tender parts' against thorns. Others explained that they wore them for the sake of decency. Others, probably those who went to the evening Adult Education classes which I was next day to see when many attended and laboriously copied letters and figures from a blackboard, explained that it was to prevent flies carrying woman disease from any stranger to them. 'But why from a stranger?' 'Because only strangers bring disease!' These pagans insist that they are themselves free of venereal disease, and it is their intention to remain so. When they do contact it and finally concede that it is not a cold (as it is always thought to be) then always strangers and flies, never themselves, are to blame. Only one other cause could be responsible, and that is that it could be a juju curse; but even that would be difficult to cast upon them if they remained covered.

The variety of dress worn by the pagan women in this part included what looked like a fan-shaped handbrush in place of the bunch of leaves; some wore a short kilt of hand-woven cloth.

Absolutely no notice was taken of these naked pagans as they moved about the market, selling to or buying from both men and women traders. They have been a common sight to these 'strangers' from the day that they came to this part. The only amusement over any new fashion in a sheath was among the Muslim and Christian lorry-drivers from Jos; I suspect that this was only because of our presence. It was strange that one had no feelings of embarrassment, disgust, or thoughts that decency had been offended by these pagans appearing in the market as they were. To clothe them—in their present environment—would be to emulate Victorian fig-leaf morals. They are perfectly happy as they are; they are healthy, many possessing magnificent physique. Later, as they become educated, they will themselves no doubt begin to buy the ready-made shorts or bathing slips sold in the market; but whether wearing them will leave them as morally healthy is questionable, for I am assured that their present standard of morals is high.

Roughly eighty miles to the north-east of Jos lies the walled city of Bauchi. There is an excellent road to it. From the start of the run this passes through some delightful highland country, over escarpments of rocks now hidden between trees which shade it; the view is brightened by glittering streams which race down the hillsides, over waterfalls framed by trees whose roots are washed bare and look like aged claw-like hands clutching at the rocks. Then suddenly the waters flow smoothly as they reach tiny valleys where dozens of flowers grow among the silted land on either side. On the heights of one such escarpment, which was once a natural fortification wall to that part, I came upon what might have been a pagan idol rock; now old, it was still tended by someone, for four rough sticks held above it a canopy of reeds; the stones surrounding the strangely natural-shaped rock had been painted white.

There were the usual small markets; in one place by the roadside under the shade of trees, men were stretching out a warp of coarse cotton spun in with goat-hair; close by, another man was

working a hand-made loom with which he was weaving, as his people had done for so many centuries, strips of cloth about nine inches wide, which, when completed would be sewn, side by side with five or six others made with the same pattern, into a blanket, much the same as I had seen wrapped around the Sokoto prison guide.

About ten miles out of Jos the road crosses the boundary into Bauchi Province. Here, in a province much reduced in shape and size from what it was once, many tribes are gathered; maybe having been driven first to the west by the rulers of Bornu, then to the east by the Fulani Jihad, and from the south by those who sought slaves to sell to the Arabs from the north. The country is lovely in parts, with fertile ground, and there is little doubt that the wealth of the province will increase now that the railway to Jos and the seaports has been opened up to its produce.

After being about two hours on the road, I saw a signpost on red-stone directing those who might be interested to the Geji Rock Paintings. I turned in and drove through the bush over a rough track little different to any bush road, except that in places concrete slabs had been built over deep streams and concrete bottoms made under fords; but there appeared no sign that cars had recently been that way. Then I came upon a pagan village surrounded by fields, and almost hidden behind the tall stems of millet; but as there was no sign of life, I drove on.

About a mile farther on, nowhere near a village, I heard high-pitched voices, and looking away to the left saw a great mass of blackish rock on which sat dozens of women with their legs stretched out before them. As I got closer they ceased their shouting to one another and looked at me. I stopped the car and quite expected that as I got down from it they would leap to their feet and run into the bush as the cattle boys had done; but none started the stampede and I went on towards them, stopping some distance away.

Suddenly the giggles and chatter broke out again, and they started working once more. They were pounding the softish rock into dust from which mud would be made for the floors of houses and for corn stores; probably pottery also. I had heard that this particular clay-like rock, which had been found most excellent for these jobs, was to be found in the district. Some of the women had

their babies sleeping on their backs; but from a distance it was quite impossible to tell baby from black goat-skin which, with its fore legs over the mother's shoulders and hind legs round her waist, all tied together in front, held the baby in the sack behind.

The women wore bunches of leaves only, nothing else, but I had to get closer to them to discover what it was that each wore on her head. I found that the hair had been plastered down with a caking of this mud which had become hard and made it appear as if they were wearing shrapnel helmets. It was set for life. Besides this they were quite different from any other pagan women I had ever seen, for it seemed that they had large cream-coloured lips; I had stumbled upon the tribe the women of which are known as duck-billed. When the girls are quite young they have slits cut in the upper and lower lips, and into these are pushed wooden plugs about two inches in diameter; as the slits heal large plugs are inserted, then larger ones still, until some of the older women wore plugs four or even five inches across, with the lips still stretched round them like ropes.

When I came to their village a short distance on, the headman, who was one of the Adult Education teachers, showed me a plug which was the next day to be inserted into a woman's lips. It was made of a smooth hardwood; shaped like a fishing-rod spool or a flattened-down cotton reel, the flanges preventing the surrounding lip from slipping out. The women eat with these in; it seems that they are never removed unless larger ones are inserted, and a woman's beauty is judged by the size of plug she wears in her lips. Many also had wooden plugs in their ear lobes.

The odd thing is that the husbands, in that tribe anyway, wear clothes; even in the fields they wear shorts or a cloth and, when not working, pull on short-sleeved shirts. Some work for the Government or for contractors; on the roads as labourers or even driving trucks and other mechanical devices; no one would imagine that they have duck-billed wives who wear only a bunch of leaves, tilling their bush farms while they earn hard cash for these jobs. Some of the men have now reached the stage when they can read and write and even understand maps and engine charts.

And what, I asked one of them, is the reason for this custom? He

said that in the old days among their own people the women of this tribe were considered to be very beautiful. The slave raiders sought them out because of their good looks; and so, to make them less attractive to the slavers and to ensure their being rejected by them, these lip plugs were introduced into the tribe by the elders. And why, I asked a woman of the tribe I later met, do they continue to do this, since slave raiding ended over half a century ago? She replied 'Maybe because those older women who had suffered the disfigurement could not bear to see younger women looking as beautiful as they might well have been.' Anyway, although I was told that only deep in the bush does this custom continue, as I again returned to the main road, I came upon two women walking towards me from the wayside market. Both wore 'shrapnel-helmet' coiffures, both had extra-large lip plugs—one had ear plugs also—and neither made any attempt to make 'for bush' as I passed. Neither yet had babies, they were both comely young women and, as we passed, laughed and waved to us.

Some weeks later when I was in Jos, I met a good-looking young Nigerian woman wearing European-style clothes, her hair smartly styled, serving behind the counter of a European shop. She told me that she came from near that village; that her mother and her aunts wore lip plugs, but that her father, who had never forgotten that his twin sister had died from blood poisoning after the operation, would not allow either her or her sisters to suffer it. She laughed as she told me how she had cried and pleaded with him to allow her to have it done, how she had refused to take food or water for days in a desperate effort to make him change his mind since she would always be different from the other girls of her tribe.

Now, mission-educated and married to a lay preacher, she was glad that her father had refused to agree to his daughters being mutilated in following tribal custom; although she confessed that occasionally when she went 'home', she felt that she no longer belonged to the tribe. It was she who suggested to me the reason for the barbarous custom continuing. As I spoke to her it was indeed difficult to realize that she was but a generation away from those primitive bush people of whom she had been born and by whom she had been reared until but a few years back; and that only a decade of education had brought about this difference between her and them.

I had asked the headman of the village about the rock paintings; he pointed farther on along the track. He knew about them and declared that they had been executed by a tribe of his people many years ago. But how did he know that they were his people who had drawn them? Because they were in his district, therefore they must have been his people. That is how so many conclusions are arrived at in Nigeria. Simply because a tribe had settled for the past sixty years in one place, since they felt secure under the British, they imagine that they have always been there. With some of the pagans who live in the hills it is likely, for few of them were driven from their fortress strongholds; but it is not so with others.

At last I found the place under the great rock face where the road ended; here the bush had been cut down to make a circle in which to turn a car. I scrambled up over the rocks and through the bush and scrub by way of a nearly overgrown rough path. A snake slithered almost from under my feet; the rocks were damp and a few shiny dun-coloured lizards scampered away, for here the rock hung over the pathway.

Then I came upon what looked like a monkey cage which had been erected by the Government, in front of a platform built of stones. Behind the wires of the cage was a smooth rock which sloped outwards as it gained height; it was a light-brown colour, and had been protected by the overhanging cliff from the dampness; a trickle of water passed down to one side. I could make out faint paintings upon the rock surface; they had been drawn in two shades of red and brown. These are of animals and appear to be either of roan or maybe a goat, an antelope, two monkeys, some cows and a horse. So far it has not been found possible to fix the year or years when they were painted. It may well be that they were done at different times, which would confuse the experts who have suggested that the painters worked on these about one thousand years ago; although the horse would have been added after A.D. 1100, since horses are believed to have been unknown in Nigeria until that time.

It was not surprising to discover that none of the ordinary people, even in Bauchi, which is but a few miles farther on along the main road, knew of the existence of these rock paintings; but it did surprise me that so few of the educated people, including

students, displayed little interest, let alone enthusiasm concerning them. At times it was as though they were ashamed of their existence. They just could not appreciate that here was definite proof of a certain culture among the men of that land a thousand or more years ago.

Bauchi and Gombe

BAUCHI Province, which has changed its shape and size over the years, at one time had the Lowland Division of the present Plateau Province within its boundary. Adjoining Bornu Province, as it does, it became the buffer between the forces of Bornu and those of the Fulani during the Jihad of the early nineteenth century.

Its history is interesting in that Yakubu, the first Emir of Bauchi, was not a Fulani. He was born of Gerawa parents in 1753; but even so he was given a flag by the Sarkin Musulmi. The story of how this came about was written by a tutor of the Emir's sons. He tells how a wise teacher, Mallam Isiku, came to live near Truin, where a native of those parts, named Dali, became his friend. 'One day Dali, to prove his friendship, gave to Mallam Isiku, Yakubu, one of his many sons, since the Mallam had none, and he charged him to treat him as a son and as a pupil, and he charged his son to look upon the Mallam as his father. From that time Yukubu was always with Mallam Isiku, carrying the Mallam's books on all his journeys with him.' Eventually, when the boy was eighteen years of age, he went with the Mallam to Usuman dan Fodio, and they became his pupils. After seven years Mallam Isiku returned home and left Yakubu with the great teacher with whom he lived until 1792, 'gaining his confidence and affection by his help during the first battles of the Jihad.' Usuman dan Fodio then sent him to his own country to ascertain which of the people would follow under his standard in a holy war. Yakubu discovered that, although those of his own family refused to do so, others

would; later he was among those chosen by the Sarkin Musulmi to carry a flag and charged with conquering that part of Hausaland for the Faith.

In the space of eight years he subdued a vast area which was far greater than is now covered by the Province of Bauchi. He then turned to help the Emir of Kano in his wars against the Bornuese. In 1809 he laid the foundations of the present city of Bauchi, where he ruled for forty years as Emir until he died at the age of eighty. During that time, so just was his rule that only one tribe revolted against him.

But, as so often happened when the sons of the original flag-bearers succeeded, they were not the successful rulers their fathers had been; during the reign of Ibrahima, Yakubu's son, three great tribes threw off his rule, and the unfortunate Emir abdicated in favour of his son. Then family conflicts started up with the uncle disputing the succession. 'He brought foreign troops from Messau, and defeated the new Emir after sanguinary combat at Bauchi, where whole quarters of the town were ruined.' Despite his victory, after a few years the new Emir suffered the humiliation of being deposed by the Sultan of Sokoto, who as Sarkin Musulmi was paramount in the Fulani Empire. In his place Umaru, another grandson of the founder, became Emir. From all accounts he was a tyrant, loathed for his cruelty and extortions from the populace over whom he ruled. 'He made an attempt to levy slaves from among the Mohammadan peoples of Gomur; they refused his demands and he punished them with massacre.'

Relief came to his subjects, both Mohammedan and pagan, after twenty-seven years of his despotic rule, when the British arrived. He was captured by them and deposed in 1902, to be carried prisoner to Lokoja in the south of the Region, and another grandson of Yakubu was appointed in his place; he unfortunately was to 'die suddenly' during the temporary absence of the British from Bauchi; and yet another grandson of Yakubu became Emir.

The main streets of Bauchi City are wide; hills close by break the monotony of the scenery; few compounds are without tall date palms; and on the sides of the streets there are numbers of great mango trees under which donkeys stand patiently waiting to be loaded, while dozens of goats wander round loose. On the site which is set aside for transport lorries, I could have added to anyone's

collection of texts and mottoes, for there were few that did not carry one over the headboard. In the south they are usually taken from the Bible; in the north many come from the Koran, but mostly they are the wise words of the story-teller, those which have impressed the listener. 'Komi nisan dare gari ya waye', meaning 'However long the night, dawn will break', I could well appreciate, for so many passengers on these lorries find themselves dumped for days by the roadside when the engine breaks down; but as for 'Kayan sammako de mareche a kan damre shi', meaning 'The load for an early start is tied the evening before', was that a motto or was it an instruction to next day's passengers?

The spelling, when it is written in English, as many are, can be amusing; on occasions I have suspected that the mistake is deliberate; a subtle way of drawing the attention of students. As probably was the notice outside a hotel eating-house right in the centre of Bauchi city:

HOTEL
LEAVE AND LET US LEAVE
BUY YOUR FOOD HERE. YAM CURRI AND RICE

To the south of Bauchi live the Jarawa tribe. They are a pagan people who believe in reincarnation; that a good-living person will be immediately reborn into his own family, but a bad one will be born into another community. Then there are the Kagoro, who live in an area right in the south of Bauchi Province and in Benue Province, who believe that during sleep the soul leaves the body; they assert that this is proved by the fact that if a man is suddenly awakened, he cannot at once gain full command of his body, the reason for this being that his soul has to hurry back from some other place.

About two hundred miles to the east of Bauchi City lies Gombe City; both are within Bauchi Province, and both have Emirs of the highest rank—First Class.

Buba Yero, the first Emir of Gombe, was one who was handed a flag by the Sarkin Musulmi; but his story is interesting because, although he was a Fulani, he had once experienced slavery. This had come about when his father sent him from his home in

Dilara to Kukawa. On the way he was captured by the Keri Keri, who sold him as a slave; he spent three years as one in Potiskum, now a few miles over the border dividing Bauchi and Bornu provinces. When he eventually managed to gain his liberty, he made the journey of more than six hundred miles to Sokoto, where he spent several years as a pupil of Usuman dan Fodio. At the time of the Fulani Jihad he too was given a flag and charged to take the holy war into Bauchi, Katangum and adjoining parts. The time arrived when he came into conflict with another flag-bearer, the Emir of Bauchi, who defeated him and refused to allow him to come farther. Following this there was a story of ever-changing borders until in 1824 he arrived at a Fulani settlement and here founded the city of Gombe. Like his neighbour, the Emir of Bauchi, he lived to a great age, dying in his eightieth year. He was succeeded by his son who reigned for forty years; he was succeeded by his four sons in turn. During their reigns they were harrassed by the revolt of Mallam Jibrilla.

The story of this man, a fanatic, is still told in Gombe and other parts. He came from Katangum in 1888 and asked the Emir's permission to take a farm in Burmi. After a time the news spread that he could work magic. The people of those parts believed, and many living there still do, that he could pull out his tongue and bind it round his head like a turban. It was said that the goat-skin on which he sat would, at his command, lift him from the ground and hold him in mid air so that, seated above them as a ruler or leader should always be, he spoke to those who were gathered round him. It was easy with the stories of such magic powers for him to convince the people that he could defeat all he attacked; thus he gathered together a large army under the standard he raised against the succeeding Emirs of Gombe. He is said to have pillaged and devastated the countryside, and withstood the combined forces of four states including Bauchi which came to the help of the Emir of Gombe.

The advent of the British brought the rule of Jibrilla to an abrupt end; and with his being taken away 'They reinstated the last Emir, Omeru, who was in calamitous straits when the British Administration and the overthrow of Jibrilla restored to him the territories which had been occupied by his great-grandfather, Buba Yero.'

The town of Burmi in Gombe Emirate from which Jibrilla started his revolt, became in 1903 the scene of the final stand made by the fugitive Sultan Attahiru of Sokoto—the Sarkin Musulmi, together with the Emirs of Bida and Messau, against the British. The commander of the West African Frontier Force died after having been shot with a poisoned arrow; the Emir of Messau made his escape; the fugitive Sarkin Musulmi remained and was killed.

The story of his death is one which will for ever remain in the race memory of the Muslims of Northern Nigeria. The British troops had concentrated from the west, south and east, besieging the town. The Sarkin Musulmi stood in the market place surrounded by his advisers who urged him to flee while the road to the north still remained open. They had his favourite white horse saddled and brought to him. But the Sarkin Musulmi stood and pondered and delayed. Then, as they waited impatiently, he made the dramatic announcement: 'I cannot go. I cannot leave my people!' And as he spoke a bullet hit his horse which dropped dead. 'See!' he exclaimed, 'It is the will of Allah that I remain!' and he sat down under a great tree resigned to await whatever the end might be. Most of his advisers and courtiers had no intention of awaiting their end though, and turning they fled, leaving him surrounded by a faithful few. When the town was taken, among the dead was found the body of the white-clad Sarkin Musulmi among those who had remained loyal to the last; he was lying next to his favourite white steed and also his white standard, which fell to the British as a battle trophy.

In the year 1902 there was born into the ruling family of Sokoto a boy they named Abubakar who, when he grew to manhood was to be appointed Sultan of Sokoto by the British. Within sixty years he was to see the British give back to his people Self Government, followed shortly afterwards by complete independence—without a shot being fired—both British and Northern Nigerians rejoiced and celebrated together while he entertained the Queen's personal representative in his capital.

And in November 1960, marking the end of British rule, there was performed another ceremony; one which brought delight and satisfaction to every Northern Nigerian; on that day the British officer commanding the 1st Battalion of the Royal Nigerian

Military Force handed back to Alhaji Sir Abubakar, Sultan of Sokoto, Sarkin Musulmi, the white flag of his ancestor Sultan Attahiru, which had been captured at Burmi in 1903. Several speeches were made during the 1960 ceremony, but one made by Alhaji Sir Amadu Bello, K.B.E., Sardauna of Sokoto, the Premier of the Northern Region, a direct descendant of the first Sarkin Musulmi, told us in simple words what the Northern Nigerian really thinks of the British when he referred to the returned flag as 'a symbol which all the people of Sokoto will treasure. It is also a symbol of the characteristic British trait to turn enemy into friend.'

The market at Gombe still has room for expansion. I had not before seen great skeins of native-dyed palm-leaf raffia like the women were buying there. I asked the wife of a Nigerian Assistant District Officer I saw there what it was used for. She explained that in their spare time the women make circular platters on which dry food is served: starting from the centre they work round and round; often intricate patterns are worked into these mats. Then she pointed out some Fulani women who were offering them for sale; I examined one of the mats and immediately saw that into it had been woven a pattern very similar to the rock paintings over a hundred miles away. Can it be that some of these paintings were the work of Fulani herdsmen of longer ago than when it was said they had come to that part?

Just before leaving Gombe I had lunch with the Assistant District Officer, and, as I left, his wife handed me one of these mats loaded with fruits saying: 'We have a custom in our country that when we wish a guest to return we hand him one of these fifi mats that we women of the house have especially made.' I wonder, now that her husband is a senior official in Kaduna, does she still continue this charming and gracious custom and make mats for welcome guests?

During the late afternoon when the market was dissolving, I again passed it; and saw on one side a number of boys and men each holding something and listening intently. I went over and found that each of them had a wooden cage containing a Nigerian canary. The birds are yellow-green; in shape, colour and size they are rather like a greenfinch, while their song matches that of the skylark. When two cages are placed close together, the birds try to

outsing each other. Among them are the champions. I was offered one complete with cage for a pound, by a man; at once a boy holding another, outsinging the first one, offered me this for five shillings. In Gombe there is no market for these birds since they are easily caught out in the bush in trap cages which have a decoy in one half.

In Gombe market a tame ostrich roams around. There is a belief in the North that their presence wards off the evil eye. They answer to their names, and this one was quite fastidious about food; I had always thought, until then, that they would eat anything. I did notice that this one kept away from the Juju stalls where among the lizard skins, monkey fur, snake heads, porcupine quills, white and black chicken heads and masses of shells, stones, bones and beans, there was an ostrich foot. This was not for sale though; it was used by the medicine man in his 'cures'; he passes it over the patient's hand, back, leg or head, according to where the pain is, to seal off the treatment he has given. While I talked to him I noticed that this particular Juju doctor had some fingers missing —he was a leper. Yet in the five minutes that I had been there two customers had bought bits and pieces, for fantastic prices; and a patient was now settling down for some kind of treatment from him.

That evening I sat in front of the British District Commissioner's unpretentious bungalow on the side of the hill. Before us was the garden in which, that afternoon, I had watched two prisoners working; one of them occasionally stopping to play with one of the D.O.'s small children. They told me that the children adored him. Yet he had been charged with murder—and murder it was—but had been convicted only of manslaughter. He was an excellent gardener; this was his hard labour, and the man spent much of his time in the prison making toys for the two children.

Sitting there after dinner, with the bungalow being on the hillside farthest from the town, I was conscious of a soothing stillness in the air. After a while I could discern the plaintive notes of a reed pipe; then the soft twang of the strings of a home-made reed harp; and in the distance the sound of drums, but not the thud, thud, thud that I had by then become used to; it was as though the player's fingers were lightly brushing the surface of the drum-skin. Down beneath the indigo blackness of the moonless sky, I could

discern the lights of distant oil-wick lamps and the glow of fires over which mammies would then be preparing the meal of the day—but they must have been some distance away.

After a while the stillness was rudely broken by a motor cycle messenger from the police to the D.O. who went to see what was needed and returned to tell us that there had been an accident he had to see to in the town; and he left us. We sat there, and I asked his wife what sort of an accident it might possibly be in that part. 'Oh anything from a child being knocked down by a lorry to someone going beserk with a mattock over woman palava,' she said. Then: 'You know I am going to miss all this quietness and never knowing what's coming next when I get back to London!'

Next morning I left Gombe for Yola. This city is about a hundred and fifty miles to the south-east; but first the road runs south to Numan on the great River Benue, which eventually joins the Niger. The first leg of the run is through fertile plains; then on to hills which in places are lush with grass and in others bare and rock-strewn. The people are mostly pagan; they are good farmers and work wonders with any ground that can possibly be tilled. On the way I passed a great Teacher Training College with its own water supply, electricity and a nearby village which accommodates the menial staff and those traders who live by them.

In those parts, spread over a large area, are members of the Wurkum tribe. They practise blood-brotherhood. Just as the gipsies of Europe, during their marriage ceremonies, cut the wrists of bride and bridegroom and hold them together to mix the blood; so it was the custom among these people, before a boy became a full member of the tribe, for him to be lashed with a whip as a form of ordeal, and then to have deep incisions made in his arm, into which, if he came of a wealthy family, or one with influence, the blood of the bravest and strongest men in the tribe is poured.

Blood-brotherhood was also practised by the Kamuku, where whole villages became brothers, the blood taken from the forearm of a boy of each of the villages was smeared on meat which, after being rubbed on ashes, was eaten by the men of the other village. The Bassa had a simpler method; each of the principals cut his arm close to the wrist, and then sucked the other's blood. I have

given the past tense for this custom, not having seen it done, but I am assured that it still goes on 'in the bush villages'.

As I came out over the hills I could see the great River Benue, meaning in the Batta language 'Mother of Waters', spread wide in the distance. From bare hills we gradually went down to the marshy plains below; the hard road here runs like a viaduct over the marshes, marshes which are thick with papyrus reeds and great trees. Large numbers of scarlet birds were flitting from one tufty reed head to another, whether searching for seeds or flies I could not see. They were small, like wrens, and looked like flames being tossed about in the air, their shape not unlike the kingfishers I later saw flashing, like turquoise darts, into the muddy water. And occasionally a small, bright, blue-black bird with a long trailing tail which looked like a streamer, floated by in the air. They were a species of the birds of paradise.

We reached the river. Here a ferry, consisting of a bargelike affair with a small but powerful motor-boat tied to its side, takes traffic over the Benue. The ferry was then on the other bank, and I knew that it would be half an hour before I could cross; but after a time it seemed that they were having some trouble, and then I heard from the owner of the only building on this bank, an eating-house that he called 'my hotel', that there had before been a break-down for two days while a new motor launch was brought up-river. I certainly hoped that I would not be held up, for already the sand flies were starting to torment, and they get worse at night by the water. But luck was with us, for the ferry started away from the distant bank and my visions of crossing by dugout canoe on that sweep of the muddy water to a Rest House on the other side, leaving an annoyed driver to bring the car over when he could, vanished as looking back I saw ominous clouds coming towards us from the hills.

When we had crossed I went to deliver a package I had brought from the District Officer of Gombe to the District Officer of Numan. I saw the clouds change course. 'They often do that on sight of the Benue,' I was told. And after a most excellent lunch ('Do stop and take pot luck with us. You can't just have those sandwiches they made for you in the Rest House in Gombe') I started on the road to Yola. Really those British wives of District Officers were just marvellous the way they faced up to and coped

with any situation, welcoming unexpected guests and suffering the climate and the many inconveniences of the bush. Most of them insisted that they 'love the life. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I adore the atmosphere—and the people too. Home leave is very welcome after a time, though—it's the many frustrations that wear you down, you know!'

Yola and Sardauna Province

YOLA, the provincial headquarters of Adamawa Province, is on the River Benue, farther upstream than Numan. The European settlement is on hilly ground; below it and close to the river is the commercial centre, while the old city of Yola is several miles away in the marshy area. Although from November to June the river is very shallow and in places little more than a stream, at other times it is wide and deep, permitting ships, even coasters, to come up and berth by the warehouses along the river banks.

In Yola on this second visit I went back twenty years, for the Catering Rest House had been a war-time Mess. The room I had for my first night there might have been the same that I had before occupied; but now it had 'mod. cons.'—a flush, a shower, electric fans and electric lights in place of a bucket, a galvanized bath and hurricane lamps. This part of Yola is delightful, with winding tree-shaded roads and a number of the old colonial-type houses still standing high off the ground as protection against pests. In the old Residency gardens I walked down to Lover's Leap, a rock cliff looking down over the Benue which flows slow and wide, although at times shallow in that part. The sun was then setting and its reflexion lighted the clouds over the green hills of the other bank; on the waters between us an old rear-paddle steamer with smoke belching from its long funnel was slowly making its way to Yola from Ribadu which is farther upstream.

I was fortunate in Yola, for on the morning following my arrival, when I went down to the petrol station, I again met one of the

Nigerian N.C.O.'s who had been with me in those war-time years. I remembered that he had then proved to be most efficient, and was not surprised to discover that he was now a fairly wealthy trader in Yola. Although he had originally come from Kano, he had, during his service in Yola, realized the possibilities for trade in these parts; and on his discharge had brought his brother and their families and settled in Yola. He traded in hides, and skins, and ground-nuts and had something to do with petrol and oil. One of his wives—he was a Muslim, came from Yola. She was an educated woman who had trained as a schoolmistress, always a useful introduction into society in those parts; from her he had learned the Fulfulde language, the original language of the Fulani people, and one much spoken in that area. He became my delightful and delighted host and guide while I was there. His pleasure, which amounted to excitement at times when he introduced me to his friends, cannot be described, for by that time he had convinced himself that I had come back to Yola again especially to meet him.

His house was set below the old British settlement and above the commercial town; the back faced the valley and the river; from the front lawn I looked across to the old Residency and the older colonial houses.

Down below in the commercial centre there are large warehouses in which crates, drums and sacks of merchandise, petrol and kerosene are stored against the months when only canoes can navigate the river. I went down to the big boats then being unloaded. I could hear the drumming so often heard when numbers of labourers are working together, for long ago the Nigerians discovered that 'music while you work' speeded up production by keeping happy workers busy. The employers therefore engage a drummer to sit in the shade of a tree close by and tap, tap, tap for hours on end as the pagan porters run up and down the narrow plank from warehouse to boat and back again. I also saw convicts working in a quarry in the hillside for material used in road mending; as they ran from the place to a lorry, each man balancing a great rock on his head, an old convict sat and with a large nail tapped a piece of piping shaped much like a triangle played in a band. On that occasion the convicts, following each line sung as a solo by the old man, were singing to a monotonous tune with his beat.

Among the boats was a great stern-paddle steamer; these are driven by boilers fuelled by wood taken on board from stacks which are ready waiting for them at villages on the river bank. There was one of these, looking very smart and shipshape, but probably with a worn-out engine, for lashed alongside was a diesel-powered motor-boat. This was the boat which plies up and down the river during the flood time taking soundings and dropping marker-buoys to guide shipping to the deep channel. This steam-boat must have been quite old, but even so it was most comfortable with its cosy saloon and a flush and basins in the two cabins. I envied the captain his cabin on hot nights, but noticed that, just as we always had over our beds at night in Nigeria, he had a mosquito net to drop over his bunk.

The Emirate of Adamawa was founded by Modibo Adama—hence the name of the province. Modibo is an address similar to Mallam; one which is 'given to men known for their piety and learning'. His father was a teacher in the Baen or Bas-jo tribe of Fulani who had been in that country for centuries. Modibo Adama had been 'a pupil of a famous Mallam Kairi of Kukawa, whence he had travelled'; he then returned to his own country to preach the Faith to the people who were there, mostly pagans. He travelled to Gombe and then on to Sokoto, a distance of something like a thousand miles, where in 1805 he received a flag and men from the Sarkin Musulmi, being charged to subdue the country from which he had come; but this was not to be until he received a signal from Sokoto.

In 1809 he commenced the Jihad; he subdued vast tracts of land, established Chiefs or Lamidos—another name for rulers—all under his paramount rule, and continued until he joined up with Buba Yero, Emir of Gombe. He made his headquarters in more than one town of the province during his reign; but in 1844 settled in Yola, where he died seven years later. During his reign he nine times made the thousand-mile journey to Sokoto, and each time brought back flags for his twenty-four chiefs. One of the original flags handed to him by the Sarkin Musulmi is still carried in procession on special occasions and during Muslim festivals.

In 1901, when the British attacked what is now the old city of Yola, it was unfortified, the people relying upon the surrounding marshes for its defence. It was then September and the river was so

abnormally full that the steamer carrying the British troops was able to get right up to the town, 'and the people lost heart when the Emir Zubeiru of Adamawa fled.'

Yola City, to which we drove over a hard road raised above the surrounding marshlands, must still be as it was at the time of the arrival of the British, except that now there are stone-built Provincial offices; the Emir Alhaji Mustafa, the Lamido of Adamawa, had just completed a modern Council Chamber within the palace area and outside the wrought-iron gateway to the Royal apartments. In appearance he is different to the other Fulani rulers, for he is very tall and slim. The ruling house of Adamawa wear their turbanlike head-dresses with that part which is outside the gown hanging like a deep bib, and the chin always covered.

The drab prison, with the highest walls I had seen in Nigeria, is immediately outside the front entrance of the palace. Behind it is the city, which I thought surprisingly small, with winding tree-shaded roads and an excellent market place with many permanent concrete-built stalls.

The day I was there the town was full, for it was market day. Then the pagans from great distances in the surrounding hills—and very 'bush'—come with their produce. Most of the pagan men wear either a kilt or a sporran of leaves, otherwise they are naked. I was told that only a few years back they attended Yola market as undressed as they lived in the bush; but even though Yola City is so far from other parts of Yola, and is not easy to reach by rail, road or aircraft, many 'foreigners' visit it, with the result that the order went out that coverings of some kind must be worn, if only leaves.

Many of these pagan people are chocolate and not black in colour. I noticed that several of the men had decorated themselves by making their kilts or sporrans—gathered as they entered the boundaries of Yola—with leafy twigs which had flowers or berries on them. I then saw that one fellow I was about to take a photograph of had added in front what appeared to be a corn cob. Then as I looked closer I realized that here in Adamawa I had again stumbled upon a pagan tribe the men of which wear the sheath, but this one, which had found its way through the leafy sporran, was of a different pattern, indeed like a full-length corn-cob, but made of the finest plaited raffia, worked in a pattern and as pliable as a Panama hat. But even my guide, well known among them, could

not encourage this man to part with his. Eventually we struck a bargain with the pagan, and the following morning, denuded of his sporran (since he insisted the order applied only to the market), the pagan arrived at the bungalow steps with two he had made during the night, one of which I hope eventually reached the American anthropologist to start off his collection. This pagan, who had remained the night through in Yola to make these, was delighted with the four shillings he had earned, especially since he had asked for only half that amount in cash together with a blue bottle. The blue bottle I had bought in the canteen on the advice of my host, who insisted that they particularly favoured that kind, was one containing Milk of Magnesia. Even he could not suggest what the pagan would do with the contents.

In his travels in the Southern Sudan during the sixteenth century, Leo Africanus tells of a people who 'embrace no religion at all, being neither Christians, Muhumetans nor Jewes, nor any other profession, but having wives in common.' During my tours there I never came upon any who had wives in common; but within what are called by some the pagan Emirates, there is an interesting group of tribes known as Lala, meaning 'naked'. Each of these groups have their own dialect, yet behind these there is a language all can understand. In the old days, during times of war, from among them the strongest leader was chosen, and from then on their cause became as one. There were never subjugated by the Fulani. They are a people who used to live and farm at the foot of hills, but also had caves high above, and to these they retreated in times of attack in order to defend themselves with great stones and bows and arrows among the rocks. In that part they went naked; now the men usually wear a cloth wrapped first round the head and then the body. The women still wear large bunches of leaves forming seats when they sit down. They have an odd custom, one which in these days of enlightenment is said to have ceased—'in some cases' an old man of the tribe told me with a twinkle in his eye. This is that when a wedding took place the groom's father superseded his son unless the son had the physical strength to prevent it. And what was more he acted as the young wife's husband until she conceived by him; she always had to procure an abortion, which she did, not with the aid of native medicine, but 'by means of a compressed bandage round the lower part of the abdomen, this

being of new cloth which had been soaked and then, when tightly in place, made to shrink.' Not until she had conceived for the second time was she allowed to go to her real husband who could insist upon another abortion. Even then the poor wretched man could not be certain of keeping his wife to himself for the whole of his lifetime since there was a shortage of women in the tribes; colonies of bachelors lived together, but they were permitted to steal a man's wife when he became too old to beat the young man off; then the young man was supposed to pay the husband whatever marriage dowry he had originally given for the woman.

In the old days, upon the death of their Chief, the Chamba tribe, in the south-east of Adamawa province, used to stun the first wife and then wring her neck. She was buried with her husband; but they were not alone, for with them went his favourite slave who had the privilege of being laid behind his master after he had been clubbed to death. These people believe that a dead man's spirit may reincarnate into one of his descendants. The members of the Mumuye tribe, to the south, believe that a dead man's spirit rests in a tree close by his grave, and, after an interval of about two years, enters into a new-born baby of the tribe.

I only wish that I could have taken local leave in Adamawa Province. Morning and evening, during the all-too-short dawn and dusk lights, I had watched the flights of great flocks of duck, and the marshlands and bush abound with bird life. Away from the towns, I was told, bush cows and even hippopotami are still to be found. Leopards and lions are not unknown; while the most fantastic stories are told by fishermen of catches both from the river and the pools in its flood plain.

The new Sardauna Province—named such as a compliment to the Premier of the Northern Region—is now the thirteenth province of the Region. I had been in parts of it before, and often think that it must be the most beautiful, though the most isolated of them all.

Originally it was a part of the old German Kameroons which they lost as a result of the 1914–1918 war—'The Kaiser's War'; but in January 1915 a German patrol from here had attacked Yola cantonment with the dawn. At that time the town of Mutum Biyu, nearly twenty-five miles from the river, was sacked by a German

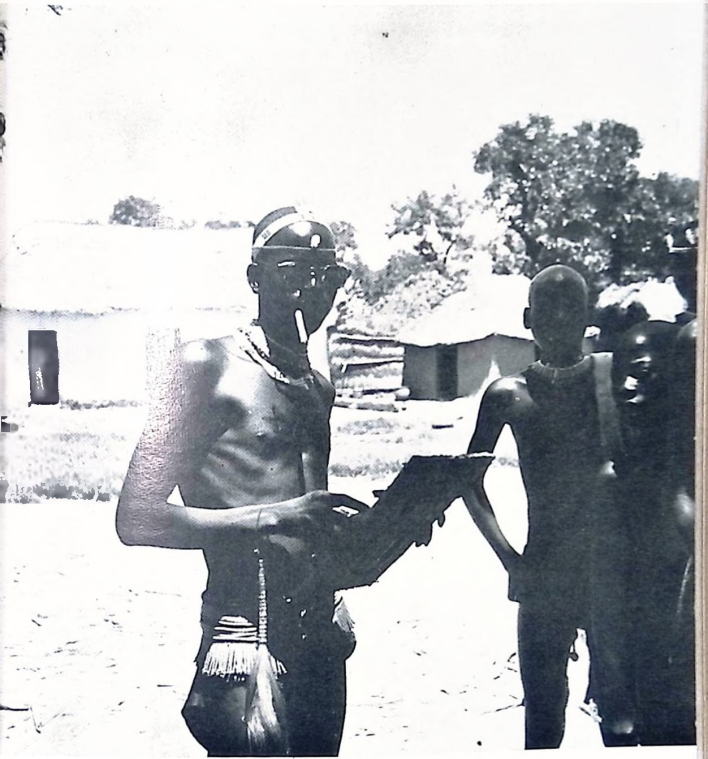
force, and only by luck did the British Political Officer and the Emir of Muri—whose reign incidentally lasted fifty years—escape from the town with their lives, and the treasury.

One part of the Kameroons—the K being replaced with the English C—had been administered after the war by the British, who held it under a Mandate of the United Nations; but with Nigeria being given her independence, the British suggested to the United Nations that the people of that part should decide their own future. This was agreed to and in June 1961 they elected to become a part of the Northern Region of Nigeria; but instead of again being absorbed into one or both of the provinces of which they had previously become almost a part, they were formed into their own separate one. Since that time the Dikwa Emirate has, at its own request, broken away from the new province to become part of Bornu Province with which it shared a boundary.

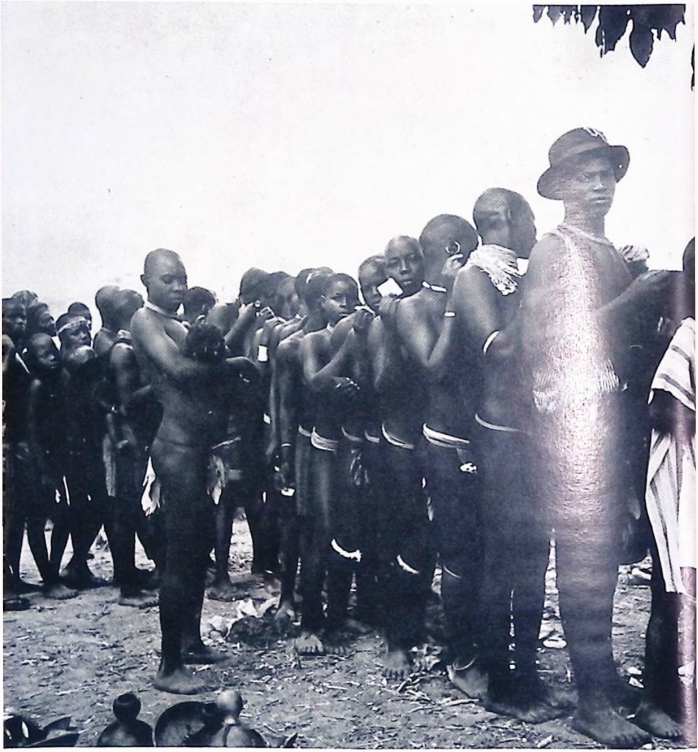
This new province is occupied by dozens of tribes all differing from each other. In the north, that part which lies close to Bornu, live the Shuwa Arabs, a most interesting pastoral people much akin to the Cattle Fulani both in their looks and in their way of life. There the soil is fertile; it has been referred to by some as 'the granary of the North'. From the sandy plains of the Chad basin, the land rises to the plateau of the Mandara Highlands; among their lofty mountains are the boulder-strewn Zeluduva and the superb, lone, solid-rock peak of Kamale. Then there are the beautiful Mubi ranges of hills, and in the southern part, the Verre Hills; and still farther south, the blue peaks of the Mambila plateau. One traveller of over a hundred years back wrote of this part as 'a land with beautiful green of the plains against the dark colour of the mountains and the clear blue sky.'

It is a land of soft pastures and hard rugged peaks; of high forest belts whose many lovely shades change with the seasons and the heights; in the north a land of golden sands, of silver mountain peaks with steep escarpments and canyons which, during the hours of sunshine, blaze like a furnace, but with the setting of the sun and the rising of the moon become cool and friendly. In the south a fresh warmth with the varying greens of the trees and grasslands brings back memories of other lands to those who have come to serve—or just look at Northern Nigeria.

. . . . .



A Pagan youth with Hausa reed harp



Patients waiting in line for leprosy treatment

It was fortunate for those who came to work as Government servants, to heal and to teach as missionaries, and to trade in the Northern Region, that the pioneers among them should have prepared the way by recording all the information they could about the land and the people. Dozens of authorities who then served the country contributed; and with the scores of languages and hundreds of dialects, only those who had lived and worked among the different tribes could have done this.

Even so, as I moved round among the people of these provinces, particularly during this last tour, I found it difficult to believe that cannibalism had been practised in some of the tribes until the coming of the British such a short time before. The Fulani had occupied this pagan country, but it seems that they had never penetrated to where the cannibals lived, for the Fulani, as Muslims, abhor cannibalism. It would seem that the pagans who continued the practice had retreated to their hill strongholds, for it was among the Hill pagans that it still went on.

The Angus, probably the largest tribe in that part of the country I had toured, had numbered about fifty thousand when the British arrived. Just as the Fulani had separated up into Town Fulani and Cattle Fulani, so they had become Hill Angus and Plain Angus; the Plain Angus appear to have given up the practice of cannibalism by that time. It had been the practice of the Angus to eat, after cooking, enemies killed in war; as well as criminals of their own tribe who had been executed. Women were never eaten; nor were they permitted to take part in the feasts which took place in the sacred grove dedicated to their god Gwon, the god of Justice.

The Zumperr tribe (Zumperr being a nickname meaning 'cannibals', their real and original name being Likam) consisted of about ten thousand people, and they lived in the mountainous region of old Muri Province which is now Adamawa Province, near the Cameroun border. It was said of them that at Pamba they skinned their prisoners-of-war, roasted and ate them; they let this habit be known, believing that by so doing they would put fear into their enemies. It is also known that when no prisoners-of-war were available, they set man traps.

The Sura, numbering about twenty thousand, also ate their enemies killed in war. The Chief had the privilege of eating any woman convicted of adultery; it is said that he also used to

purchase slaves and have them fattened for his table. But oddly enough, although a woman might be killed and eaten for adultery, by tribal law a murderer was not killed; he was handed over to the family of the dead man to be enslaved for life. Yet crimes against the pagan religion were punished by death.

Another tribe known to have practised the eating of human flesh was the Tangale, numbering fifty thousand; they are said to have been the earliest dominant occupants of the Gombe Emirate. They were one of the naked tribes; 'in times of shortage they are known to have sold their children, the price demanded for a ten-year old boy being three oxen.' These people used talking drums, each message conveyed by a change of note and not by rhythm as is common. They have five types of drums, each for a different occasion; one of these, the Kakanga, a small drum with a high note, was beaten in quick time as a call to arms; another, Kwala-katum, also a little drum, was beaten after a head-taking fight. There were many dances, two of which point to their old customs; the first of these took place after Kwalakatum had called them together, it was the head dance; the other was to celebrate a cannibal feast. These people are said to have 'sun dried those parts of the human which are tender, pulverized them, and then after pounding, mixed them with their gruel.'

In these days not a great number of horses are seen; a few are owned and ridden by the more affluent farmers; but fifty years ago there were three categories of pagans, the Plain pagans, the Hill pagans and the Mounted pagans. Records show that 'the Mounted pagans were a naked people, the men wearing only the penis straw cap'. They lived in the south-west of the old Bauchi Province, now the Lowland Division of the Plateau Province, 'close to the granite hills, with thick cacti hedges surrounding the towns and compounds. They were essentially horsemen, in war relying on the charges of their mounted spearmen; some have bows and arrows.' It was the custom of these pagans to ride bareback; but a natural saddle had been made by slitting the skin on the pony's back for about a foot, then laying the flap back. Assisted by poultices of herbs, the flesh became callous.

It is the general practice among the Hill pagans to protect their compounds and villages with cacti. Those who live among the rocks on the hills have their huts tucked away behind great natural

walls of boulders; thus carefully blending the huts with the surrounding countryside, so that you are almost upon them before you are aware that they are there: only the voices of the children or the smoke rising from their cooking fires betray their existence.

Each tribe has its own way of building both houses and villages; in size the villages vary. The Angus, with some villages containing hundreds of huts, favour circular buildings nine feet in diameter. They are built of mud with unsupported domed roofs; they have a two-and-a-half-foot circular entrance about eighteen inches above the ground. These huts are built a foot or two from each other, the space between being filled in with walls; thus those on the outside of the compound form a protecting wall to the village and those on the inside create a maze. Each woman has three of these huts, one as a sleeping room, one as a store and the other as a cookhouse; at times a fourth is added in which she sits on the floor and makes mats or pots. In the room in which she sleeps there is a raised platform mud bed with spaces under it for storage; into the thick sun-dried mud-walls pockets are made to serve as shelves; and standing out from the walls are horns of wood on which to hang odd items. In the separate inner compound of the Sarki or Chief, there is a hut in which he keeps such trophies as the horns or skulls of wild animals, or the teeth of lions or leopards he has killed; together with the skulls of the men eaten by previous chiefs, always enemies killed in battle, and never criminals executed at their orders.

The Sura villages are built among shady trees; the huts in clusters surrounded by the cultivated fields; while the fields, as a protection against goats, are also hedged with cacti, sometimes so old and tall that they have entwined over the pathways. Each family has its own compound of circular houses built of mud strengthened with stones. The women all sleep together in one round hut; the inner wall of this is encircled with a raised bench for sleeping; a fire is kept burning in the centre. Out from the married women's sleeping room there is an inner chamber, the entrance to it being through a narrow space in the wall; here the unmarried girls sleep together. The husband and father has his own hut to which he calls his chosen wife as he wishes. The Sura are one of the very few pagan tribes in the Northern Region who look upon the birth of twins as ill fortune; 'they used always to kill them'.

The Hausa villages are quite different. Anyone can pass along the roadways or wide passages between the compounds, each one of which is surrounded by grass-matting or bamboo-cane screens, usually affixed to closely planted trees. But within the compound each wife has her own hut, the head of the family calling her to his; they take it in turns for two nights each, and to take one out of order would be sufficient grounds for her to seek divorce. Many of the women's rooms, especially those in larger villages, have their walls covered with enamel-decorated plates which she would have brought with her when she was married. The man's hut contains a bed on one side, screened from view when the door is opened, by a hanging curtain. Usually there is a chair rather like a folding deck-chair with arms, which he can take outside his door to sit there; and also a tin box in which he keeps his clothes reserved for festivals, so protecting them from ants and other pests. His other everyday clothes hang loose over ropes which are tied across corners or against the walls.

There is always a kitchen hut in the compound. This is either round or square, built with gaps under the eaves to allow the smoke to escape from the low mud-built fireplace set on the floor. Scattered round this are cooking-pots; also low stools on which the women sit to fan the fire and prepare the meals.

Usually about the time of the fast of Ramadan, in preparation for the great feast which follows, there will be a goat or sheep tied to a stake in the compound; its bleatings becoming less frequent and plaintive as the time of the feast gets closer and it becomes fattened and satisfied.

In the towns and largest villages there is a District Head. He is responsible to the Emir for the collection of taxes and the keeping of peace. He has under him the small Village Heads. Where there are District Heads there are Alkali's Courts where all the Muslim cases in the district are tried by a Muslim judge according to Muslim law. Inside the mud and thatched, or sometimes iron-roofed courtroom, and facing the door, is a raised platform on which the Alkali sits behind a large table. To one side is a table for his clerk; to the other side, unseen by any in the courtroom except the Alkali, is a window from an adjoining room in which any woman plaintiff or defendant who happens to be in purdah sits with her friends while she gives evidence. The men, plaintiff and

defendant, take up positions before the Alkali, the public sitting behind them, the overflow listening through side windows. The criminal cases are first tried here; often the punishment is awarded by the Alkali. The accused enters in charge of a policeman and takes his place before the Alkali. He is brought to the Court from the lockup, with separate cells for men and women.

Usually a dispensary is to be found in these larger villages. It may be within the village or close by on the main road. The dispensers have all passed examinations which ensure that they are fitted to meet the everyday demands made of them; and these places have either a man or a woman in charge, for gradually nurses are being trained to take up their duties in isolated places. On these dispensers, male or female nurses, rests a great responsibility, for they must either treat the patients or decide whether they are to be sent to one of the large but few hospitals, which, in parts of the country, might mean making a long journey. With the present shortage of doctors and fully-qualified Health Sisters, it is not once a day, nor always once a week, that a dispenser can hope to see one arrive for a few hours to examine and prescribe for the difficult or doubtful cases. Yet never did I visit a village dispensary—and I called on all before passing—to find it badly managed or dirty; seldom did the staff complain, although they worked under considerable difficulties; this attitude of theirs is in part a tribute to those who trained them.

Usually in both Hausa and pagan villages, large or small, there is a hut set aside for Adult Education; to this men, and a few, though very few of the women, come during the evenings to learn how to read and write, poring over the sheets with symbols and pictures of Nigeria which cover the walls. The room contains a blackboard for the teacher; the pupils either sit on the floor or on stools they bring along with them. All are keen students; they are not conscripted, coming entirely of their own accord.

Then, in a Muslim village, there is always the mosque. This is usually a simple mud hut with a thatched roof, wooden shutters to the unglazed windows, and a solid wood door which is never locked and is always wide open on Fridays for all who wish to attend prayers. The congregation overflows outside the building which has only its floor covered by rush matting. There are no seats, no texts, no pictures. Muslim worship is as simple as that.

And near by will be a well or a stream where the faithful can wash hands, feet and so on before attending mosque to pray.

The time to visit a Hausa village is during the feast of Ramadan, when no work is done and everybody is happy; and, as the Muslim is forbidden alcoholic drinks by his religion, no one is drunk, The laughter and the drumming and the dancing goes on and on into the night by the light of flickering oil-lamps; the children still running round in all their finery (always something new for Ramadan).

The day starts soberly enough, but after mosque, when the beggars, who appear from nowhere for all such occasions, have been given alms, the feast is eaten; the Nigerians have enormous appetites on such occasions. The old folk take a siesta for an hour or two; but the children and the younger folk will have already started the celebrations; and when, in the late afternoon, the old people join them, they become revitalized. The young girls, wearing velvet bodices and gaily-coloured satin or velvet skirt-cloths and silken headcloths, cast off their new sandals and dance on bare feet, often as a solo to the thud, thud, roll and tremble of the drums. The girl's dance is often a shuffle with the feet and a jerking of the body while she flexes her shoulders back and forth until you are certain that she will throw something out of joint. You watch her close her eyes as though she is either going into a trance or about to fall asleep; but still that jerking goes on until, suddenly, disregarding the drums, she stops dead, laughs at the applause; and then, as though not in the least tired by the exhausting exhibition, she shyly runs among her giggling girl-friends close by, to hide her face against one of them. For she well knows that young men were all the time watching from a discreet distance, and she hopes that among them will be the right one; one who will have seen how beautifully she can dance, have noticed her vitality, her new clothes, her bracelets, necklet and her make-up; for fingernails, toe-nails and lips are all painted scarlet, the soles of her feet are red with henna, and the surrounds of her velvet eyes blackened and brightened with antimony dust to make them appear even larger than they are.

Later on she will probably watch him drumming. After a while he will pull off that new semi-transparent shirt to reveal his muscular body beneath a snow-white crochet vest. After half an

hour of crazy drumming with sticks, fists and fingertips, he will be soaking wet as perspiration pours from him, making his face and body appear as though coated with oil. Then, when he realizes that he can no longer continue, but showing no signs of exhaustion, he will probably cast the drum-sticks into the air, leap to his feet with his head thrown back in carefree laughter, dance off into the darkness, there to collapse on his mat in the hut.

Kontagora and Bida

KADUNA is just off the trunk road running from Lagos to Kano; and although most of it now has a bitumen surface, at least down the centre, this has been done only recently; at times that part which ran from Kaduna to Bida used to be a nightmare. When you were stuck during the heavy rains in some outlandish place you realized the truth of the stories told by those who pioneered the country. The result was that unless one definitely had to go somewhere during the rainy season between May and October, one waited until it had passed. At the start of the rains the heat and humidity turned the country into a vast outdoor hothouse; it was like a Turkish bath for a while.

When the rains ceased traffic started to move; great lorries with trailers attached, much like circus trucks on the move, hogged the centre of the road and for miles it was impossible to pass them, or get close to them, for within a few days the roads become dust baths; nothing can keep it out of the car; you finish a journey looking like a Red Indian all over, for it gets into the hair, eyes, ears, beneath your clothes and even in your mouth.

Ahead the red road can be seen for miles like a snake writhing through the green of the bush and the yellow of the savannah; but when with a few dry weeks, all has dried up and the leaves of the bushes, followed by the long elephant grass, turned to a light brown, those who farm here fear an uncontrolled bush fire, and set the bush alight. At night, unless you realize what is happening, it can be a frightening sight, for bush fires

move fast, and they always appear to be gradually surrounding you.

Many times I have driven through roads where the fires have passed, leaving scorched earth, a few sticks and twigs standing charcoal black from the ground; the lower parts of tree trunks blackened, their leave singed, curled and stiff. All is then deathly still and silent. I have watched a fire as it moved away. On the ground before it and in the high trees sit vultures, hawks and falcons, waiting to prey upon the small creatures fleeing in terror before the flames; creatures like small striped tree-rats, big-eyed bush babies, snakes, hundreds of lizards. Thousands of these must perish in the flames, many being cremated; others suffocated by smoke in the hollow trunks of trees to which they flee for protection.

On one occasion when my gardener was chopping wood for the cook, he found two live bush babies inside a hollow log. So petrified were they of the sudden sunlight that they just sat close to each other and peered out at him, their eyes enormous. We caught them and carried them to the nearby trees. Bush babies are a light brown in colour, rather, I imagine like a cross between a grey squirrel and a koala bear—quite small. They have large wing-like ears, tiny paws like hands; and when you drive along the roads at night, quite often you will see pairs of bright russet-red lights in the trees; the reflecting, frightened eyes of bush babies—so called because their usual call is like that of a bad-tempered human baby.

I recollect passing along that road to Bida before the fires. In one part it winds slightly down and then on a twist passes over a plank bridge; the glades of trees and great bushes and palms turn it into a delightful spot. The bush at that time was very beautiful; the trees fresh green, splashes of colour from flowers breaking through in places; here were clumps of mauve blossoms shaped like anemones, but in clusters on stalks about three feet long, and then masses of a similar kind, but brilliant orange. But, passing a month later, all had disappeared, for the bush had been fired and complete desolation covered the blackened ground; one could see for miles ahead to hills of smooth black, shaded silver-grey granite. Then, a month later, I again went that way; the bushes and the trees were still blackened, holding tight to their scorched leaves; no goats or cattle were in sight, there was no animal life; but where the long

stalks of orange flowers had stood, the velvet black earth was again a mass of golden blobs. It was as if these Silky Star lilies refused to be killed and now defiantly thrust their orange heads out from the blackened earth; and from where the long stalks had before reached high, the blossoms were thick and close like a crown of gold holding tight to the ground. The air was again alive with the hum of bees which had escaped somewhere during the fire and now came to gather honey. I soon found that it was possible to slice the whole clump off; it made a perfect cushion of flowers for the dinner-table centre.

On the road which leads to both Zungeru and Kontagora there are few villages; two or three are shown on the maps, but when I first reached them I found them so small that I wondered if I had come upon one as yet unmapped. That part of the Region was practically depopulated by past notorious Emirs of Zaria and Kontagora, between whose capitals it lies. Both were famed as slave raiders before the coming of the British; they even made efforts to continue afterwards.

These parts are also poorly watered. During the rains, where there is sufficient feeding and water to encourage them, the Fulani bring their herds; but later the pools and streams almost disappear, and once again the herds are moved on. The Government are making efforts to conserve water here, and it seems that a certain amount of success has been achieved, for more Cattle Fulani with their herds are about. I took a photograph of some of these boys going to a festival, offered them a 'dash', but they refused cash and asked for some engine oil; presumably to use on their hair.

They came from a small Fulani settlement near a place convenient for lorries, mammy wagons and trucks to pull up. This had become the start of a village, and made the more inviting by a forty-gallon drum of petrol with a hand pump being stationed there: anyone who passes one of these in unpopulated parts, when he has only just sufficient petrol to take him to his destination, is a fool; anything might happen on the bush road, a tree blown down across it, a lorry collision and the road is sometimes blocked for days, and one always needs sufficient petrol for an unexpected return. In these wayside hamlets food can be bought, drinks can be had, passengers from bush villages can be dropped and picked up, the Fulani women can dispose of their skim milk and butter. In a few

months a weekly market will start up, and that is how a Nigerian village, even a town, is born.

We climbed a long winding road built in one part on an embankment on the outside of the most dangerous turns of which six-foot-long whitened posts had been planted to warn drivers not to go too close to the edge; but even so a battered mammy waggon and two cars lay down below. I wonder how many lives were lost? It must have happened during the last rains, for they were not yet rusted. At the top of the hill we turned off to the right, away from the one main road into another. On this the traffic has not been so heavy; the centre, anyway, was hard, although deep ruts told how soft the sides had been for those cars forced there by the heavy lorries charging towards them. Then I saw the signpost: To KONTAGORA.

The name Kontagora is said to have originated from the time that the first Fulani Emir, Emoru, a great-grandson of Usuman dan Fodio, was searching for a suitable place on which to build his capital in that part of the country. Arriving at this spot he had exclaimed 'Kwanta-gora', meaning 'Put down the water-bottle', and the town was built there. This happened in 1864.

This young man had originally been given a town called Gwamatche, but he was known to be such a tyrant that none would go there; and he was recalled to Sokoto. Some years later he was sent to the Nupe country in the south, with an expedition to collect horses; but after many wanderings he arrived in Lalle, in what is now the Kontagora district, and with the help of his Nupe allies, started to conquer the pagans of that part; among them the peoples of the great Gwari tribe, and there he founded the town of Kontagora.

But he was not there with the approval of the Sarkin Musulmi, who issued an edict that none should go to that part. However, when the Sarkin Musulmi died, Emoru's father succeeded him and rescinded the edict, following which all the most adventurous and turbulent of the Fulani men rushed to Kontagora to join him.

During his reign, together with the Yauri tribesmen, he is said to have 'lain waste the country for a hundred miles to the north, the east and the west, enslaving the people and enforcing heavy taxes wherever he went'. His father bestowed upon him the title of Sarkin Sudan. Upon his death he was succeeded by his son; but he

reigned for only four years, and was followed in 1879 by his younger brother Ibrahim who, keeping up the family traditions, 'laid waste and depopulated the whole country'; turning upon his father's allies the Yauri, and also the Nupe, and driving them from the country. Kontagora had now become nothing less than a vast war camp of twenty thousand men. He was nicknamed 'The eater up of towns'.

Flushed with victory he now moved south and marched on to Jebba on the River Niger, the headquarters of the British Government; but as he neared it, hearing of the armaments of the British, he stopped short of an attack upon them. The following year the British sent a force against him; he fled and they withdrew; but within a year he was raiding in Zaria and Katsina. Once again an expedition was sent against him by the British. Hearing that they were suppressing slavery, and realizing that it was mainly because of his raidings that they were against him, he retorted 'Can you stop a cat from mousing? When I die it will be with a slave in my mouth!'

He was captured, alive, but without a slave in his mouth; and, like some other Emirs of that time, he was banished by the British. It has been estimated that in the eighty years of his and his father's rule, a population of close on a quarter of a million indigenous people in that area were reduced to hardly thirty thousand.

The Sarkin Yauri, Chief of the great tribe which had been allies of his father, was called to Kontagora and installed as Emir. But he considered that to be Emir of the newly created Kontagora was a position inferior to that of Chief of the ancient Kingdom of Yauri; and he nominated his son as District Head of Kontagora, giving up to him the title Sarkin Sudan which had been conferred on the Emir of Kontagora by the Sarkin Musulmi. This proved to be most unsatisfactory; and a Nupe, one who had been a slave of humble birth, was found to undertake the task of governing a part of Kontagora. Then in 1903 the British decided to reinstate the banished Ibrahim as Emir of Kontagora; but with jurisdiction over Kontagora district only, leaving the Nupe to become Sarkin Sakaba: ten years later the Nupe resigned, and his lands came under Ibrahim. But seven years before that happening, in 1906, so much had Ibrahim reformed that the whole of Yauri came under Kontagora; and he was made a First Class Chief.

While this was going on, in 1888 the future Emir of Kontagora was born. I had met one of his sons in Kaduna; and after he had told me about Kontagora, I promised that I would one day visit it and would then not fail to call upon his father, the successor to those famed in the past for their terrible years of oppression and tyranny.

Naturally, with the Emir of Kontagora being one of the few First Class Emirs in the Northern Region, I expected to find his palace and court matching the style of the others I had been to. But to start with, the town, which is not the Provincial Headquarters, had been a disappointment to me; it did not have the vast expanse of houses and buildings behind city walls that I had expected; the palace was equally unimpressive, with no new front built as had been done with the others. The entrance hall is right on to the main road; from the outside it looks like a great thatched barn. Under one of its veranda entrances a policeman sat. I stopped and asked him the way to the palace, thinking this might be some old building no longer in use; it was he who told me that the Emir lived here.

I was directed by him to the house of another son of the Emir, who told me that he had been informed by his brother of my coming; he had booked a room for me in the Catering Rest House. Then he explained that his father was not too well and that he was an old man; but for all that would be pleased to receive me the following morning at ten o'clock. Meanwhile, if there was anything that he could do for me, any direction or information I needed, then he was completely at my disposal until I left Kontagora. It was by then getting towards evening and I pleaded an excuse; for it seemed from what I had seen and what he said that there was little of historical interest to be found there.

The following morning I was at the palace at ten o'clock, and was frankly amazed when, with my experience of African unpunctuality, I found that I was expected; not only was the Emir's son there, but members of his Council. There followed the usual introductions and courtesies—they take some time to perform in Northern Nigeria—and I was again advised, this time by the Emir's Waziri, to be prepared to meet rather a sick old man, who had insisted that he must meet me.

Inside the great entrance hall I had half expected to find, as so often happens behind unpretentious exteriors in Nigeria, the place

fabulously furnished; but, except for some old dust-covered cast-off furniture and what might have been farm implements and harness thrown in a corner, the place was completely bare. Looking up I saw what a magnificent piece of early engineering work in mud this building really was. I was told that it had stood from the time when Kontagora was first built. Beneath the great thatched roof there was a false ceiling built in two great domes. The buttresses were many feet thick. What had, from the outside, looked like a decaying building, I now saw to be one which was just being allowed to fall into a state of dilapidation. It would seem that the old Emir did not realize that his palace needed to be rethatched and decorated inside; for this was indeed a most excellent piece of early Fulani period building. We passed right through the great hall and out into a courtyard behind. Here were many buildings, and to one side a thatched canopy under which stood a magnificent stallion.

Then I saw another, though smaller, building, through the entrance of which three of the councillors had already passed. I was invited to enter and meet the Emir. The room was about twelve feet square. It was bare of furnishings; in the centre of the floor was what appeared to be a millstone let into the ground, and on this logs were smouldering. Behind this and facing the door—there appeared to be no window—an old man seated on a simple rush mat; he was wearing a white riga, his head covered. Before him was a very well-worn tin box; to one side an alarum clock; to the other an enamel bowl of gruel next to an aluminum kettle. Here was the Emir of Kontagora; the son of an arrogant, tyrannical family which had held the populace, for hundreds of miles around, in terror for scores of years; whose predecessor had been known as 'The eater up of towns', a man who had defied the British, turned and run, but only to fight another day.

His councillors seated themselves round the walls of the room, those farthest from the door shielding their eyes from the smoke floating from the direction of the logs. A folding, light-weight, modern chair was brought in for my use; then I wondered if they were all waiting for me to open the conversation, for there was silence. Then in quiet and slowly spoken voice the Emir expressed his regrets that he had not been able to meet me as he would have liked to have done; he explained that he was far from well. We

talked about the past; of his struggles to make good the depleted population, a task started by his father who, ironically, in an earlier period of his reign, had been busy depopulating it. We talked about the remaking of the great trunk road through Kontagora to the north, and of the traffic which, until now, had mostly gone by way of Zungeru Bridge and so by-passed Kontagora. At the mention of this his eyes brightened, for it would mean a revitalizing of trade in Kontagora. Then we found ourselves on common ground, for he was known to be a farmer of no mean quality; while I had dabbled in farming for a time back in England many years ago, although in Kontagora, the ground, of stone, rocks and laterite, was very different from that of Sussex; he said that all that was needed was hard work, intelligent understanding, selection and rotation of crops, together with patience.

Then he said that he was poor, explaining that Kontagora was not as well populated as most of the other Emirates. Well, he had only his forebears to thank for that, as I told him: he smiled agreement. He said that he was weary and old. At first I wondered if this was a sign that he wished the interview ended; in an effort to sound a cheerful note, I told him that my own father, who was well on the way to ninety as against his seventy-three years, walked around the village every morning and was as lively as a cricket. At this he was silent for a while. Had I offended him, I wondered, for no one else spoke? He then looked up at me and asked: 'And how many sons has your father got?' I told him, 'Four, and all of us alive.' 'Phew!' he almost spat at me, 'I have so many that I do not count them. Your father should live to be one hundred years old!' At this I laughed, he joined me; and I promised to give my father his forecast of his years ahead; with that I got up. Back in Kaduna later, I repeated this conversation to a man from that part. His comment was: 'Well, they do say that he has made every effort to repopulate his Emirate!'

As I left the old Emir, I turned and congratulated him on the superb stallion standing, held by a groom, just outside the door. He at once assured me that he would again be riding it, and very soon. And I was certainly surprised, seeing the fiery steed, when I was told that until a few months before he had regularly ridden it often both morning and evening. I then realized that it had been tethered in a position so that the Emir could see it from where he

sat each day in audience. It had now become a ritual for the horse to be saddled and brought to the door twice a day for him to inspect, and then decide to ride it 'this evening' or 'tomorrow morning'.

I am told that the Emir Umaru Maidubu, C.B.E., who died in 1961, never again rode his magnificent Arab stallion. Like all the Emirs who cannot now be privileged to die in battle, he quietly faded away, having seen the British arrive in his country, and what strange victors they had proved to have been in permitting his father and afterwards himself to remain as Emirs. He had lived to see them happily hand back all that they had won and held for sixty years.

I find in my diary a short note of my impression of him: "A most interesting and likeable old fellow.'

I had intended travelling south over the newly constructed road to Jebba, but was warned at the Rest House by both a Nigerian and an Englishman, who had come that way, that the road was then almost impassable. It was a disappointment, for I had heard that occasionally elephant and even lions were to be seen, as well as the wallows of hippopotami, and not far off the road; for how long that will continue once most of the traffic uses it is debatable.

So I had no alternative but to retrace my route to the main road I had left close on sixty miles back at Tegina; then turn south for Zungeru where both single-track rail and road traffic are ferried over the Kaduna River by a narrow bridge. I was most fortunate, for without the usual delay I was able to drive straight through and over to the small town of Zungeru which, together with Wushishi, was once the headquarters of the British Government in Northern Nigeria. But little trace of that period is now to be found there. The only relic I saw of the British and Lugard's years in Zungeru and Wushishi was in neither of these towns; but in Kaduna, where in the Lugard Public Gardens, which run along the banks of the river, there is a small iron suspension-bridge, next to which stands a notice-board declaring it to be a protected ancient monument which had been removed to these gardens from Zungeru. It was sufficiently wide for a mounted horse to pass over; but now, as a footbridge, it stretches over a tiny stream emptying into the Kaduna River.

Above: On the Niger ferry *Below*: Fish seller cutting up Niger perch

Above: The brass idols in Jebba *Below*: Juju man

The town of Zungeru comes under the Chief—called by some Emir—of Wushishi, Abubakar Agwai, who has his official house in Zungeru. I found him to be a youngish man, enlightened and desperately keen about his duties. Talking to him I discovered that he was most enthusiastic about the small school which had been started up near to his house, insisting that I must see it. After a while he introduced me to the only mistress—a shy girl with a rather sweet face—working there with two men teachers; next he told me that she was his wife. To find this with a Muslim was unusual; but it is one of the instances now found in a country where, with the heavy responsibilities of independence, rulers and leaders are setting aside the age-old custom whereby Rulers' and Chiefs' wives were kept in strict purdah, contributing practically nothing directly to the good of the State and country. Many of these women, though still in purdah, are being educated in the privacy of their own homes and, I am told by one British official's wife who was teaching some of them, now listen to the school broadcast lessons.

From Zungeru the road divides; to the left it leads to Minna, the Provincial capital of the Niger Province; while ahead is the road to Bida and the south. This one I took, and after going up a long hill, came upon a signpost to Wushishi. This town had been founded in 1885 by the Emir of Kontagora, in whose province it came, with the purpose of using it as a war camp for slave raiding among the Gwari and other tribes in that part. He appointed his son as Sarkin Wushishi; in 1901 the British confirmed the appointment, but at the same time made it a separate and independent second-grade Emirate.

The British interest in Wushishi and Zungeru had been created by Sir Frederick—later Lord—Lugard at the turn of the century, when he advanced into the Northern Region with the newly formed West African Frontier Force. Lugard had first made Lokoja, at the junction of the Rivers Niger and Benue, his headquarters; next he moved them to Jebba on the Niger; later, searching for a place nearer to the north for his advance, but dependent to an extent on the proximity of a navigable river for transport, the survey parties had suggested the vicinity of Wushishi on the Kaduna River, a tributary of the Niger; Lugard's dislike, from a health point of view, being overcome by Wushishi being several miles away from,

and above, the river. Eventually in 1901 the site selected for his headquarters was Zungeru, 'about a mile from the Kaduna River, nine miles from Wushishi, and the plans for the new capital were prepared.'

A light railway was then constructed to link Wushishi and Zungeru; its main purpose seems to have been to carry building material between the two towns, but passengers also used it. This narrow-gauge railway had its first train running before Christmas 1901. It was closed ten years later; but on Minna main-line railway-station 'Wushishi Tramway engine No. 1.' is still on exhibition. Records show that this line was made good use of, for in 1907 this engine and her sister pulled trains carrying 29,832 passengers.

But now, just as Zungeru had fallen back to being a small town, so Wushishi is just like any other sleepy village, the inhabitants of which could show me nothing connected with its past history of which they were oblivious.

The strange thing was that most of them directed me to a large clump of trees back on the main road where they said there lived 'The Queen belong Wushishi, she be getting plenty fine house.' When I arrived there I found a conglomeration of buildings and many African children running about. I asked for the Queen, wondering what historical past I might be about to discover; and after hearing some laughter from inside the building, out came a homely looking American woman, Miss St Germain. She was in charge of this mission station, the larger part of which consists of an orphanage in which there must have been a score or more children of all ages. She had been in Nigeria since 1927, and her assistant, Miss Kibby, who was as small as she was large, was 'a new arrival; I came out in 1938'. They told me that the children are, in many cases, brought there when they are born, their mothers usually having died at childbirth; also orphans found or taken to the eleven other stations of the Sudan Interior Mission in Northern Nigeria are sent to this one where young girls, often orphans who had been brought up in the place, are trained as nurses before going on to Nursing Colleges. There were dormitories filled with small cots, children's playrooms, and classrooms also for the Mission includes a school. And in the house where the two women live I at last found a link with the past, for I was shown a great decorated

baked mud archway, the entrance to the main room. This archway had stood there from the time the original mission was opened in 1904 for the S.I.M. by Dr Andrew Stirrett. He was then the only fully qualified medical man in their mission field; he remained at work until his death in Jos at the age of eighty. When he opened the station the British Government headquarters had been there only a year or two.

Bida was my next stop. Until a hundred years ago Bida was just a village. In 1857 it was first fortified by Umoru Majigi; from that time there were a series of wars and intrigues between those who were in power and those who considered that they should rule. In the early part of his reign Umoru had saluted the Royal Niger Company, but on his death the Bida army looted the Company's factory at Shonga. When he died in 1884 he was not succeeded by his son, but by Maliki of another family; but Maliki proved to be powerless and had no control over his strong chiefs; and upon his death Abubkri, son of yet another family, succeeded. He was driven out by the Royal Niger Company in 1897, and Muhammadu, son of Umoru Majigi, who first fortified Bida, was appointed; but no sooner had the British forces retired than the deposed Abubekeri drove him out and reinstated himself until 1901 when the British troops advanced on Bida, and he fled.

I was told by an aged member of one of the Royal houses of Bida, then living in what was originally the palace, that before any campaign was undertaken, the Emirs of old always consulted a Mallam who was gifted with the powers of prophecy and able to tell whether the result would be victory or defeat; for good or for bad. According to a manuscript which he said still existed, a century before the British arrived a Mallam had foretold that one day a hundred years hence there would be an attack on his country by 'a fair race who will advance from the east'; resistance to their arms would be useless; and for that reason alone it was forbidden. This he gave me as the explanation for the refusal of the Emir of Bida and his family, as well as all the Mallamai, to defend themselves against the British.

Mohammadu was then nominated by the British as Emir under a letter of appointment; he was formally installed in 1905, when the

oath of allegiance was first taken. The twice-deposed Abubekri died in Lokoja in 1911.

And so the succession had passed through three families, all of whom claimed descent from Mallam Danyo, the Fulani founder of the Bida dynasty, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule. The new ruler, in the old days, had to be decided upon as soon as possible after the death of the old one, for during the period between his death and the appointment of his successor, none of the laws could be enforced; whatever the crime, no criminal could be punished; and any prisoner who was fortunate enough to make his escape could not be recaptured.

It was market day as I entered Bida, and on the way I passed numbers of Fulani youths also going there. These Cattle Fulani often adopt a costume which incorporates the one worn in the district in which they happen to have settled temporarily. These were wearing the big high-crowned and wavy-brimmed coloured straw hats made locally; and round them, with one end passing over the shoulder, each had a red cloth decorated with coloured, silver or gold threads; a variety of cloth which for centuries has been made in those parts. But as always they carried their long lathi—cattle sticks. Then there were the hurrying women with head-loads of produce and back-packs of babies. Many of the market women carried, over one arm, a milkmaid's stool on which she would sit behind her tray of food or goods or produce, bargaining and bartering the day through. On top of the head-loads many carried sandals which they put on when they reached the market; and in the wet season, if not a straw cover, then an umbrella tops that head-load.

One of the sights of Bida is the night market. Other than on market days, during the hours of daylight there are few mammies and traders behind their stands in the market; but as the evening comes they start opening their 'shops' and light their tiny lamps. Those who come to buy will have been working during the day and only have time to make their purchases during the night. Looking down from the roadway above, the whole market place becomes a twinkling carpet of stars reflecting the gold and silver threads in the glorious colours of the Bida cloths worn by the women and the young men who wander from stall to stall.

Seldom is a festival procession or a Durbar seen in the North

without some of the famous Bida dancers. These women, who wear large starched headcloths and flamboyant blouses and skirts, huge ear-rings, many necklaces and bangles, perform a sitting dance whilst mounted on horseback. Their dance consists of waving arms and body-bending movements, together with hand and finger manipulation; the origin of this dance is lost in the past, but it is now copied by the ladies in circuses who parade the elephants.

I found that the Catering Rest House was fully booked, and went to see if the District Officer, who is responsible for it, could help me. He offered accommodation in what is known as Bida Lodge; this is close to his house and was the original residence of the D.O. It must have been erected well over fifty years ago, for it was one of the prefabricated sectional wooden houses brought out from England for Lugard's staff. These bungalows, which are built on iron posts about three feet off the ground, are made of pitchpine, and have withstood termites, which attack in those parts, over all those years. The original design was a long room surrounded by a six-foot-wide veranda, all under one roof. Rooms were then partitioned off to suit the occupant, and mosquito netting was fixed over doors and windows; these also having flap-up rush mats to protect them from winds and rain. Those Lugard houses which remain usually have the verandas filled in as extra rooms, and glass windows in place of the crude rush mats.

Set in a tree-shaded garden among green lawns and bright flower beds, these houses, especially when their roofs are thatched, can be most attractive. With the shutters open at night and punkers or large ceiling fans moving the air, they are fairly cool, as I discovered when I sat on the veranda that evening, listening to the never-ceasing croaking of the toads and watching the hundreds of fire-flies darting around, the air sweet with night-scented stocks and tobacco plants; and lighted by silver moon-flowers, which are like gigantic flat-faced white convolvulus climbing over the veranda, their petals opening with the rising of the moon and closing with the daylight, then to die.

Near-by was the Bida Club with its Old-English-style pub made from a mud house, its walls thick and buttressed as though the building had once had a second story. It even had a rustic swinging-sign outside: THE CAVE INN.

Bida was a convenient and necessary stopping place for those

travelling north by road from Lagos to Kaduna or Kano; or to Jos for some local leave. The result was that the small Catering Rest House was usually full; because of this the old mud Rest Houses, large circular buildings rather like circus 'big tops', which must have been put up quite early in the century, are always ready so that they may be used as overflow accommodation. For one memorable night, when I arrived too late to cross by the ferry, I had to put up in one of these. I was driven nearly crazy by the sound of rats scampering about; and by mosquitoes which had managed to get through a badly darned hole in the net. Otherwise I have no doubt that the place could have been made quite comfortable; certainly better than having to use a tent during the wet season.

Bida is famed for its other handcrafts besides the hats and cloth —both of which I had found absurdly cheap in the market. Here glass beads and bangles are made. Next day I went to look round a glass-works, and found one in a mud hut in a back lane; the owner told me that the family had been making beads there for a hundred years. I watched the glass-blower at work, clad only in a loin-cloth in the furnace heat; a small boy, wearing less, was working the goat-skin bellows. They were melting down glass bottles, and in the compound outside there were stacks of these, all separated off according to colours and shades, blues, greens, ambers and so on. The speed with which they made bangles and beads, followed, as they cool off, by adding twirls and twists of a second colour, was bewildering. No wonder they can sell a string of beads in Bida for sixpence—they cost five shillings in Kano airport; not a bad profit! Then they displayed some of their showpieces; decorated flower-vases and bottles which were beautifully executed by one of the older members of the family. 'They are not for sale, Master. But for you—well, how much you give?'

There was no need for a guide to the brass workshops, for the hammering can be heard a quarter of a mile away. Here in sheds, into which I first had to peer until I could see in the poor light, men sit and hammer out sheet-metal into trays, bowls, platters and all manner of articles, including ceremonial sword scabbards and coffee or rose-water jugs. I watched a superbly made chalice being embossed by a very old man, the uncle of the proprietor, who had 'worked in this shop for seventy years—before the British are coming to this part'. His eyes looked dim, yet the work he was

slowly executing was perfection; he was a master of the craft. He confessed that he now found it difficult to see even though he sat close to the door; but he could feel the design. He told me that his age was 'done past the Emir', and the Emir was then in his eightieth year.

The following day I went to see the Emir of Bida, Muhammadu Ndayako, C.B.E. Again the Emir's palace was one of those which had recently had a new front built to it; but, although he was now an old man, he had not allowed the palace to become dilapidated; all the buildings I saw were in excellent condition, the courtyards newly swept, the floors polished, the attendants in spotless gowns.

I was shown into the large room in which he received his visitors; and was left there to await His Highness's arrival. I rather expected, having heard that he was 'very Royal', that I might have to wait for an hour or even more, especially when a wicker chair was brought for me to sit on. The room was bare of any furnishings except for an old-fashioned iron double bedstead with flower-decorated posts at each corner to hold a canopy above. This stood side on against the end wall; over the bed was spread a large velvet tablecloth and on both ends a number of velvet and silk cushions rested. The floor was blood-red and highly polished; one lovely carpet lay before the bed. The ceiling was brightened by coloured rush mats showing between the beams; these supported the flat mud roof of the building. The walls were smothered with pictures and photographs; prominent among them were those of the British Royal family, all of which were hanging round an American clock with a swinging brass pendulum visible behind the glass door. I checked and found the clock was correct to the minute according to Big Ben I had that morning heard relayed, on my portable radio, through Kaduna Radio Station.

No sooner had I the time to take all this in before I heard voices followed by rustling. An attendant entered; he was probably a praise-singer extolling the glories of the Emir. Then I found myself facing the Emir of Bida, who appeared younger than I had expected, especially after seeing the Emir of Kontagora. He arrived as though floating, his great cream, silken alkyabba spread open like wings. Bida has always been famous for its tsamia silk. He was wearing a white muslin rawnni, the lower part of which covered his chin.

Immediately behind him, a secretary, or councillor (and there were a number of them with him, for he had just finished his morning meeting), presented me to him. Aged, but with thin lips and an aquiline nose, there was the undoubted Fulani Royal bearing; but after my interview I can deny that there was any sign of the pomposity suggested to me by 'very Royal'. He at once sat on the side of the bed facing the room; I then realized that it was there for that purpose alone. At the same time he asked me to again be seated; his councillors and secretary sat on the floor on either side of him. Only I sat at the same level as he; with some Emirs and rulers this is a compliment.

When he entered I noticed that he carried in his right hand a tail flywhisk; and in his left a large aluminium kettle, just as I had seen next to the Emir of Kontagora; this he placed at his side. In it he carried kola-nuts to break and hand to visitors when they appeared to be preparing to seek permission to leave—and he wished them to remain a little longer.

Although aged, the Emir was still shrewd; he was well read, was a writer, and kept himself well acquainted with what was going on in the Commonwealth and in the Muslim world. His admiration for the British Royal family was considerable, as was also obvious from the number of pictures of them on the wall behind him. Later, when Princess Alexandra of Kent, representing H.M. The Queen at the Independence celebrations, flew through from Lagos to Kaduna, she broke her journey to visit Bida and meet the aged Emir. Few outside Northern Nigeria could have realized how much this gesture moved and was appreciated by not only the Emir, but by all Northerners.

Bida was in the middle of the old Nupe Province. The Emir is a Fulani, but most of his subjects are Nupe. It is said that about a half of these Nupe are Muhammadans; under half are pagan and the rest are Christian. Before the Fulani arrived and changed the name of the ruler to the Emir of Bida, there had been a Nupe King entitled Etsu. They too had been Muhammadans; and the Koranic law had been observed, only to be modified after the British came to power. To this day the quarter of a million Nupe he rules over refer to the Emir as the Etsu Nupe.

It is interesting to search out some of the punishments awarded in the old days; neither a boy of under seventeen nor an unmarried

woman were considered adults, and therefore were not subject to the law, although he or she had to be punished in the home by parents or guardians. 'Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the tongue and ears. Murder was punished by decapitation; but a married woman who committed murder was put in a pit inside the Alkali's compound, her head only emerging, and kept there without food or water until she died, for a woman might not be killed.'

The Nupe were in advance of the Western world, even of today, in their payment to medical practitioners, since no doctor received his fee until he had cured his patient. It is said that among the doctors there were many who became famous. Obviously only patients who stood a good chance of recovery received treatment; those who had only a fair chance, or none at all, were less fortunate.

Among the Nupe in certain villages the strange custom existed of marriage between women. A wealthy woman trader would go through a form of marriage with one, or more, younger women who were supposed to be virgins. She would then send her 'wives' out to neighbouring villages, ostensibly as market women. Left there long enough, it was to be expected that these 'wives' of hers would form illicit attachments, in which event a careful note was made of the progeny. When the children reached the age of about six years, the 'woman husband' claimed them as her children; this right being based on the law that all children of a legal wife belong to the legal father. In practically every case the real father was by then unwilling to part with the children, and, after much bartering, the 'woman husband' agreed to his retaining them, but for a considerable fee which showed her a colossal profit.

This strange practice was also carried on in some other tribes like the Akoko in Kabba Province and the Ekiti in Ilorin Province. Some say that it is still practised in parts. But with the Ekiti there was a variation of the custom; this being that a childless wife would 'marry' a virgin whom she would lend to her husband, the children resulting from the mating, considered to be hers—and his. Not really so original an arrangement though when we remember that the Old Testament of the Bible tells how Sarah gave her handmaiden Hagar to Abraham; and their resultant son was Isaac. Also of the Ekiti it is said that, besides a wealthy trader woman marrying young girls for the use of her husband, she would marry a girl, quite young—maybe taking her in settlement for a debt—and

when the girl was of an age to marry, seek a husband for her; but would accept no dowry for the young wife who remained in the woman 'husband's' house—her man husband coming to her. All the children of such a marriage belonged to the 'woman husband', for whom she continued to work. It was suggested to me that this strange old custom might have been a survival of the past days of slave breeding, when villages had to pay an annual tribute of slaves to whoever was overlord of the area.

Ilorin

THE road from Bida to Ilorin, the capital of the adjoining province, and to the coast, runs west to Mokwa and then turns south. All the way to Mokwa it is a dirt road, but wide and passes through much fertile country.

At the beginning, after passing through an expanding Government educational centre, this road runs through marshes, and, after about ten miles, reaches the Kaduna River once again. Here it is hoped a bridge will be built; but I was to find the ferry of the same kind as plies the Benue at Numan. On the occasion when I went through, at the time of the installation of the new Emir of Ilorin, the river was so low that the ferry had to be poled over by eight men; a slow process. The road was packed with waiting cars and lorries; but none, not even Emirs or Ministers, could jump that queue which was on a single-track road on which it was impossible to overtake. Here one learns to be patient, for with every journey the men poling get more tired, and the wait for the return ferry becomes longer.

At long last we were across; on board with us had been a lorry carrying the staff and equipment of an Emir who had flown ahead to Ilorin; his servants had become frantic at the delay, probably having in mind what used to be meted out as punishment to those who displeased their master in the old days; for many among them looked quite aged. As soon as we were on the other side and they were able to overtake us, the lorry shot ahead. We passed it about ten miles farther on—broken down.

As we went on the scenery changed; we were getting nearer to that part known as the Middle Belt; there was the warm moist scent of fertility and growth, larger expanses of vegetation, great trees; and in places giant ant-hills, some twenty feet high, rising from among the tall elephant grass like eroded brick-coloured church spires: the Queen's chamber was probably three feet below surface.

In one place we came upon people making their way to the market. Among them were two young girls, each with a live black kid with legs tied lying in a great enamel bowl she carried on her head while she drove the nannie before her; it kept stopping to look at the bleating head-load.

Then we came upon children returning from the village school with satchels over their shoulders, some with wooden boards, used in place of slates, tucked under their arms; they use reed pens and home-made ink which they can wash off. Most of the older ones balanced bottles of ink on their heads, held erect as they darted after each other in games; occasionally, with a shriek, grabbing at the bottle to prevent its falling. I stopped one small boy who had a stone on his head. Under it was a stamped envelope he had bought in the village post office. This he told me was for a letter his father was to dictate to him for his brother who was 'a college boy in the England University.'

About twenty miles after reaching the tarred road at Mokwa we came upon a railway-crossing gate. We had at last reached the Niger, over which road and rail traffic use the same bridge. It is built in two sections, each meeting on Jebba Island. On the Island there is a large village; and being warned that I might be delayed there for an up train to pass over, I strolled round the village.

The people are a tribe called the Baedegi. They are of Yoruba extraction; but now speak Nupe. They originated as a tribe when the Nupe raided and despoiled their country Ilorin; then they migrated across the Niger to the island of Jebba. The name Baedegi is said to be a corruption of 'Enya to Gbode', meaning 'a man who speaks two languages'.

They are pagan and worship two brass idols, one male and the other female, said to have been brought from Old Oyo in about 1780. In 1900 a European stole these and removed them from

country; but they were returned. The people declare that they came back of their own account. The male figure is 'Dako Tako'; and certain days are given over to festivals in his honour, when drums are beaten for hours on end, with dancing and beer-drinking following.

I had found the village Chief who took me to the Tsafi house where the two idols were kept. We went up a winding, stone-strewn lane, then came upon an open space where many lanes met, and were faced by a locked wooden shed. The Chief sent for the Tsafi house-keeper, who arrived carrying the key. When he opened the door I could only just see the two brass idols which stood about two feet high. The shed was empty except for these. One of the figures, I saw as I got used to the poor light, was dented and slightly broken. I asked if it would be possible to have them lifted outside so that I might take a photograph of them; but it was at once explained to me that they never left the shed. My retort that I had heard they always used to stand outside and not inside the Tsafi house met with: 'That was before the white man was stoled them. Now we no get trust for him!' But we arrived at a compromise, for a small window on the side of the house was opened so that I might take my photograph—after making a cash offering to the idols through the attendant.

I was told that when the festivals are held, a black goat and a white sheep—'not a slave like the white man is telling all', are sacrificed to them. The Chief Priest, whose title is Borom Tako (I wondered if he might be the rather scruffy fellow who had produced the key and opened the shed, and taken the offering) sacrifices the sheep and the goat before the Tsafi house, smears the idols with their blood and places the flesh on the step. This ensures that any request of the gods will be granted. The Chief asked me if I had any special request I wanted granted while I was there. If so, a white sheep and a black goat could be got for me to buy and have sacrificed. I smiled and told him that the cost of the sheep and the goat would be far more than my immediate desire, and I would be out on the deal. At this he burst into peals of laughter, while the man with the key looked blankly at us both, obviously not understanding.

The Chief then came with me to the gate over the roadway-cum-railtrack. We were allowed to walk through, and he showed me in

the distance the great rounded Jebba Juju rock, which, from where we stood, appears to rise sheer from the waters of the Niger. Here, he told me, before the Mohammadan invasion and the British occupation, the pagan king-priests held many ceremonies. It seems that the rock contains a crater which might well be connected by a man-made tunnel from the base of the rock. Prisoners-of-war and, if they were not obtainable in times of distress, slaves, were dragged up this chimney-like tube to be cast down by the priests into the waters below as an appeasement to the god of the river.

He pointed out that overlooking the bridge there was the tall cenotaph built of rocks as a memorial to Mungo Park and Richard Lander. Mungo Park, having found the source of the Niger, then set himself the task of discovering its course. On his second, and officially sponsored expedition, he left Goree in 1805 with thirty-nine other Europeans; his intention being to build a boat to sail down the Niger; but eventually, with but four survivors, he started down the river in a canoe, only to perish in the rapids near Bussa in the Borgu Emirate, now in Ilorin Province. Richard Lander, a Cornishman, eventually discovered the outlet of the great river through the scores of creeks known as the Niger Delta. That was twenty-five years later.

Once over the bridge you are in Ilorin Province: Ilorin is a name which is a corruption of the Yoruba words 'Alo Erin', meaning 'The place of elephants'. At once you are conscious of a complete change in that, including the shape and build of the houses, so many of the mud ones have tin roofs, a number of them are built of wood; here the ground is fertile, and the farther south you travel the fewer are the uncultivated places. In many villages chapels and churches have been built; for Christianity had been brought into Ilorin from the south just as the Mohammadan religion came down from the north; both waited for a while before crossing the great Niger River.

In one village through which I passed, there were a number of Africans wearing long white gowns; some with scarlet sashes. They were in procession and singing and dancing to their own accompaniment of tambourines, while the women among them shook small calabash each of which was loosely encased in a net with shells and beans knitted into it. From their dancing and their happiness I imagined that this might be a wedding party; but I was

afterwards told that in all probability, since it was late in the day, they were a funeral party returning from burying one of their 'well beloved brethren'! This was their way of showing how happy they were that he had been 'gathered home'. It is said that this attitude of the mourners does bring some comfort to those of the family left. These people were probably members of the Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim, which is strong in the south. They put a swing into their hymns, the threat of fire and brimstone into their sermons, and happiness into all those who 'see the light and enter the fold'; especially during their evangelistic meetings.

In these parts I noticed that the chickens in the villages, playing 'last over the road first in the stew pot', were much larger than those in the north; and among them were many turkeys, for which Ilorin is quite famous; they send hundreds to Lagos at Christmas time.

Here is a province growing so much food that it can export much of it to the Western Region and to Kaduna, the corn going to the southern part of Sokoto Province. Here also a considerable amount of weaving is done, much of it from cotton grown and dyed in the province. The spinning is undertaken by the village women; the weaving is done by men and boys who sit on benches before horizontal looms set under the shade of trees or thatched roofs, the warp being stretched for thirty or forty feet—at times sixty feet, before them. Women also weave, but mostly using the upright loom indoors; although I did see one or two set in the open, always, it seemed, with a baby asleep on its mother's back. The cloth the women weave is about a yard wide.

Another industry, although one which is dying out, is the making of stone beads. This lantana work is believed to have originated in Old Oyo, forty miles northwards of Ilorin City, where the most suitable grinding stone is found. The lantana stone comes from the rocks found in what is now the Republic of Dahomey, to the west of Sokoto and Ilorin Provinces. The resultant bead is smooth and coral-coloured; 'as costly as gold', I was told. In the old days pagan kings paid many slaves for a necklace of these beads. In these days, one which could be worn by a ruler, usually a double string hanging to the waist, could cost more than a hundred pounds. Manufactured synthetic imitations are immediately detected, for in the real strings no two beads are alike, either in shape or colour. They are

often worn as anklets by smart young men who favour native costume.

The delightful old craftsman, into whose house I had been invited through the introduction of a missionary in whose chapel he was a sidesman, told me, as I drank tea brought to us by his granddaughter (a European-dressed operator in the telephone exchange), that he had been trained in the trade by his father 'who except but for the grace of the good God and the British would have died a slave, just as he had lived until that time.' It seems that this unique craft was brought to, and carried on in Ilorin a hundred or more years ago, by slaves who were either purchased or captured from where they were skilled in the art.

All that first night that I was in Ilorin people were entering the town in preparation for the Emir's installation the following morning. I had, during a previous visit, seen the hundreds of twinkling lights on the market stalls which filled the open space before the Emir's Palace. Now these stalls were all being moved away and the whole area swept and washed down. People were sleeping where they could; houses were crammed and eating-houses kept open all night, Ilorin being kept awake with drumming, singing, talking and shouting, while stands, canopies and barriers were being hastily erected.

By eight o'clock the next morning the whole processional route was tight-packed; and still more people were arriving, choking the streets to the city centre. Then came the Prime Minister, the Premier of the Northern Region, The Sultan of Sokoto, Emirs and many Ministers. Finally the Governor and his lady arrived; by which time all were in their seats and waiting for the terrific blasts from the six- and eight-foot-long silver trumpets which would herald the coming of the new Emir of Ilorin.

At last we saw him on his white horse, closely surrounded and followed by his councillors and *entourage*, all mounted. Grooms stood round as he dismounted before the raised dais; I could not see from where I was, but was told that many held the head, many the tail, of the frisking and possibly frightened animal.

The ceremony of installation was short; the reading by the Governor of the Letter of Appointment followed by his lifting the white and silver embroidered alkyabba over the Emir's shoulders; and finally handing him the silver staff of office of the Emir of

Ilorin. This was the signal for clapping and cheering, for the whole ceremony was being broadcast to the crowds by loudspeakers set high on posts round the area—only the V.I.P.s seated flanking the dais heard nothing.

Then, following the new Emir's speech, there was the procession of Chiefs, each at the head of a number of people from his own district. Many of the Chiefs were mounted; one Chief's horse had been trained to come up before the dais and kneel before the new Emir, as his master, mounted upon him, raised his arm in salute. This thrilled the people, who cheered wildly. There followed great cloth-covered frames like walking columns; there were tumblers who, encouraged by clapping, wanted to perform before the Emir for far too long and had to be moved on, for the procession was piling up behind them; others came beating drums, rattling beaded calabash and singing specially written songs of praise of the Emir; some were over-dressed and some under-dressed; their bodies glistening, about half a dozen pairs of wrestlers, who were getting plenty of applause as they performed before the dais, also had to be moved on, almost by threats from the police ushers; then came a section with men leading rope-muzzled hyena; there were also Juju men wearing the oddest of coverings, some with skirt-like kilts made of hundreds of pieces of coloured rags and topped by gigantic head-dresses like turbans; one within a net of large shells which had been sewn to cascade from his head like a waterfall, his two eye-pieces made of reflecting mother-of-pearl shells.

There was one Juju man who must have been nearly seven feet tall; he was painfully thin, his red dyed hair had been made to stand on end, giving him an apparently enormous head. Except for a frightening black mask and a stupid little black fur kilt about six inches thick sticking out round his waist, he was clothed only in the most amazing mass of stripes of red and yellow paint; these made it appear, as he walked with a writhing movement of his body, that snakes were completely covering him and slithering up from his feet to his head. I was told that he was possessed of magic control over snakes, and could cure a man of any of their bites, even bringing back life into one who had been dead from snake poison for a day and a night.

It was interesting to watch the reactions of the masses to these Juju men, for among the people were Christians and pagans, with

a sprinkling of Muslims. The pagans were obviously impressed, the women in particular, hastily turning their faces away if a Juju man looked in their direction; while among the men were some who stared expressionlessly. Then there were the Christians and the Muslims who rocked with laughter at the Juju men who played up to them.

The procession went on and on. The sun was rising high in the sky, and I was glad that there was an awning over our heads; but with the heat, the scent worn by so many of the Nigerians was almost overpowering. These scents mostly come from Kano where they are made; and those who cannot afford to buy a bottle of 'Binta el Sudan' pay a penny for a dab, when it is not so bad; but it seemed that shillings' worth had been bought that morning, and that scent, mixed with African perspiration, just cannot be described. Nigerians, wrinkling their noses, declare that 'the white man stinks like sour milk and rancid butter when he sweats'.

Finally I saw the police coming forward as the procession reached its end and the masses of spectators rushed towards the dais in an effort to pay their respects to the Emir, the Premier and the Sultan of Sokoto; just as their Chiefs had done each time after leaving the head of their parties to take their places among those assembled behind the great ones.

That evening the new 'widely travelled Emir of Ilorin, Mohammed Sulu-Karnaini Gambari, First Class Chief, versed in Arabic, an avid reader of history and speaking three vernacular languages', as well as excellent English, as I knew, gave a banquet in his palace to one hundred guests. I was fortunate to be among them.

The banquet was held in the inner courtyard under great trees festooned with hundreds of coloured lights which turned them into giant Christmas trees. Over the shoulders of the guests sitting opposite me at table I could see small fingers sticking through the double trellis-work screening. Then I realized that as the Emir was a Muslim, his wives and womenfolk would be in purdah; without doubt they, together with the children, would be peeping at the guests and watching the proceedings from behind the screen. A European opposite turned and tickled one tiny finger; it disappeared in a flash. Another, not so small and with the nail varnished red, came through. He gripped it and held it while girlish giggles came from behind the screen.

Then, as he turned to see what was happening behind him, I noticed that the Emir Alhaji Muhammadu Sani of Borgu, who was sitting facing me, was wearing on his right hand an enormous silver finger-ring which might have been an outsize five-shilling piece. When I showed interest in it, the Emir held his hand towards me, and I saw that it had been made from a medallion with the head of King George III on it. He told me that it had been given to his ancestor by Mungo Park; and that it was now included in the regalia of the Emirate of Borgu. Then I recollected that the rapids in which Mungo Park lost his life were at Bussa on the Niger, and in the domain of the Emir of Borgu.

It seems that there is some question about this ring, for it is said by some that the gift had been from Richard Lander who passed through that part of the country and doubtless would have paid his respects to the then Emir; probably requesting his permission to go on. This would have been about the time that Lander discovered the mouth of the Niger, in 1830. Some discussion then took place at the table; it concluded with the Emir of Borgu assuring me that I had become his very good friend, for fortunately, having had the dates of the reigns of England's Kings and Queens drummed into my head at school, I was able to remind them all that George III reigned from 1760 to 1820, during which time Mungo Park travelled in Nigeria; but Richard Lander and his brother did not reach Bussa until 1830, so that I felt that it was far more likely that the ring, as a medallion, had been given to the Emir of Borgu by Mungo Park. Later, as we left the table, the suggestion was made to me that there remained the possibility that it had been in Mungo Park's possessions retrieved from the upturned canoe when all were lost in the rapids. So far I have been unable to trace records of its either being given to the Emir, or its being lost. But bearing in mind the pride with which the present Emir of Borgu always wears and displays it, I accept the story he told me and one which I am very certain he believes.

It is from Borgu, which is in the north-west of Ilorin Province, that quantities of corn are exported over the border to the adjoining Sokoto Province. Here the population is denser than in the other parts, which have not yet recovered from the terrible losses they suffered during the time of the Fulani Empire, and their wars with Ilorin. The far north of the Emirate used to be famous for the fine

horses bred there; before the reorganization of the Northern Region, Borgu was a separate province, in size, double that of Ilorin Province.

The Bussawa claim that they originate from the Kingdom of Badar near Mecca, and formed part of a great exodus from that part when their King Kishera opposed the Prophet Mohammed. They had moved across the Sudan to a place called Asben, where they divided into many sections; one of which, under the leadership of Kishera's descendants, came west and settled in three places close to each other under the chieftainship of three brothers; in Bussu, Illo and Nikki. Bussu, being the eldest, was offered gifts by the other two; but on the succession of each Chief they performed the offices one for the other. The combined chieftainship was attacked at the rise of the Songhay power, but successfully resisted it. Later, except in the far north, they withstood the Fulani invasion; but at the end of the nineteenth century came under British protection.

The city of Ilorin is built among low hills. The Residency and the European settlement stand on one; the old city, surrounding the palace of the Emir, on another; and on the banks of the River Asa I saw the remains of parts of the old city mud wall. But what first strikes anyone coming from the north is that the Emir's Palace is surrounded by a high, cemented, stone wall and not one built of mud. The main gateway had a covered platform built above it, under which the new Emir stood to receive the acclamation of the people. Inside the gateway, and behind a comparatively small courtyard, is the Audience Chamber in which the Emir's throne, like all the others, faces the main entrance. The walls of the chamber are lined with framed photographs and pictures. I saw among them eight or nine coloured pictures of H.M. Queen Elizabeth, all exactly alike; and asked the Emir why there were so many copies displayed. He explained that they were there so that when a Chief came to pay his respects, he, as Emir, was able to present the Chief with one of these pictures of the Queen having it taken down from the wall to hand to him. The value of such a gift lies as much in its having once been on the Palace walls as in the gift itself.

In 1817, Alimi was sent by the Sarkin Musulmi to subdue the people of these parts. But in the years that followed he and his

successors had much to contend with, for there were wars and counterwars between the Olupo of Ajassa and the Alafin of Oyo. The latter had previously placed in Ilorin an Ajele, rather like a consul, to watch over his interests there. This man, Afonja by name, had ambitions to become ruler; among those he collected together to join his rebel army was 'a foreign hoard from the north'. Hearing of this, his master, the Alafin of Oyo, sent for him, but in reply received an empty cloth-covered old calabash, the meaning of which is understood in those parts to be 'Kill yourself, and send me your head in this'. The Afalin of Oyo feared that he might not be able to stand against this rebel, who was also his war chief; so he cursed the rebels and all their seed for evermore and committed suicide.

The one who led this 'foreign hoard from the north', which had joined Afonja's army, was the emissary of the Sarkin Musulmi; he then successfully turned all the rebels against their leader; and it is recorded of Afonja that 'surrounded only by his household, he fell fighting. . . . So great was the number of arrows sticking in him that he died in a sitting posture, his body being supported by the shafts of innumerable arrows showered upon him.' His body was burned in the market place. Then it was that Alimi, the Mallam sent from Sokoto, declared himself Emir of Ilorin.

The laws of succession to the Ilorin Emirate were established in about 1823 when Alimi died and Abdu-Salami, his son, was about to become second Emir. Alimi had four sons, 'the two eldest were by a handmaid of his wife, the third was by a Fulani lady, and the fourth by a slave wife.' On his father's death, Abdu-Salami, his eldest son, divided the estate into four equal parts and told his half-brothers, beginning with the youngest, to choose their portions. This they did; but when Shitta, his full blood-brother, went forward to take his share, Abdu-Salami knocked his hand away and, mixing the two remaining portions together, handed his brother a walking stick and told him to 'Go, for our united inheritance is now Royal estate which we will enjoy by turns.' The succession therefore had been confined to the families of those two elder brothers; the descendants of the other sons being told that, having had their portions, they had no further claim upon the Royal estates. Even so, to this day, the descendants of the younger brothers, more especially those of the 'Fulani lady', declare that the day will

eventually dawn when they will come into what, they maintain, is their rightful inheritance.

In 1893 Momo, the sixth Emir of Ilorin, appealed to the British Governor of Lagos to arbitrate between himself and the Alafin of Oyo, with whom he was still at war. This the Governor did, and in his camp, set between the headquarters of the two warring rulers, arranged lasting terms. But the Emir of Ilorin's people were so disgusted and infuriated by his having had dealings with any white man that they attacked him in his palace. 'After a week's defence, he blew himself up.'

The population of the north of the province are mostly Nupe. Those to the south, and in the city of Ilorin, are predominantly Yoruba. It is believed by most of them that this tribe was originally a part of the tribe which came to Nigeria with King Kishera of Badar. It is said that the second part of the migrants remained in the Bussa area; the third overran the south, including that part which is now Ilorin. Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto, the great and most reliable Northern Nigerian historian of the nineteenth century, wrote of these people: 'The inhabitants of this Province, it is supposed, originated from the remnant of the children of Canaan, who were of the tribe of Nimrod. The cause of their establishment in the West of Africa was, as it is stated, in consequence of their being driven by Yarooba, son of Kahtan, out of Arabia to the western coast between Egypt and Abyssinia."

Many of the Yoruba now profess Christianity; but the others worship gods, among them Shango, the god of lightning; he is the most powerful of the gods in Northern Nigeria. But they also worship Shango's mother, Yemagya. These gods of the Yoruba are mythological in both character and conception; I found a certain similarity between them and some of the Hindu gods. To tell their complete story would take many pages, but that part which concerns the gods of the Yoruba in the north starts with a goddess named Odudua or Odua; she represents the earth; her name means Black One; she is the patroness of love. She bore her husband, Obatala, the sky god, a son Aganju, the god of dry soil, and a daughter Yemaja, the goddess of water. Brother and sister married and had a son Orungan, the god of space between sky and earth. Orungan then fell in love with his mother and ravished her. She fled from him; but when he was about to catch her, she fell on her

back. Her body swelled out, streams of water gushed from her breasts to form a lagoon, while her belly burst open and she gave birth to fifteen gods and goddesses: they were the gods of agriculture, hunters, lightning, the moon, mountains, the sea, smallpox, the sun, vegetation, war and wealth, and the goddesses of the lagoon, the River Niger, the River Oba and the River Oshun.

To commemorate this happening, in the place where she is said to have fallen, they built a town and named it Ife, which means 'swelling up': this is the sacred city of the Yoruba-speaking tribes. The Oni of Ife, which is in the Western Region of Nigeria, is the religious head of the Yoruba, but 'he only has shadowy power', especially so in the north. The priests, who act as intermediaries between the people and the gods, hold the power, presiding at trials by ordeal, and making and selling charms. This office is hereditary.

With so many gods and goddesses, to whom many more have since been born as gods to certain other trades and pursuits, there can be few Yoruba who cannot find one to whom to plead their pardon or seek their favours. Many households have their gods in the compounds; some of these have two heads; one had four heads and goat's feet. But for any special favour or pardon, the people must approach the god through his priest.

To some of these Yoruba gods human sacrifices are known to have been made. For instance, in the annual festival of Ogun, the god of iron and of war, a dog or a cock was sacrificed; but in times of war a slave was purchased by the town or village; for the last twenty-four hours of his life he was permitted complete licence. He knew that he would die; but all believed that he would be born again as a king. Then his head was struck off upon the god's stool, his entrails exposed before the idol image, and his body hung from a tree. To Olori-merin, the god with four heads and the feet of a goat, a new-born child was sacrificed every three months. It is said that this worship ceased before the coming of the British.

Twins are not looked upon with disfavour by the Yoruba of Northern Nigeria; but if one should die, the mother gets the local carpenter to make for her a doll in the same sex as the lost baby. This they call Asshe, and it is kept in the house, for the woman believes that if she does not do this she will never give birth to another child.

Yoruba law, practised both before and after the Fulani came to power in those parts, insisted that there were to be no secret trials; all cases were heard by the chieftains and village heads in public. The cross-examination of the accused, prosecutor and witnesses was carried out by the most important of the village elders; after which the village head gave his judgement. If a fine was awarded, half went to the victim of the aggrieved family, and half to the court.

Murder committed by a man could result in his being punished by having to pay goods to the value of twelve pounds and ten shillings, or by his decapitation. If decapitation was decided upon, then the criminal was taken to the market place, stunned by 'uduro', which are heavy irons, his head cut off, and the head and body exposed for twenty-four hours and then buried naked at the place of execution. But a murderess, although she could be fined a like amount, could not be executed; she could only be imprisoned for one year.

Oddly enough the punishment for theft was more severe, there being no possibility of a fine, only execution, as for a murderer. But a woman thief was taken back to her father by her husband. The father then took her to the Chief, who had her flogged and put into prison for two or three days; if she was convicted of theft on five occasions, she was put into prison for two or three years.

A man caught at the actual time of committing adultery was put to death; but if he managed to make his escape for some time, his punishment would be a heavy fine or imprisonment for from five to twelve months. The woman was put in prison and given hard labour.

Kabba and Lokoja

TO the east of Ilorin lies the province of Kabba; this is of special historical interest to the British because its provincial headquarters town is Lokojo, the oldest British settlement in Northern Nigeria.

I never once lost interest in this route to the east, so varying are the landscapes. Practically every kind of vegetation seems to grow here. Here the population appears to be denser than farther north; or maybe it is gathered nearer to the road. Although the children, as always, waved and called to all the white people in cars 'Bature', which means 'White Man' in Hausa (they say it actually means 'Skinned One' in these parts), few of the men or women took much notice of us. Here were towering trees, dense vegetation, red dirt roads, still damp; for although there had not been rain for several days, the roads were so sheltered by the great spreading trees overhanging them that the ground took some time to dry. Then we came upon flint roads winding round hills, at time frightening in their twists, many of which seemed to be at the steepest part. But suddenly you come out on to fertile fields and lush grass; on the roadside there were small villages of huts with thatched roofs, although few houses in the towns had other than iron roofs and large wooden verandas. Some of the posts of the verandas were carved figures of men. In the towns there appeared to be fewer of the small 'shops' run by the women; these were seen only in the hamlets and small villages.

Kabba is in a valley. Its name is a corruption of the words 'Oke Oba', meaning 'Father of Hills', so called because of its proximity

to the largest of three sacred hills. The District Officer's bungalow is on the hill overlooking the town; a delightful spot with a glorious view from its veranda of tree-covered slopes on the far side of the valley. It had been some time since I had enjoyed such a view—and such welcome lager at noon.

As I sat there a man riding a bicycle came to the front of the bungalow. He stopped as he saw me there alone (my host had gone off to arrange for lunch), and I realized that this fellow was a trader, for as he chattered on he lifted from the back of his bicycle a box which he carried to the foot of the steps and in no time had spread his goods out on a cloth. But he was not the usual Hausa trader that I had come to know; he was a Yoruba, and told me he came from the Kabba district.

He had only one craft to show me; small 'thornwood' figures whittled and carved from two kinds of wood and so cleverly stuck together that the joints could not be detected. The standing figures were about three inches high; the sitting ones two. They portrayed practically every way of life of the village people of Nigeria. Some were of women bending over preparing food; or sitting before a loom with a baby on her back; women carrying sticks to market; women washing pots or gathering water at the side of a stream; men mending shoes; a fortune-teller with his shells and stones spread out before him. Then taller pieces; one, a man with a rope round his body as he climbed up a palm tree; others were canoes with men and women in them, and loaded with different coloured fruits.

These were not mass produced; every piece was individual. The carvers are ordinary village men. He asked a few shillings for each piece. 'Trade is past bad, Master; not too many white people come for this place now. I let him go small cheap for you!'

They are designed so that brown wood is used for the flesh parts, white for clothes and such things as looms and canoes, while fruits are coloured with orange and red dyes. This man, from whom I bought about a dozen pieces, told me that the very rough cut pieces are stuck together; and then the figures are finished off. He showed me his tools which consisted of three knives of different sizes, a razor blade in a handle, a small glue-pot and two bottles of dye. The wood used is of the softest kind with few grains. It might well be, as he said, growths which come at the base of trees and

briars. But the figures are so delicate that, as far as I am aware, no one has thought it worth while to pack and send them for sale in Europe or America, where there would surely be a ready market. I only wish that some could be exhibited in those countries so that the people might see what arts are to be found hidden deep in the bush of Nigeria.

I made a courtesy call on the newly-appointed Chief, known as the Obaro of Kabba. His house abuts the main road; it was then hurriedly being prepared for him by decorators who were running in and out and fixing flags and bunting on poles outside; his installation being but a few days later. A deep trench had just been piped and was ready for filling in, this thought of his to have his house-draining made good had resulted in the addition of another piece to the Chief of Kabba's regalia. A few days before, workmen had struck what they at first thought to be a length of iron piping; but which, when cleaned, proved to be a Chief's solid-gold staff which had been lost, even in living memory. It was shaped like a fairy wand, with an entwining double gold wire running its length. Who could doubt that this was a splendid omen for the future of the new Chief?

In parts of the country the forest belt is dense; the trees, among them teak with large green leaves, and enormous ebony and mahogany trees, are often draped with liana tendrils which are so tangled that it seems impossible to find a path; although men do, for I often saw one wander out, usually wearing only a loin-cloth or cotton skirt-cloth, and carrying a machete or hoe.

These men who work on the land and in the forests, are thickset, tough fellows; from their glistening muscles it is obvious that they are strong; their thick necks tell that they are used to carrying heavy head-loads, and their covering of firm flesh that they are well fed, for here food in plenty is to be found. I had never, farther north. seen such large yams as those stacked for sale thereabouts. Yams are the tubers of a climbing plant; they look like enormous long potatoes, and are a basic food of the people, just as potatoes were for the Irish. There are few animals like horses or cattle though there are many dogs; and many chickens, most of which, probably because of the amount of traffic, appeared to be more road conscious than those up north—as also were the children.

Then when we were apparently deep in the bush and away from

any visible habitation, as the road dipped to cross a bridge, we saw men and women collecting pitchers of water from the stream, or washing clothes or themselves, sometimes both; and then standing stark naked but modestly clasping their hands low before them as we passed.

When I stopped for a while by the roadside I was at once conscious of a damp stench of rotting vegetation; and heard the increasing murmur of forest sounds; while from those places where the sun managed to penetrate the leafy curtain, there came the urgent buzz of bees or some winged insects. Occasionally there was the sudden sound of breaking or falling branches; maybe one rotting and dropping off; or maybe an unseen animal moving and, unlike the noisy chattering monkeys, intently watching from among the thick foliage; but I could see nothing.

In this part of Province live the Aworo tribe.

In the old days they are said to have practised burial customs when, on the death of a Chief, they smoked and preserved his body for several months. Then his favourite wife, his boy and a slave (and sometimes more than one slave) were buried with him.

It was interesting to discover that the Igara and the Okpoto, who live in the southern part of the Northern Region, some of whom I met, share the Tibetan belief in reincarnation to the extent that the first posthumous boy-child born to a widow of an Ata or Onu—Chief or King—is at at its birth given that title; in the belief that in him has been reincarnated the spirit of his dead father.

Lokoja came in sight. This first British settlement in the Northern Region lies at the confluence of the great Rivers Niger and Benue and nestles at the foot of Mount Patti. It was originally purchased from the Ata of Igala by treaty with Her Britannic Majesty on September 6th 1841. The land on which Lokoja stands was bought for seven hundred thousand cowrie shells on the instalment system, one fifth cash down and the balance over five payments made annually. In those days the cowrie shell was the currency of the country, and one hundred cowries were worth one and a half pence; so the cost to the British Treasury was under forty-five pounds sterling.

The story of the British and Lokoja, and indeed of the Northern Region, had commenced many years before that time, though. In

his search for the mouth of the River Niger, Richard Lander had, in October 1830, passed the confluence of the Niger and the Benue. In 1832 he was the leader of an expedition up the Niger. But it fell to the credit of Lieutenant William Allen, another member of the expedition, to see the possibilities of trade at that place where the two rivers joined. His mind was not entirely filled with ideas of barter of goods for elephant tusks, hippopotamus teeth, indigo, palm oil and skins; he also saw it as a suitable place to establish a settlement which might become an example of peaceful living to the many tribes for ever at war in the vicinity.

The expedition had travelled in two ships, the *Quora* and the *Alburkah*. The *Alburkah* was of particular interest because she was the first ship built of iron to cross oceans anywhere in the world: only her decks were of wood. These two ships anchored off the present Lokoja town, and during January 1833 there was set up a warehouse-store for trading. Two months later they sailed down the river. They had done little trade, and left with only three hundredweight of ivory. But fever, then called miasma, brought about the death of thirty-eight of the original party, including Lander. Only ten of those who had left England returned.

This expedition had not been entirely unsuccessful though, for during those two months one party had set off up the Niger and reached Rabba; and another went over a hundred miles up the Benue.

Then an organization in England called 'The Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa', who heard reports of the expedition and Lieutenant Allen's suggestion of establishing a settlement which would be an example to the peoples of that part, considered it a worthwhile proposition. Especially, as far as they were concerned, with the idea of starting a centre from which to stop the transport of slaves from that particular area; for it was known that hundreds of them were being loaded into canoes in that part and taken down to the slave ships waiting at the coast.

The British Government were approached. They had abolished slavery in the United Kingdom, and were then fighting European participation in shipments of slaves from Africa; it was considered their duty to see that those still enslaved in the interior of Africa were freed. Besides this, the trade angle was one which was

certainly not to be overlooked, for obviously here was a very large potential market—both ways.

Therefore the next expedition which set out was one in which the British Government had a considerable interest; and one in which they participated, initially, to the extent of thirty-eight thousand pounds. So that this new expedition may have been considered largely a Government responsibility. Its official purpose was to make treaties with those Chiefs whose lands reached down to the banks of the River Niger; to get them to agree to abolish slavery. In return for which the British undertook to send trading vessels at regular intervals to exchange merchandise for the products of the country. In addition to this, a model farm, financed by private organizations but receiving official support, was to be established at the confluence of the two great rivers. This was to be an exhibition centre, in the middle of Africa, of peace, good will and profitable methods of agriculture. It was hoped that this experiment would result in the surrounding tribes emulating its way of life, and also in gradually bringing about the complete abolition of slavery over ever-increasing areas.

Captain Trotter was in charge; and among those included in the expedition was Lieutenant, by then Commander, Allen. With them was a Church Missionary Society catechist named Samuel Crowther. He was a freed slave who had been rescued from a captured slave ship and taken to Sierra Leone. There he had attended the C.M.S. school, and showed such promise that he was sent to England; he completed his education in London. Crowther was later ordained, and still later became the first African Bishop. He was probably the greatest West African of his time.

The expedition started well. Within three weeks of reaching the coast and moving up the Niger, making treaties with the Chiefs as they went, they reached the confluence; and here was made the famous treaty with the Atta of Igala for the purchase of the area necessary for the farm in that part, now Lokoja. They unloaded stores, tools and agricultural implements, and started clearing the ground. Then, leaving those who were to establish and work the experimental farm, the three ships of the expedition continued their voyages; two up the Niger and one up the Benue.

Within a few days the waters of the rivers began to fall, and sickness broke out; with several people dying, the ships with

depressed crews returned to base. Although all the leaders were keen to remain, the sickness quickly spread; and Commander Allen, who had before seen the results of these dreadful fevers, decided upon an evacuation. Within a month of arriving at the confluence, all the Europeans had gone. The farm was left to the charge of Ralph Moore, an American negro. 'Of the one hundred and forty-five Europeans who left England, forty-eight died, and over ninety suffered the dreadful fever within two months of their arrival in the river.'

The 'dreadful fever' was malaria: at that time its cause and its cure were unknown—undiscovered. In those days the sickness was believed to be brought about by the moist bad air from the river swamps; hence the name, mal meaning bad, and air—malaria. Every conceivable precaution was taken to prevent this 'bad air' entering the ships. Special ventilating systems were fitted to ensure that only clean air could enter. Orders were given that no one was to be exposed to the morning or evening dew or to the sun between the hours of eleven and three; or go out at night between sunset and the hour after sunrise. Those who, by reason of their duties, had to do so, were made to wear thick gauze masks through which to breath.

Yet, in spite of these tragic happenings, and apparently ever-present threats of fevers, Commander Allen still pressed for a colony to be set up at the confluence. His suggestion was that it should be manned by men of the country; men such as freed slaves from Sierra Leone, or American negroes brought back across the Atlantic. There still remained those two great incentives: the abolition of slavery and the opening up of the country for trade.

Then the whole picture suddenly changed. The discovery was made that quinine was a fairly reliable preventative as well as a cure for malaria. Yet it was still not known that mosquitoes, and not the swamps, were responsible for the fevers.

Another expedition set out in 1854; the twelve Europeans in this all returned alive. The expedition, described as a 'Voyage of Exploration' was to explore the Benue farther up than Lander had done in 1832; to examine the slave trade in those parts; to study the possibility of trading with the people; and, at the same time, to endeavour to discover the whereabouts of Dr Barth, who had left

England five years before on an expedition there and not been heard of since.

On arrival at the coast, it was found that a Mr Beechcroft, who was to have led the expedition, knowing the country well, had died. Dr William Blakie, a young Scot, took over as leader. They arrived at the confluence on August 4th 1854; and after remaining there for three days, continued up-river. On his return to the confluence, like Allen had done, Blakie climbed Mount Patti and from there looked upon the surrounding country. He also saw the great possibilities of a future settlement which would fit in with all that he had found during his tour of exploration.

They had not found Barth; but they heard news of him which was only seven weeks old. During the three and a half months that they were in those parts the expedition collected valuable information regarding the geography of the country, the people, their languages, their customs and their attitude towards the white man—with whom they were willing to trade. They brought back to England products from the country; principally ivory.

In London Blakie made his report. With this he started to convince the British Government of the favourable interest of the natives; and the value of their produce. One point he brought out was that England had imported great quantities of palm oil that year from the coast of West Africa, yet how much more would be bought if only they could penetrate the country by way of the great rivers; for he had seen thousands of oil palms as he moved along the Niger and the Benue. He put forward Allen's proposal that freed slaves might, especially if they originally came from Nigeria, be sent back there to man the settlement, and start life anew. He went even further, for he suggested that they could eventually become the traders and representatives of the large companies.

The final paragraph of his report reads 'Let Britain not leave to other nations to finish what she has begun, but let her pursue her labour of love and aim at acquiring and retaining the glorious title of Friend of Africa.'

Crowther added his contribution by pressing the Church Missionary Society to open up the country by sending missionaries farther inland, saying 'I believe that the time has fully come when Christianity must be introduced on the banks of the Niger.'

They were successful in their efforts. On January 1st 1857 a contract was signed with MacGregor Laird for one ship a year to go up the Niger. The first ship under contract was *The Dayspring*, which, several years later, was wrecked on the Juju rock at Jebba, stranding the survivors there for a year until the next ship arrived. Relics of *The Dayspring* are preserved on Jebba railway-station. Both Blakie and Crowther had been on its first voyage to the confluence.

Finally, about two years after this first new expedition arrived on the Niger, Blakie (having charted the river and established a number of stations along the banks) informed the British Government that a spot, close to where Allen had laid down the farm, was, in his opinion, the most suitable for a British settlement. And in October 1860 the town, conceived twenty-eight years before, was at last christened Lukoja.

There has always been some difference of opinion as to how this name came about. The son of Abiga, who was one of Blakie's interpreters, and who became the second Chief of Lokoja, insisted that his father had told him the name came from 'Loko ja', meaning in Hausa 'The red Oroko tree', which Blakie found on Mount Patti. But the Aworo people who lived in that part insist that the area was before known as Olu Akoja; named after a past Chief of theirs. From that came Lukoja, now Lokoja.

Blakie had remained there until late in 1864, by which time he was a sick man; he had, during his stay, established good feeling among the tribes (who, in some cases, even moved into Lokoja to be under his protection) through the freed slaves from Sierra Leone brought with him. He made friends with Chief Masaba of Bida who helped him considerably. In the absence of all the support he demanded from the British Government he had to rely more and more on the Chief. The consequence being that, although he never lost sight of the original intention to free slaves, and had forbidden their being brought through the settlement, he had no alternative but to turn a blind eye on the canoe loads which were being shipped down the river.

In Lokoja I saw, standing close to the ferry, an enormous old cotton tree; it must have been over fifteen feet in diameter. Like so many of these old trees, although much alive, it is hollow, and has a small entrance at ground level just large enough to crawl

through. There is also another entrance hole about thirty feet above, from where the great branches spread out. It is said that this old tree was used as a slave store; into it were pushed as many slaves as it would hold; the base was then closed and guarded. Food and water were lowered to the poor wretches through the hole above; and here they remained until canoes came at night to the river bank. Then, shackled and chained one to the other, they were dragged out and driven to the canoes to be loaded for the journey down river. No plaque marks this tree to tell of its historical association with the past; but it is a story known to all those who live there. That tree is now surrounded by stands for the bicycles of well-paid Africans employed in the adjoining boat-yard, men who ride between their homes and their work.

When Blakie left, trade had already started to flow; the population of the settlement was about two hundred. By 1871 the population had increased to five hundred, and numbers of traders were arriving. In 1877 George Goldie arrived in Lokoja. He saw how large were the numbers of commercial concerns; how they were competing one against the other; how the Chiefs were pitting one against the other and demanding 'presents' for the privilege of trading. He could see that future cut-throat competition would result in the trade becoming useless to Britain. By 1879 he had convinced the large commercial concerns of the stupidity of their policy, and they amalgamated to become the United Africa Company. Three years later its name was changed to the National Africa Company. It had become a great power in the land and bought out the two large French concerns which had started up in Nigeria.

Under Goldie trade increased rapidly. The capital of the new Company was now a million pounds, and at his instigation the British Government granted it a Royal Charter, which created the Royal Niger Company. With its creation Lokoja became the advance headquarters of the Royal Niger Company Constabulary. Yet although the Company had been incorporated for trading purposes, the original objects for opening up the settlement were not forgotten, and the abolition of slavery was very much to the fore.

In the compound of the Church Missionary Society's school, which is the site on which Bishop Crowther had built his house,

there stand two broken iron bars. One writer, a Britisher who arrived in Lokoja in 1926, says that these were 'iron bars over which the freed slaves jumped, as a symbol of their freedom.' But the story told me by the African clergyman who was then occupying the bungalow in the compound on the site of Bishop Crowther's house was that these were parts of a campanile on the top of which was a bell; this stood in the Royal Niger Company's compound. A slave who escaped had only to reach this place, pull the chain which rang the bell, and the Company's agent immediately came out and enlisted the man into some branch of its service; often in the constabulary. This was the beginning of later extensive efforts by the British to stamp out slavery in the North.

In January 1897 Sir George Goldie, Governor of the Royal Niger Company, 'at the head of a force of thirty officers and other ranks, five hundred and thirty Hausa constabulary and nine hundred carriers' left Lokoja for Kabba in response to a request for help from the Chief of Kabba, who was being threatened by the Emir of Ilorin. They arrived in Kabba to find that the Nupe had retreated, at which Goldie proclaimed to the assembled people that henceforth they were under the protection of the Royal Niger Company and also that slavery was abolished for all time. Then he proceeded to Bida, which he took, and then made the same proclamation. Next to Ilorin, and did likewise. Two months after he had left Lokoja he was back again.

But in London it was obvious that the Royal Niger Company was becoming too powerful in the land, and the British Government decided to cancel the original Charter and take over responsibility for the country.

The taking-over ceremony of January 1st 1900, on the Royal Niger Company's parade-ground in Lokoja, must have been quite picturesque, with the colourful uniforms of the Royal Niger Constabulary on one side of the hollow square and the West African Frontier Force on the other, facing the flagstaff from which floated the flag of the Company. With this being lowered and the Union Jack run up, and Colonel Frederick Lugard, Her Majesty's High Commissioner, reading the Queen's Proclamation—translated into Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba—the transfer was completed.

From Lokoja Lugard commenced his subjugation of the North;

later moving his headquarters first to Jebba, then to Zungeru and finally to Kaduna. But here in Lokoja were stationed the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the West African Frontier Force.

In Northern Nigeria Lugard introduced indirect rule, for when he had suppressed the Emirs and rulers, he was faced with the problem of a vast territory to control and administer with very few officials. By that time he realized that, besides the palaces, the wives, the courtiers and slaves (a court much the same as those of the Sultans of the Sudan and Middle East) there existed in the North an excellent system of administration, part of which had come down from the old Habe Kings, which ensured the maintenance of law, order and justice; and provided a system of collecting the taxes.

Realizing that their system could continue successfully, Lugard decided to allow the Emirs to continue ruling through their own officials; but each court was to be under the supervision of a British Resident. He first insisted that the Emir must surrender his sovereignty; having done this, he handed back all the power he could which resulted in the Emirs losing little, if any, dignity with their people.

All these Emirs, who were in the main descendants of Usuman dan Fodio's flag-bearers, when reinstated by Lugard received a letter of appointment in which was laid down the conditions under which they were given back, and how they should in future administer, their Emirates.

The Resident was there to inform the Emir of the British Government's wishes. He was there to ensure that the country was administered by the Emir as laid down by Lugard, and in accordance with any changes made from time to time by the British. He was there to interfere in the traditional Emirates system of government only to the extent that he would check abuses. By his experience he was able to advise the Emir how to prune and improve on the previous system of government, and shape it to fit in with the practices and ideals of the British.

The main task at this time was to ensure that slavery was abolished, although all subjects remained subject to the Muslim law of the Emir's courts; to put a stop to all forms of cruelty, which included cannibalism and human sacrifice among the pagans; and to see that corruption and bribery were stamped out—no easy task

when dealing with a people who had before been ruled by fear, and who still had the same officials over them.

Lugard had instructed the Residents to build on the present Muslim law which had been practised in the land. They were to treat the Emir in such a manner that he would not lose face among his people; but at the same time the Emir was left with the full responsibility to the British for his Emirate and the collection of taxes.

Over taxes there was a slight alteration; the Fulani system of taxation had been complicated and consequently open to abuse. Their system was replaced by a single tax levied upon each village. These taxes were collected by the Village Heads who passed them on to the District Heads; by these they were paid into the Emirate's Treasury. A percentage of these was then passed to the central British Administration; at first this was a quarter, later half, the amount collected. It was used to provide trunk roads, railways, telegraph and postal services; and later, health, education and agricultural facilities. But the rest of the money was left at the disposal of the Emir's governments. It was for them to ensure that their officials received their regular salaries; after which they could do more or less as they pleased with the remainder as long as it was used for administration of the Emirate. The spending was subject to the advice and guidance of the Resident.

To Lokoja were banished those Emirs whom Lugard had cause to depose; either because of their unwillingness to submit to the British Government's policy of the abolition of slavery and cruelty, or because of their misuse of the power which had been handed back to them. In Lokoja are now to be found the descendants of many of the retainers and followers of those who died in exile; while in more than one case the original retainers, now very old, still live there.

In Lokoja there still stand eight wooden bungalows raised on iron pillars, just the same as the one I had stayed in when at Bida. These are known as Lugard houses, since it was he who brought them out from England; and still, as then, they house senior Government staff, though now they are Nigerians. None of those houses that I saw had anything approaching the glorious flower-gardens which were described to me as of old; they had been tended by those who retained a nostalgic memory of and longing

for England. All these now partially neglected gardens have great trees overhanging the flowering bushes of pink and red hibiscus, pink oleander and scented white jasmine crowding the compounds; while masses of colourful creepers and bougainvillæa climb to enclose most of the verandas, even spreading over the roofs.

When Lugard took over for the British Government, there were six commercial concerns with warehouses, stores and agents in Lokoja; now there are two. There is a marine road running alongside the river; but where the long-boats tie up it is still known as 'the beach'. One can still see the old wood-burning stern-wheel steamers, with their great paddles flapping round and churning the water. There are also dozens of long houseboats, like giant canoes with hooped straw-matting coverings.

Cotton has been growing in those parts for as long as can be remembered; as early as 1900 the British Cotton Growers Association opened a ginnery in Lokoja. It is still working, and, only as recently as 1959, was its old equipment replaced with more modern machinery.

Yet another 'first' in the North is the Holy Trinity School, originally the Church Missionary Society one, and opened by Bishop Crowther in about 1864. Until that time, in the North, there were only Islamic Schools attended by Muslim children: now schools are open to all, whatever their creed.

Makurdi

TO get from Lokoja to Makurdi, the capital of the adjoining Benue Province, it is necessary to take a ferry down the Niger for some miles to Icheu, and make an advance booking for a special trip from the jetty near to the old slave-store cotton tree.

The ferry I went on was a barge with planks on which to run my car. Alongside it was tied a small steam-craft. No sooner had we run the car on board and its wheels been tied down than we cast off. I then had time to look round the small steamer with its crew of three; one at the wheel, another in the engine-room and the third, a deck hand. I found a single cabin-cum-saloon fitted with bunk, table and chairs, toilet, kitchen and a refrigerator, for these boats are used by officials passing up and down the Rivers Niger and Benue on duty; many make them their homes for a week or more.

The Niger is wide in this part; buoys are moored every two or three hundred yards to mark the deep-water channel; between these pass steamers going down to the coast. Only here and there were mud- and sand-banks to be seen; in parts reeds and rushes and mangrove swamps hid them from view. The flood plains on either bank were covered with vegetation; there was no doubt as to their fertility if only they could be drained. In the distance there were green rolling hills, some rising high; nowhere could I see anything like the savannah I had got so used to farther north.

It took us well over half an hour going down-stream before I could pick out the worn landing place. As we went towards it I

saw people waiting there to scramble on board the barge, never knowing when it might return to Lokoja.

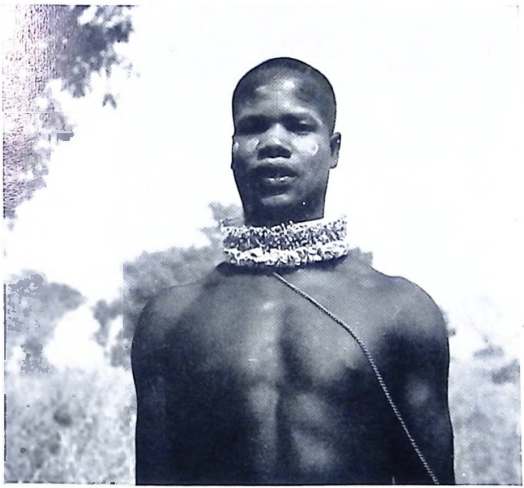
Driving off to the east over a dirt road I came upon a number of men carrying on their heads great clumps of palm oil fruits which, when the sunlight catches them, shine like prismatic balls. These vary, but most are about the size of a bucket; they look like giant-sized porcupines, and have dozens of shining fruits, much like large hard grapes, held close between the spikes. When ready for cutting, which is done by slicing off the whole clamped lump with a knife, the fruits are either blue-black or ruby red, depending upon the variety.

In Southern Nigeria, including the southernmost parts of the Northern Region, there are said to be about three million of these indigenous oil palms. In these days most of the fruits are taken to mills where the oil is extracted and exported; as are the kernels. The country people also extract oil for their own use. The nuts are boiled for about twelve hours, and give a red oil; this is called Main ja, and used for cooking. After this is drained off, the sediment is stood out in the sun for three or four days to become dry; after which it is fried and pounded in a mortar to give a black oil called Adeili, which is used for lighting; and also said to be an excellent purgative. Some of this palm oil is made into soap, either in the homes of the people or in factories now opened up. But all Africans insist that the best oils are those produced by the old traditional village methods of hand extraction.

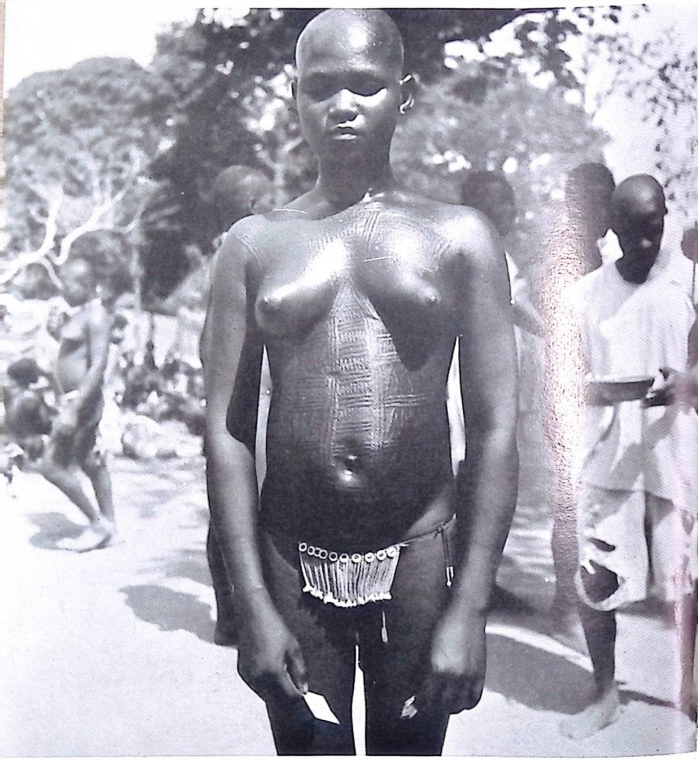
It is recorded that the first shipment of a few casks of 'Oyle of Palm' was carried to England by Captain Welsh in 1588. Now nearly a quarter of a million tons of palm oil, and double that weight of palm kernels, are exported each year from Nigeria.

How little was exported from the country in those past days can be judged from the records of the shipment carried by Captain Welsh: 'Pepper and elephant's teeth, oyle of palm, cloth made from cotton wool and curiously woven, cloth made from the bark of palm trees'. Three years later he carried back to England '389 sacks of pepper, 150 elephant tusks and hippopotamus teeth, 32 casks of oil of palm' and probably on each occasion a few slaves as make-weight; but of them there is no record.

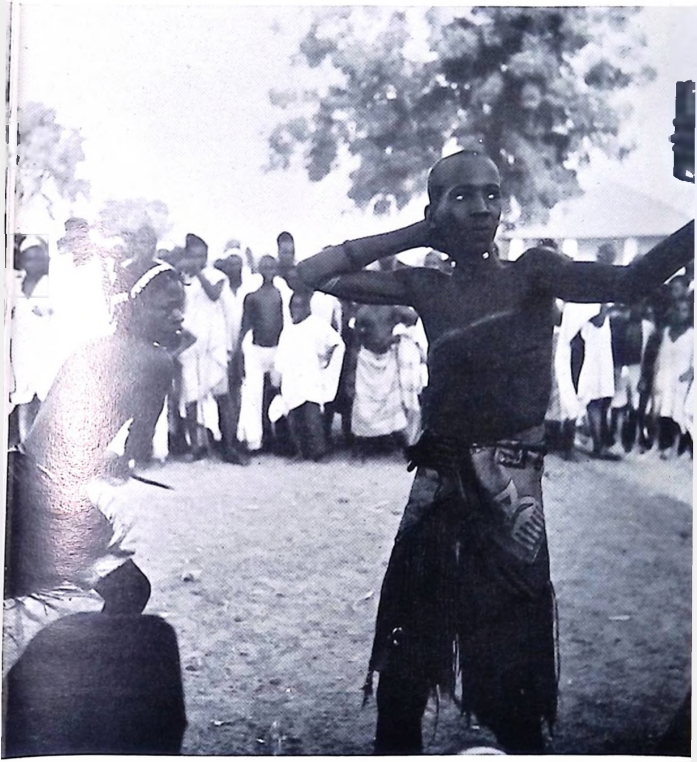
Also on that road I came upon men with large calabash on the backs of their bicycles or on their heads; and carrying over their



Above: Young husband with three of his wives
Below: A Pagan wearing a bead ruffle



A Pagan girl recently tattooed



A Fulani boy undergoing flogging ordeal

Above: Mrs. Ramsey with Jonathon
Below: Miss Lewsey with some of her family

shoulders a number of smaller calabash together with a loop of thick rope. They were palm-wine tappers. With the rope hooped round themselves and round the trunk of the palm tree, they work themselves up to the top by their feet. They then make a deep puncture in the tip of the trunk; from this a milk-like substance oozes, and a calabash is fixed below to catch it; these are emptied every day. The 'wine' is allowed to ferment for some hours, and then becomes the local beer seen on wayside stalls bubbling out from the tops of uncorked bottles awaiting customers. The tree eventually dies—bled to death.

Often the men carrying the clumps of palm fruit will be accompanied by their wives who also carry a load; but usually theirs is in a basket. The load often consists of a large bunch, if not a stem, of green plaintain bananas which, when fried in palm oil, make a good meal. You can hear these people talking to each other long before you come upon them; the man will probably be twenty yards ahead of the woman, and they shout at the top of their voices, the man seldom looking back. This form of conversation takes place all along the road, even between a string of women. Seldom did I hear men or women singing or whistling; their conversation was of two kinds; either shouting as if a terrible row was going on between them; or the shouting intermingled with shrieks and peals of laughter.

Generally the people of the southern part of Nigeria are a noisy race; in times of exuberance they are given to back-slapping and pushing to elaborate a point. When overcome with laughter—or embarrassment—they affect a gait which makes one imagine their bones have turned to jelly. They always seem to imagine everyone else is deaf, and in towns and villages raise their voices to get above the radio sets, none of which, it seems, have volume controls. In the northernmost parts there is a quiet dignity about the people's conversation; even during festivals there would appear, at least to southerners, to be an unnatural restraint. If in a northern town there is shouting and screaming, it is fairly certain to come from the Sabon Gari, the Strangers' Quarters, where 'native foreigners' live and trade. The High Life abandoned dancing and drumming, which was the rage of the West Coast, had not crossed to north of the Niger—other than to the Sabon Gari districts—while I was there. It was far too noisy and undignified to 'catch on'.

Unless they have been forewarned, heads of states and such people being received at a Northern Region airport or railway-station might well be confused by the welcome they receive from the waiting crowds, who stand in complete silence; only a few of the men might raise clenched fists. Maybe there will be an attempt by a European to lead them in some mild very self-conscious clapping, but there is never any cheering. If the visitor should be greeted by shouts, then he has cause to concern himself.

After some time we joined the main road, the surface of which is perfect; but as such encourages crazy driving. I soon learned to keep well away from the old and overloaded lorries; but it was usually they who swung out and overtook us. One could only slow down and pray that their swaying loads, topped by passengers, would 'stay put', at least until they had passed.

This part appeared to be more populated, the people more sophisticated, many of the men wearing slacks and shirts—and sun-glasses. And whereas in the north the wayside stalls carried bottles of mineral waters, here many sell beer; both imported and Lagos brewed. The men of these parts, more so the Tivs, are great beer-drinkers. Among the younger ones the done thing is to drink imported beer; in the hotel the empty bottles remain on the table when another round of drinks are brought so that your friends can see how much you can consume and how much you can afford to spend.

I drove on to the fairly recently constructed capital town of the great Tiv tribe. The Tiv tribe is divided up into dozens of clans, and none have a town of any size; they prefer to live in small communities or villages. They are generally a hardworking, pugilistic and intelligent people who have among them many educated young men. I found that they certainly do not lack confidence, and tend to be a little scornful of their brothers who live farther north. Gboko, their headquarter town, I found disappointing from an historical point of view; but interesting in that a quite unique Government Chamber was then being completed. It looked a cross between the design of the Albert Hall in London and the Coliseum in Rome.

The Tivs are a thick-set stocky people, with thick lips and rather coarse features. They are referred to as a hairy race. This I can confirm; I knew one young Tiv in Kaduna who changed his style

of facial decoration almost monthly; I have never before seen so many styles of beards, whiskers and moustaches tried out. In the villages, so I am told, older men can be found with beards down to their chests. In Lugard's time they were known as Munshi; today, for some reason I could not discover, they are not too happy about that name, more especially the young Tivs in the large towns of other provinces.

They are clever drummers and still use a method of signalling in the villages called 'Giddi Ku', by which messages are sent for up to twenty miles. Each of the drums used is made from a hardwood tree trunk which has been hollowed out through a slit in its side; this stands on two legs. It is struck with two wooden sticks with angled knobs. They are not talking drums; but through them different signals are sent out for marriages, deaths, hunting, ordeal; and were used for warning of attack or the call to war. The Tivs are famed for their dancing and singing, each of the clans or sub-tribes having their own particular dances. These are most intricate and it takes many years of practice and concentration to accomplish and memorize the many movements.

Although Christianity is spreading, especially among the educated Tivs, they are a pagan people, worshipping many gods. Wooden images and various other symbolic objects are set up to represent gods; sacrifices are offered to these. But of them all Awandu is the Supreme Being, directing the world and having power over the elements; prayers for rains are always offered to him. Thunderbolts are thrown down by him, and the fortunate possession of one of these ensures protection from attack by bad spirits and promise of a long life.

Here trial by ordeal was practised when any member of the tribe was suspected of causing the death of another either physically or by other means. When a death was not attributable to old age, and the family suspected that someone was responsible, they could call for a trial by the Sarkin Gwaska after paying his fee of twelve shillings.

The ordeal practised is known as 'trial by sasswood', the poison being extracted from the inner and outer barks of sasswood; or from a mixture of poisons from many trees, shrubs and climbers which together are called Gwaska. This is beaten in a stone dish with water, boiled and then strained. Usually the red poison would

be vomited; but if salt were added, it caused it to have immediate effect, and was more deadly. The Sarkin Gwaska did indeed have the power of life or death in his hands, for if he desired the death of the accused, or if a sufficient gift was not handed to him by the relatives of the accused, he simply introduced salt beneath his finger-nails and dipped them in the draught before handing it over.

In these days in the villages, chickens act as stand-ins for both the accused and his accuser, each having his particular fowl as representative. The nominee of the one which dies is judged guilty, and compensation is demanded of him. This does stop the old 'murders by sasswood' of those who could not buy the judge's favour.

Still farther to the east, across the plains from the Tiv country, lies all that remains of the fabulous kingdom of the Jukons, a tribe which has a proud history of glories in the fifteenth century. Referring to the time when they controlled a very considerable area of the Southern Sudan reaching to Kano, Sultan Bello has written of them as one of the seven greatest kingdoms of the Sudan.

The Jukons claim that they originally came from Yemil, to the east of Mecca. Under King Agadu they marched out to make war against the Prophet Mohammad; but, on the advice of an old man they met on the way, returned to Yemil. The Prophet heard of their intentions and of their turning back, and sent them a letter together with presents; but the people of Yemil feared that behind this there might be a trap, and they fled the country, finally reaching the area west of Lake Chad. Here a number of them stayed to found the city of Kukawa; and it is said that with them remained the Prophet's letter.

King Agadu continued south with his remaining followers, and made his capital to the north-east of Wukari, at Kororofa; this has now disappeared. From that time they plundered and made war to the north-west, but, with the Fulani Jihad, they retreated and their capital was destroyed; finally a remnant returned to build the walled city of Wukari, the Sarkin Wukari agreeing to pay tribute to Bauchi. The headquarters of the tribe, under the leadership of the Aku of Wukari, who personally is still of importance in the Northern Region, is at Wukari.

By ancient law the King of the Jukons was only permitted to rule for two years; and if during that time he showed any signs of the slightest sickness, even a cough or a sneeze, he was put to death. The succession passed to any direct descendant of any previous king; and the one who wished for the kingship had the job of slaying the reigning monarch. But the king was warned of this intention, for by custom the intending anarchist had to enter the King's Mess, walk round and out, after which it became his duty to attack the king at the first opportunity. If this was not possible before the annual festival when the king was, by custom, obliged to go to the place of sacrifice, the king-slayer waylaid him and made an attempt to kill him. If the king managed to survive and kill his would-be slayer, another candidate came forward, until eventually the king was dispatched.

The Royal corpse, with four men to guard it by day and night, was laid on a bed over a smouldering fire for about three months. Only after that period was the king's death announced to the headmen and members of his family. The king-slayer was then seated on a chair; before him, sitting on reversed household mortars, sat the priest and five or six of the important Chiefs. The priest declared that he wished to select a king; the Senior Chief then handed him a whip and a cap. The whip was wrapped round the candidate's neck, and the cap placed over the Royal head-dress, which was a long plait coiled on the top of his head. The candidate had to twist his head sharply at the twinge of the whip, and if the cap remained on his head he was declared king.

That night, attended only by the Priest and the Senior Chief, the body of the dead king was dressed and mounted before the new king who took it to the Royal burial vault which had already been prepared.

This custom of murdering the king was broken by King Agadu, who himself employed a Hausa bodyguard to save him from attack when his two-years' reign expired. Under their protection he reigned for eleven years.

Although the King's Minister for foreign affairs was always a Muslim, the Jukon remained pagan. Among their beliefs is one that each man has a body, a soul, a shadow and also a ghost, but only that part of the ghost's body which is above the abdomen is ever visible. They say that the sun travels by day, while the moon

travels both by night and day; an eclipse takes place when the sun is caught by the moon.

The Residency in Makurdi is in a commanding position, being on the top of the hill around which the Provincial Offices, most of the Europeans' and Company Managers' bungalows, the Bank, the Makurdi Club, and the Catering Rest House, are grouped. Looking down from the Residency tree-framed lawn during the evening, as I did on my first night there, a glorious sight lies almost at one's feet; for below runs the great smooth spread of the River Benue, and over it the brilliantly electric-lighted bridge which appears like a flashing diamond bracelet lying upon a strip of mirror. In the moonlight the far bank of dense trees and bushes become like dark-green velvet, lighted here and there with golden stars, which are in reality the tiny oil lamps in scattered hamlets or small hurricane lamps in the hands, or on the heads, of fishermen on their way to or from the river.

The next day, not far from the bridge-head, I found the quite famous boat-yard. Its manager was then Dick Pomeroy, a Cornishman. Here the ferries and boats which ply the Benue and the Niger, but not the large steamers, are built and repaired. At that time two large boats were on the stocks; and a new launch had just been completed for the Medical Services. I was invited to join the doctors and 'Penny' Weston, the hospital matron, on its testing voyage. Their interest was in the boat's performance; my interest was in the river life.

On both banks we came upon the odd one or two fishermen's huts made of mud with thatched or flattened tar-barrel roofs; always with many naked children and dogs running round. In several places, a short distance from each other along the river banks, patches have been worn, for from these, at evening time, crudely constructed giant cane-hooped nets fixed to the bank are lowered to remain below the surface of the muddy Benue for the night. Next day they are lifted on their hinges to a vertical position; the fish which have been caught in the net are then removed. There is no bait; it would seem the fish try to find their way up from the bottom with the daylight.

Down-stream is the great waterside market. Here almost anything can be bought, whether imported or home-produced. I

watched a fisherman arrive half-dragging, half-carrying on his back a great Niger perch, far too heavy for him to lift from the river to the stall. After some time he struck a bargain with the woman fish-trader, who after paying him, at once started to cut the fish up for waiting customers.

It seemed to me that half the population of Makurdi must live in the straw-roofed long-boats which are tied prow-on to the river bank. Many had high poop seats from which the owner steers the boat; in each of them now sat a pretty girl waving to us and all who passed them up- or down-stream. I watched these boats on the smooth waters; the river was far too deep for poles to be used, and the paddlers kept close to the banks, for the smooth, swiftly moving midstream is most treacherous for those who do not know it.

I watched them unloading, from one of these, sacks of benniseed, a grain which is the main crop exported from the province. Much is grown below Yola and brought down to Makurdi, it being easier to drift down the river and pole the empty craft up-stream afterwards.

In the evening, when we made the river trip, the banks in the town were filled with men and boys bathing to cleanse themselves of the grime and sweat of the day. Some, standing in the shallow parts near the exits from the road drains, were covered with white soapsuds, although clear water was but a short distance off. Probably they could not swim, and it was too deep for them to venture there. These town men stood facing us and drying as immodestly as the countrymen we had come upon in village streams and ponds had been modest. Small boys were swimming and diving from boats or any other vantage point and shouted 'Dash me one shilling, Master!' They only laughed and blew fountains of water from their mouths when we refused.

Later a fisherman stood on the bank near to his lone hut and held aloft a string of fish. He called to one among us: 'You wanting today, Master? Only five shillings this all lot!' At this all on board laughed hilariously, for so often had they seen this 'Master' on his return from his lonely evening's fishing with enormous catches. That night everyone in the Club would know the secret of 'My own special spot on the river, old boy!' where they were 'caught'. No wonder he looked more unhappy than embarrassed, for where

else, other than to lose himself in his work at all hours, or in silent drinking, can the unfortunate European grass-widower or lonely bachelor go other than to the Club for companionship? And at the beginning of a tour of duty leg-pulling is laughed off, but towards the end of one it is not so funny, nerves get frayed and tempers short with having to contend with the many frustrations, the climate and with being away from home.

Lafia: Keffi: Abuja

MAKURDI is on the south bank of the River Benue. Only one road leads to the north, to Kaduna and Jos. To reach this you cross the river on the most magnificent bridge in the Northern Region. Built at a Scottish foundry and brought out in sections, it was erected thirty years ago. It carries both rail and road traffic; but there are none of the usual worries when you drive over it, for the rail lines have been sunk in the wide roadway in the same way as tramway lines.

Having crossed it I knew that I was on my way 'home'—to Kaduna. Just over sixty miles to the north lies Lafia, a small town blessed with both road and rail communications; practically the whole way through there are fertile fields and glorious forest lands; the road is wide with a smooth surface. It was early morning on this, my last journey, and in the air hung a dawn freshness; the people we passed were bright and active. What struck me was the cleanliness of the villages and of the people: Nigerians are generally a clean race, even though those who labour might become begrimed by nightfall. These country people always bathe at sunset; many freshen up during the day if they happen to come upon a stream or pond, for there is little for them to take off, and they just stand in the sun for a few minutes to dry; clothes spread over a bush are crisp half an hour after being washed.

A few miles before reaching Lafia we saw a batch of men just about to enter a field; some wore loin-cloths, others ragged shorts, and all carried machetes. Among them were drummers who would

sit and tap while the others worked. They told me they were farmers from round about who had come to help a sick member of the community by gathering his ripened crop. Farther along the road I met some young women carrying great jars of beer on their heads; this was for the men working in the fields. With drums and beer and all, it seemed to me that the day should go well for everyone concerned.

Then I came upon youths decorated with many cowrie shells and nickel coins over plum-coloured hand-knitted vests and slips; and riding brightly polished bicycles. They carried small sheathed knives on cords over their shoulders; each had his hair done in a fashion which incorporated shells and coins. They are members of a tribe which inhabits that part of the country. Reputed to be wealthy, but hiding their money—'they have no idea how much they have', I was told. These youths spend their first earnings on a bicycle, and I saw few without one; they then embellish the bicycles with every conceivable fitting they can purchase, like rear mirrors on each handlebar, many reflectors—all up the rear mudguard; and back-lamps, bright head-lamps, flags, bells; there is always a rubber bulb horn. I saw none without a tandem seat behind; some had a saddle type on the cross-bar also. These were cushioned and often frilled. I noticed some of these boys had lost fingers and toes; they rode with bare feet; it seems that leprosy is not uncommon in that tribe.

I called on the District Officer in Lafia, and found him to be a Northern Nigerian. At once he invited me to take a seat on his veranda; shortly afterwards his wife appeared, followed by a servant carrying a tray of 'cold drinks, or would you prefer coffee?' she asked in a voice betraying that she had attended a Teacher Training College. I found that several of the more ambitious of young Civil Servants had married either teachers or nurses who would be able to go up the social scale with them.

After a while my driver came to ask permission to go off for a short time so that he could pay his respects to the Emir whom he had before served. That left me with no alternative but to call on the Emir. The D.O. came to introduce me.

Lafia is a compact town just across the main road from the bungalow and the small office of the D.O.—staffed by one clerk and a messenger. When we reached the Emir's compound it was

obvious that something was happening, for the area was crowded. I remained in the car; the D.O. went to the palace through the mass of people who made way for him. After a while he returned, together with the Emir, Alhaji Yusufu Musa II, a youngish-looking man, wearing a white, rather high-built rawnni, and a simple white cloak over his riga. He explained that he was trying a serious case; but brushed aside my apology for interrupting him, with 'I was just about to adjourn for a rest. I must show you my house and my zoo.' He did not, I noticed, call it a palace.

When we entered the great compound I was surprised to see, set in the centre of a large green lawn planted with young trees, a modern white-distempered house with curtains at the open glazed windows. To one side were the stables; and here, among the horses, there was a magnificent silver-grey Arab stallion. On the other side was a paddock with two ostriches; next to that a run with white peacocks, white turkeys and white guinea-fowl. All the time I was being pestered by a tame fawn which, together with a white nanny, roamed the garden. On the far side was a pen of White Leghorn hens which, so they told me, had 'just laid these ten eggs for your breakfast'. They were enormous eggs—what a breakfast!

Then the Emir was reminded of the case he was trying. I asked permission to listen for a while, and having taken photographs of the Emir's zoo, asked if I might, with discretion, take a photograph of the court in session. He agreed at once. The court was being held in what was the only remaining part of the old palace. It was a high-vaulted room, fifty or sixty feet square, and was possibly the entrance hall, for one entrance led to the garden and the other to the area outside the compound.

All stood as the Emir entered. I had said my farewells, for I wanted to be near the exit, while he took his place on a seat against the far wall; on either side sat the public; immediately to his right sat his scribe. It was not until then that the D.O. told me that the well-built handcuffed prisoner, a young pagan wearing only a very small loin-cloth which was little more than a sex-sack, who sat on the ground before the Emir, with a Native Authority policeman standing beside him, was charged with having committed murder. He was accused of having shot a poisoned arrow at his victim; 'Woman palava', and not disputed tribal territory, was the cause of this. The head of the dead man's family started to give evidence;

the Emir put to him most searching questions and listened patiently to much repetition. Then he asked the sullen prisoner if he wanted to ask any questions; but the man refused to speak, an attitude he had taken up the whole time.

At that point I decided that I had seen and heard enough; it was obviously going to be one of those cases which would last the day. As we went away the D.O. told me that the man had first proudly boasted of having committed the crime but, with the arrival of the police, denied all knowledge of it; and this he was sticking to. The Emir had the power to find him guilty or to acquit him. If he acquitted him that would be the end of the matter —as far as the Court was concerned; if he found him guilty, then his finding must be confirmed by the High Court in Kaduna; to which the man could also appeal, as many do, having learned that over the past few years not a few have gone free on a point of law.

Executions are now carried out by hanging. In the days before the arrival of the British, there were various ways of doing this, depending upon the tribe. The pagan Ekiti used to tie the criminal to a tree and then, after declaring his crime to the assembled populace, decapitate him with an axe. The Gade always killed a murderer with the same instrument that he himself had used in the perpetration of his crime. The Agara and Okpoto, of Fulani extraction, were bound to a stake by a rope round the neck and left there to slowly strangle. The Batta had the choice of killing him by arrow shot, stabbing him with a spear, or slitting his throat. The Koro husband had the right to poison a man with whom his wife had committed adultery. From which it will be appreciated that these people were so uncivilized that they had not learned of the more genteel methods once practised by the people of Europe—and often in the name of religion—like burning alive at the stake or tearing the living man apart on the rack!

I drove on and arrived at Akwanga about noon, but since my driver could get some food in the 'hotel' there, I dropped him and turned a corner to sit just past the market and quietly have my meal from a 'chop box'. After a while drumming started. I strolled back to the market and there saw a man and two boys sitting facing each other, drumming loudly. Although it was not a market day and the place was nearly empty, they were drumming to tell the people of the village that the butcher had killed a sheep, for

meat must be sold the day the animal is killed. The drummers are employed by the butchers and are rather like the Town Criers of old in England.

Meat locally killed in the north, as well as poultry, is usually tough; we found that keeping it in a refrigerator helped, but better still it becomes tender if wrapped in paw-paw leaves for a few hours. These are the leaves of a very quick growing tree which bears fruits much like a melon, and grow brussels sprout fashion from the main stem. When ripe the fruit is yellow-green outside, but inside it is orange and a delicious flavour, especially with a squeeze of lime over it.

As we drove farther along the road I caught sight of what at first looked like an upright truss of straw, quickly dashing across the road to disappear into the bush. At that moment two women with babies tied to their backs and loads on their head also saw it, and almost dropping their head-loads, but clutching at their babies' behinds, they scrambled out of the wayside bush path whimpering, and tore down the road.

I stopped the car and, leaping from it, ran down the narrow bush path, for I realized that I had come upon a Juju man on his way from one cluster of huts to another. Soon I was at a small hamlet and saw him; but two men, one wearing a loin-cloth and the other shorts, were there also. Seeing me they signalled me to go away, but being so close to the road I imagined that no harm could result. Then the one wearing the shorts came over and demanded that I should go. I refused, until, as I said, I had taken a picture of the Juju man, for I had grabbed my camera as I got down from the car. Eventually after some argument among themselves they agreed. The Juju man stood just like a truss of straw while I took the photograph. I could not see his face, for it was covered with a thickly crocheted net; the costume was fresh-cut straw. I just could not imagine why these village people so feared him, for many of them know who is beneath the costume. 'He der go change himself from der boy he is when he go gettem dis Juju dress,' the one in the shorts explained. 'Him very bad Juju dis one, Masser!' But when I went to hand the Juju man a shilling for having posed, I found that he was shaking with fear.

Maybe this fellow had something to do with the Dodo Society which is strong in and south of that part. This is a society for

married men only, into which the initiate, under threat of death if he breaks his oath, swears in the 'kumri' or sacred guarded grove not to reveal the secrets of the Dodo. There he is thrashed by dozens of members so that his cries of agony, mingled with the piercing blast of the priest's gourd horn, will reach the terrified women of the village; they believe this to be the voice of the awful Dodo who will get them if they go to any other than their husband's bed. The Dodo priest is known to all of them; he lives in the village, but spends much of his time drunk on the beer brewed by women who want to ensure his favour with the Dodo if their husbands, suspecting their infidelity, tells of it in the 'kumri'.

Even my driver, a Muslim, was not too happy about my having run after the Juju man, and drove like a madman over the road to Keffi.

Keffi—meaning fort or stockade—was at one time a more important town than it appeared to me, although efforts are now being made to improve its standing, there being a Government College; which, together with another in Zaria, is a descendant of the old Katsina College, and also a Teacher Training College. With time to spare I left my bags in the Catering Rest House and called on the Emir of Keffi.

Behind the Emir's palace there is a hill on which is planted a cross, a memorial to Captain Maloney, the Resident of Nasarawa Province—no longer existent as a province—who, in 1902, when attempting to arrest one of the chief notables of the Emir's *entourage*, was murdered by the Magaji. The Magaji then fled to Kano in the sanctuary of the Emir Aliyu—that was before the British attacked Kano. The cross was originally placed so that its shadow would fall at evening time across the Emir of Keffi's compound as a reminder of this event. It was believed by the local people that as long as this shadow was cast there, Keffi would not progress. At about the time of Self Government in the Northern Region, the cross was moved to the other side of the hill.

The Emir Ahmadu Maikwatto graciously received me, permitted me to take a photograph of himself with some of his staff; only then was I told that he was about to leave on a tour; maybe I had delayed him for a while.

As we drove away from the palace, my driver mentioned that, while he was waiting, he had seen several Fulani boys arriving in

that part of the town wearing the gay costumes usual when a Sheriya is about to be held. I stopped two such lads and heard that this was indeed so. As always the Sheriyas are held before the Emir's or Chief's palace or house, but in these days only when he happens to be away; for if the Emir or Chief were there, he would have to stop the proceedings.

I went back to the Catering Rest House, had tea and then returned to the area before the Emir's palace—near the Police Station; together with a French-Indian 'doctor' who was also staying there and touring Nigeria to ascertain the chances of his company finding a market for 'World-famous aphrodisiacs, sold in gold, silver and bronze pellets'. By that time large numbers of Fulani boys and girls were gathered, all of them gorgeously arrayed, for the Sheriya. The girls had their faces made up with reddened lips and black lines drawn in various directions—some were tattooed with indigo—their hair bound with gold wire, most of them were wearing gold ear-rings, bracelets and many necklaces. The boys, over their goat- or calf-skin kilts, were wearing fringes of cowrie shells, and many had shells plaited into their hair; over their shoulders they wore brilliantly coloured handkerchiefs. Each carried his cattle lathi or stick; most of them had cow's-tail fly-whisks, to the handles of which small mirrors had been tied.

Already a ring had been formed; at the side drummers sat on the ground and tapped a high-pitched note. In the centre were two elders. Into the ring stepped a number of boys who had let their silken scarves fall over their kilts. They went up to each other and it sounded to me as though they were shouting abuse, but they were proudly proclaiming their strength and their ability to unflinchingly suffer any pain inflicted upon them; each challenging the other to thrash him with his lathi to prove it.

Suddenly there was a shout, then complete quiet; a challenge had been accepted. Without considering the hurt that might be inflicted, the young men standing inside the ring slashed out with their sticks to drive the spectators back so that a larger ring could be formed. The Elders stood back and watched without saying a word. With firm stance the initiate took his place in the centre of the ring; his lathi lay at his feet, his torso bare, and holding the mirror in his left hand high before his face; his head was thrown back in defiance, his staring eyes fixed on the mirror. The

youth he had challenged to flog him, also bare to the waist, stood at a distance playfully flexing the stick in his hand. The drums had ceased; it was so quiet that I could hear the heavy breathing of those near me. I could see that the boy who was to be flogged was trembling; yet on his face there was a fixed smile, a smirk. The other one then circled his victim, making feints with his stick. Then suddenly, standing back with legs apart so that he might inflict a severe cut, he slashed at the bare chest of the young boy before him. There was a sickening dull thud; I looked at the victim's face; there was still that stupid smile, although by then his lips were held tight over clenched teeth. But he had displayed no sign of fear to those who watched intently. The blood was by now streaming from the ghastly weals where the rough knobs of the stick had torn into his smooth copper-coloured skin; but the flagellation was to be repeated twice more, by which time perspiration was pouring down his face; great lumps had developed where the first slash had not broken the skin; but where it had, the blood mixed with the sweat streamed down to his waist.

Then all was over. Still smiling, the victim dropped the mirror; he did not once look down at the cuts as his friends gathered round him. But the one who had flogged him—and incidentally would, during the next few days, have to suffer flogging by his today's victim—was by that time apparently repentant. He was wringing his hands and telling those round him how sorry he was to have done such a terrible thing to his friend; begging them to seek the wounded man's forgiveness for him; they in turn were soothing the victor, stroking his arms and smoothing his hair, consoling him by telling him not to worry; he had done the right thing, for had he not been the means by which his friend had proved his manliness? This part is called 'the play'; the tears, though real, are forced.

And why is it done? 'It is our custom'; it is so that the Fulani boys can prove to the girls who watch that they are brave. Only after such a display of courage, the youth having taken his flagellation without the slightest signs of fear or flinching, will a Fulani girl agree to marry him. Now, having passed the test to the satisfaction of the Elders, who would have stopped the flogging had the boy flinched or become ill, he has become a man; he can shave his head. In some parts he has the right that night to sleep with any

Fulani woman of his choice; neither she nor her husband may refuse him. But from the ghastly cuts inflicted on these boys, I should imagine such a continuation of 'the play' would hardly be what one of them would desire on that particular night.

The pity of it is that, even though the cuts may be bad and blood poisoning and fever follow, these boys will not go to a hospital; always native medicines are used. The dressings applied being those which will afterwards leave terrible weals for proud display as is the cauliflower ear or the broken nose of a boxer; the only difference being that the Fulani's scars ensure him a wife.

These initiates prepare themselves for the ordeal for several weeks by avoiding drinking sour milk and by abstention from sexual intercourse; on the day before, they fast and take a native medicine which is said to contain a 'magic quality' to harden and protect the skin against poisoning after the punishment has been inflicted; while the fasting is believed to prevent excessive bleeding.

By the time all the initiates had been satisfied, night had fallen; but even so, despite the crush of spectators and competitors, I had managed to get a few photographs in the poor light. My companion who had commented, as we went along to watch the flagellation, how effeminate the boys appeared to be, now, when told that the boys had become men and could cut their hair and marry, exclaimed: 'What a pity, and such beautiful boys, too!' But, as I reminded him, they were now potential customers for either his gold, silver or bronze pills, so why should he complain?

The following morning I drove over to Abuja, which is about sixty miles to the west. The road starts off over sandy ground, then climbs an escarpment which becomes like a rocky river-bed in parts, the surface having been washed away by the rains. But all the way it was through the most delightful wooded countryside. Traffic is light, for most goes from Abuja to the west, where it meets the rail line between Kano and Lagos at Minna.

Abuja is historically interesting in that it is one of the very few states, protected by a brave army behind a natural fortification of outcrop granite hills, that was never subjected to the Fulani, although they battled many times with those within in an effort to overcome them. King Mahau of Zaria, its sixtieth Mohammedan

ruler, retreated to Abuja after he and his followers had been surprised by the Fulani when at prayers in the great Zaria Mosque. Unable to gather his army together, he was forced to flee. To this day, when the Emir of Abuja turns to the east while praying in the mosque, his bodyguard and archers, standing behind him, turn to the west.

The Emir Alhaji Suleimanu Barau, O.B.E., is a Muslim, as were his ancestors from 1505, but he is not a Fulani. He is a product of the old Katsina College, as his English immediately reveals; and, being an enlightened ruler, at least one of his daughters is a fully qualified Welfare nurse.

In the Emir's palace, where I was greeted with complete lack of formality, he showed me, in the vast straw-thatched circular central hall known as the 'House of the Emir's drums', the regalia and relics of the Emirate; among them were the skulls of the three war-horses which had brought Mahamman Makau, King of Zaria, to Abuja in 1804. I saw the famous drums, cone-shaped, their points resting in the ground when they are played; the larger one is of wood, the two others of brass. They are beaten without a break for seven days when an Emir is appointed; also every night during the month of the Fast of Ramadan. Here also are preserved the precious insignia of office; the Sword of Zazzau, on which the Kings of Zaria swore the oath to govern without favour, and which was brought by Makau together with his Koran, when he fled from his capital.

The history of Abuja is itself fascinating, but it is far too long to include in this book. The writing of *A Chronicle of Abuja* was encouraged and its translation made into English from Hausa by one who the Emir was pleased to describe to be as 'The other Emir of Abuja', insisting that I must call upon him; he being Dr. Frank Heath. I found his delightful old colonial-style thatched bungalow on the crest of the hill a mile or so outside the town and on the road to Minna. Frank Heath, who for many years had been a leading light in the British Red Cross in the Northern Region, has his bungalow set within a lovely garden which he tends himself and which is always a mass of colour. The flower seeds he carefully saves, packets and sells; the proceeds going to the Red Cross. Unfortunately he is physically handicapped by arthritis; but it was amazing to see him roll from his couch to pour out cod-liver oil and

evaporated milk, which, together with a sugar biscuit, he insists each of his servants' children must have morning and evening. To them, and many other children round about he is their much-respected 'grandfather'. To the Emir he is a most trusted friend; their mutual admiration is wonderful to hear and see.

Another European character in Abuja is Michael Cardew. He is another Cornishman, a famous potter who has given up what had been a brilliant career in England, so that he might enjoy, as he undoubtedly does, life in West Africa. His reason for selecting Abuja for his pottery was because of his discovery there of the most suitable clay for his work; proof of his foresight is seen in the amazing individual pieces which are now produced there and snapped up in all the exhibitions held in London, not only by collectors, but also by museums, among them the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The pottery buildings are most original, being after a period of the early Fulani, possibly two or three hundred years ago. Besides being a commercial concern, it is now the Government Pottery Training Centre, with Michael Cardew as its Principal. Here Nigerian youths and girls are taught the art, shown how to use potters' wheels, which were not before used in those parts; how to produce pieces which are a blending of the African and the Cornish artistic sense, resulting in stoneware pottery of the most glorious colours.

He lives on the crest of a hill which overlooks the town. I went home with him for a meal in his large round thatched mud-built house, one of about three remaining near to the old fort, to which we drove through an avenue of giant trees. He has almost become a part of the country—a 'white West African'—wearing at work only a pair of sandals and khaki shorts. His home consists of as many Nigerian items as could be gathered together among the bare creature-comforts necessary to any European who had made his home there. It appeared to me like a Swiss Family Robinson home. Our meal was of course eaten off plates, dishes and bowls made in his pottery; the cups were enormous, and filled with the most delicious coffee.

The view from the front of the vast circular veranda was across the green wooded valley to the grey granite-topped rolling hills which protected Abuja from attack in the past. Here he has

found quiet; here was to be heard only the gentle buzz of the bees as they came and went from the hive in the garden; and from down in the valley, with its glittering stream, the distant bleating of sheep and goats. Only the pulsating beat of the Emir of Abuja's famous drums can reach this far from the town; and they but faintly disturb the stillness and contentment created here. I imagine that maybe his son had sat here during his leave from England when staying with his father; he had fashioned the terra-cotta bas-reliefs which now rested against the veranda walls.

Like Frank Heath, Michael Cardew loves the people, who accept him as 'belonging'; no wonder he hesitates to leave Abuja. I can well understand his feelings, for I was reluctant to go after but a day there.

Kaduna

OTHER than going through Minna and rejoining the road by which I had started the tour, there were two other roads shown on the map leading from Abuja to Kaduna. One of these, the older, goes direct; the other, built of recent years, goes through Keffi, and although it is longer, I was advised that it would be best to go back by that one, turning north from Keffi. I had no wish at the end of a long tour to experience a mud-track 'road' such as the pioneers had ridden when I could avoid it.

As I travelled from Keffi to the north, the country constantly changed; it was flat with vast cultivated fields in some parts; and in others, areas of savannah, a reminder that I was getting closer to the Southern Sudan country. With the season advancing, guinea-corn and sugar cane were growing high in those places which were fertile; yam vines were also fast covering the sticks planted in each of the mounds, while the long rows of red-stemmed cassava were by now waist high; both would soon be ready to dig. Then I came upon a part where no blade of grass was to be seen on the slate-grey hard ground; there were large numbers of mushroom-shaped anthills, each as large as a stool, and the same colour as the earth; and from under the stems of bushes there were splashes of mauve where flowers, rather like great autumn crocus, and called Resurrection lilies, were growing, as well as many wild Arum lilies.

At a turning in the road I saw in the distance two figures coming towards us, on their heads were earthenware water-pots, and as I

got nearer I saw that they were voluptuous young women, wearing only bunches of leaves, deep in conversation. Suddenly they seemed to register that something was coming towards them, and looking up they darted like deer into the guinea-corn field amongst which they were lost by the time we came up to where they had 'made for bush'. I was obviously back in the land of more primitive pagans, for, as I passed other fields, I saw men wearing small loin-cloths or hanging goat-skins, while the women wore bunches of leaves.

It was past noon when I reached Kufana, a place I had before visited several times, as it was only thirty or forty miles from Kaduna. I looked in at the Sudan Interior Mission Station, but was told by the Nigerian schoolmaster that the missionary in charge was away at headquarters in Jos; his assistant was there but she was over in the dispensary. This building is on the far side from the road and the school; I walked over to the white building about the size of a signal-box. A line of patients was waiting to see 'the doctor misses'. They instinctively made way for me as I went in and found there a small middle-aged woman wearing a flat white topee—the uniform of the 'mission field' of about thirty years ago, while even her white doctor's jacket seemed to have an old-fashioned cut. She appeared all the smaller because of the giant, near-naked pagan who was standing before her as she lanced a great boil on his back; as it burst the stench from it nearly knocked me backwards. She was obviously conscious that someone was standing and watching her; but not until she had cleaned the wound and plastered it, afterwards wagging her finger at the giant and daring him to remove the bandage, did she turn to me.

I shall always remember Ramona du Bois's greeting: 'And just what do you want—say, who are you, anyway?' At first so very direct, and then changing to the faintly friendly with her last five words. She is an American, and like so many of her countrymen—and women—has a mixed background; a French father, a Dutch mother, and here she was in Nigeria.

I hastened to explain that I was not a patient, at which she said that in that event we could talk while she worked, for she was behind with her day which had started early with a woman who had almost died after a difficult delivery. I listened as she attended to patients, many of whom had come from long distances; many who had come after all the native medicines, and often the medicine

man's cures, had not only failed, but made the sickness worse. Then there were those who even came acting a sickness with the intention of taking the medicine back to the real patient in the bush; they quite naturally protested when told to take a draught in the dispensary. And there were always the instructions, with a wag of the finger, that this bandage must remain on until she took it off; no one, meaning the medicine man—witch-doctor—was to touch it; no Juju charms or medicine were to be put on top of it. I could now see why she was always treated with the respect necessary to her since she was a lone white woman in this village, miles from anywhere, with no telephone; her only transport a mission truck, which was then away in Jos.

I left her and went towards the centre of the village; it being market day I knew that there I should find a quarter of a mile line of people standing tight-close to each other before a reed-matting open hut, under which two white women would be giving treatment for leprosy. Quite a number were making their way there. One young man I saw had three women with him all in different stages of pregnancy; he told me he had a fourth wife at home who had just had her baby. Few men were with their womenfolk, though; it seems that they prefer to keep with the other men and boys when, all dressed up in some item of finery, like a hat or scarf, they parade the market.

When I reached the matting-hut I found the line considerably longer than I had expected. The two missionaries, Miss Lewsey—British, and her assistant Mrs Ramsay—American, had arrived later than usual, having set up yet another treatment centre on the way so as to save some of the patients having so far to walk. The motherly-looking Phoebe Lewsey and the always immaculate Olive Ramsay look nothing like most people imagine women missionaries to be when working deep in the Nigerian bush. They were then wearing flowered summer cotton frocks under white linen coats; their hair tied in scarves.

Both women sat under the shelter, each at a folding table on which there was a register and a bowl of small white tablets. I stood watching as the patients came forward and handed the white-coated Nigerian medical orderly a card which he or she had been clutching from the time each left home. The card bore a number which the orderly called out so that the missionary could check

this against the same name given by the patient; this was entered in the register which was then ticked off as the week's treatment was given.

From the records the missionary told him how many tablets to give; and these had to be swallowed with water in front of the missionary. Often I heard her say firmly 'No! No! Swallow them. Look, Samuel, she's still holding it in her mouth!' Then to me: 'They do that, you know. Then they carry them back to their village and sell them to some rich man who either won't admit that he has the disease or won't bother to come for treatment. Black market—while we are left wondering why the patient shows no sign of improvement.'

Slowly the line grew shorter, delays occurring while the owner of a lost card had to be checked or while a patient explained why he or she had missed coming for treatment for a few weeks. And then at the end of the line there were those who waited to be examined—new patients whose cases had to be carefully diagnosed by Miss Lewsey and treatment prescribed. A long tiring job in the torrid heat; more so during the Harmatan dust-storms or the drenching rains. But every week these women made the journey, for the treatment must be unbroken to ensure success.

The patients in those parts are mostly pagan. They are dressed for market day, as within a few weeks of a centre being opened a market springs to life. The older women from one tribe mostly wore either nothing or a bunch of fresh leaves. Those from another tribe wore oblong 'modesty curtains' of beads. Babies were tied to their backs in goat-skins, some of which were decorated with long fringes of blue, white and red beads. Many of the women were comely; some beautiful by African standards. A number of them had their torsos tattooed. Among them was one who had recently undergone the operation by which patterns are drawn over chest and stomach, followed by half-inch knife-cuts being made into the skin. This goes on for hours until the girls can stand no more that day; then it is usual for indigo, which is grown there, to be rubbed into the cuts. The patterns are often artistically executed; but if they become blood-poisoned, her chest looks as though she has been burned—yet she will still remain uncovered through life.

The men, mostly of excellent physique and handsome, were far

better dressed; they wore small kilt-like fringes of beads, mostly blue and white; under these some of the younger bucks wore narrow-shaped loin-cloths. A few wore collars of beads also, usually made up with nickel tenth-of-a-penny coins, each centred with a pearl shirt-button; most decorative and looking rather like Elizabethan ruffles. Many wore bands of beads round their heads, some with feathers in them; some had silver armlets and leg bands.

While waiting for the new patients to be examined and booked in, I walked into the bush which became almost a forest with dark pathways cut through. I heard panting, and towards me ran a young man followed by a woman carrying a child jogging up and down on her back. Both were dripping with perspiration. They feared that, having started late from their village about fifteen miles away, they would not be in time to find 'the doctor misses'. They did arrive late—'past late'—just as the folding tables and chairs and the records and tablets were being packed into the old station-wagon; but they received their treatment from Olive Ramsay while Phoebe Lewsey was busy measuring grain and water-testing eggs brought by patients for her to buy to take back to the Albarka Fellowship Leper Settlement.

The first thing that would have struck any visitor on seeing the hundreds of patients was that few looked like lepers—that is without fingers, toes or noses—while most of them appeared to be well fed. I was told that this is the result of early diagnosis, and the people's confidence in the white man's—and woman's—medicine. They themselves know the first signs and bring patients for early treatment. Those who are far gone with the disease realize that they can never again grow lost fingers and toes; but with so many complete cures, they know that the complaint can be checked and they will lose no more.

We left Kufana for Kaduna at the same time, the two missionaries going ahead. As they passed they called out 'Drop in for a cup of tea as you go through!' I thanked them; I would have gone, anyway, for Albarka Fellowship had by that time of my tour became almost my second home in Kaduna.

I shall always remember the first time I had gone there. Wendy Nash, the wife of Dr 'Tam' Nash, then Director of the West African Institute for Trypanosomiasis Research, which delves into

the curse of the tsetse fly (the cause of sleeping sickness in both humans and animals) was the one who told me about Albarka where she had found that she could help by sewing clothes for the children. I was also to be grateful to the Nashes and Major Brotherton, Secretary of W.A.I.T.R., who were instrumental in my being able to rent a lovely house and glorious garden containing a wonderful collection of exotic tropical flowers and fruits for about a year when accommodation for Europeans, other than those employed by the Northern Nigerian Government, was almost impossible to find in this fast-growing capital.

I had driven out to Albarka on the southern fringe of Kaduna; after turning off the laterite road and going over a track through the savannah for about half a mile, I came upon the tiny plateau I had before passed many times, wondering who might live up there. I found four cottages, the first thatched and built of mud and stone. The second, obviously the principal one, was surprising to come upon, for it was just like an English cottage with roses climbing over the veranda and all kinds of old English flowers in the garden. But only when I was asked into the main living-room did I realize that a farmhouse might have been brought there from home, with its open fireplace with a small warming-pan, and lattice windows and brass standard oil-lamps.

The bungalow was then full of children—African children from many tribes. The expression of welcome on Miss Lewsey's face told me what she was saying unheard above the shouts and the laughter of those mites. At last she was able to tell me that this happened to be 'their hour, when they come over from their own cottage to play, sing and finally say their prayers with us before bedtime'.

But whose children? They are children without parents. The children of patients who did not survive; or mothers who died in childbirth in the surrounding villages, and the people, suspecting the evil eye, could not find willing foster-mothers for them. By the time they were brought to, or found by, Miss Lewsey, many were near death, having starved for days. The stories of how these children were brought to her, how in the past she and her original partner, Ida Whittle, another Englishwoman, now retired, had trekked into the bush to bring back children deserted there, was both amazing and pathetic.

Phoebe Lewsey and Ida Whittle first sailed from England to Nigeria in November 1926. They worked together on the Sudan Interior Mission Station between Minna and Abuja for nine years and then decided to start up their own mission; thus the Albarka Fellowship, meaning 'Fellowship of Blessing', was born. From what I heard it must have been started up 'on a shoe-string'. They built their own house, church, school and dispensary-clinic; at the same time they had to find the cash with which to do this, as well as running them. The physical struggle must have been terrific, but their faith never wavered, 'We have a Great God, and we have so many good friends at home.' Eventually they moved from the Gwagwada area, farther north, to Kaduna, bringing with them 'expensive things like doors and windows', and here they set about building all over again.

The children all think of, and call Phoebe Lewsey 'Mamma'. This is their home, and the only one most of them have ever known. What is more, they continue to think of it as such as they grow up and are sent to train in Teacher Training Colleges or Nursing Schools, even when they marry and have children of their own. Well over fifty have been brought up by these two women and by Olive Ramsay who joined the Fellowship after Ida Whittle's retirement from active mission work in Nigeria.

'This is not an orphanage,' Miss Lewsey will tell you, 'it is our home: these children are our family, and that is how it has always been and always will be.' Not an orphanage, and with the name Fellowship, which means the same as Mission, but is so different when they reach adolescence and go out in the world and give their home address.

For years they have looked after their family with the help of one Nigerian woman who was herself a patient in the Leper Settlement and has long since been completely cured, leaving no trace of the disease. She did not want to go home when she was ready for discharge; so she has stayed for about twenty years. She is the children's nurse, and adores and hovers over them as if they were her own.

What stories lie behind each child! There is Debbie, who arrived when I was there. She weighed well under three pounds when she was 'dashed' to Miss Lewsey. They had a job to find a feeding-bottle teat that she could take; there was no incubator for her to be

put into, and no electricity if they had one, anyway; but she is alive, and very much the spoilt darling of the family.

Then there is Jonathan, the survivor of twins born prematurely on the roadside when their mother died. No one wanted them. Jonathan was so weak and frail, all head—'a human tadpole'—that the hospital doctors thought he could not survive many days. Olive Ramsay, then newly arrived, adopted him as her special charge, and between them the two women reared him with 'special diet, lots of love and many prayers'. Later they anxiously watched for his string-like legs to move, fearful that they had reared a cripple who would have to drag himself through life. They have brought him through all these, and many other physical troubles, until now he raced round the compound shouting and laughing on my arrival 'Hi! Uncle P.G's motor!' He has become a delightful mischievous young rascal among his 'brothers and sisters', all of whom are bilingual, having been so taught from the start.

But those children are only a side-line to their work. From their plateau you can look down and over the roadway to the Leper Settlement with its dispensary, school, its non-denominational church, its farm lands and its dozens of small square mud-huts with thatched roofs in which the patients and their families live until they eventually receive their 'Medical Certificate of Cleanliness' from the Government; as valuable to each of them as any University Degree is to one who lives outside that world of lepers. These two women run the lot by their physical efforts and spiritual guidance; how they manage to do it I shall never know.

In Albarka I would often see Dr Charles Ross, who, together with 'Wyn', his wife and a wonderful hostess, had come out to Nigeria as missionaries; but later went into Government Service to do the same job, for he was then in charge of all the Regional Leprosy services. Charlie Ross was a man dedicated to his work; he nearly drove his wife to distraction in the end because on the morning he was about to leave by car for Lagos on his way back to Ireland for retirement, he insisted upon making 'just one more official visit'—probably to Albarka's Leper Settlement. Within six months he was back again.

Then there was 'Simmie'—Miss Pearce-Simmons, whose never-failing interest was the children. She was the Senior Health Sister in charge of the Community Nurses Training Centre at Tudan

Wada, adjoining Kaduna. Her school was in the Emir of Zaria's old Kaduna mud-house; here she trained girls from the bush to become sufficiently qualified to return to work in the dispensaries of their home villages, where they often had to face up to terrific responsibilities when far from doctors and hospitals. She had introduced instruction through puppets into her training courses for these girls.

And when but a few weeks after Independence had been given to Nigeria, I left from Kaduna railway-station for Lagos and home, and waved farewell to those friends who had come to see me off—the last faces I saw were those of Phoebe Lewsey, and Jonathan held up in her arms, still waving and shouting.

I still remember her last words, ones which many of the missionaries remaining there must have uttered so often since then: 'It seems that in these days I am always saying good-bye to so many old friends.'

o

Index

been
it the
d Mr
to it.
ed. if
some
and a
ho is
As he
h for
ition-
after
ppor-
es. A

ement

and
ffects.
en of
of the
n he
l and
ellent
vith a

phere

or the
bling,
the
t the
t. In
ntur-
ed us

Press

f-tone
l- net.

Also by Pearce Gervis

Naked They Pray

'A good deal of nonsense has been written by western observers about the ancient Hindu science of Yoga; and Mr Gervis has been careful not to add to it. His standpoint is that of a detached, if sympathetic, observer, possessing some familiarity with Indian conditions and a working knowledge of Hindu, who is concerned to find out the facts. As he was frank and honest in his search for these facts, and was neither a sensation-monger not a credulous seeker after miracles, he was given unusual opportunities to observe Yoga practices. A sensible and informative book.'

—Times Literary Supplement

'Balanced, unemotional, factual and lacking in cynicism or in cheap effects. Mr Pearce Gervis, who has written of his own travels to the Holy places of the Himalaya and of the instruction he received there in both the practical and ethical side of Yoga, is an excellent observer and expresses himself with a clarity that holds the attention.'

VERNON FANE, *Sphere*

'Mr Gervis has an infectious zest for the East. He also possesses a bubbling, unquenchable zeal for finding the answers to those questions that the rest of us ask and then forget. In describing his vigorous and adventurous pursuit of Yoga he has provided us with an incomparable travel book.'

—Yorkshire Evening Press

228 *pp., Demy* 8*vo*, 24*pp. half-tone illustrations and* 2 *colour plates.* 25/- *net.*

Pearce Gervis first studied Law; then at Oxford he undertook his ground training in aeronautics and later on, gained his wings, was commissioned in the Royal Air Force. Next he entered the London Hospital Medical College of the University of London as a student.

But it was neither law nor medicine that he eventually practised. He spent the next few years in the poultry breeding industry and wrote a text-book which is still recognised as a leading reference book on the subject. Following this, in 1938, he returned to the Royal Air Force to reach Senior Staff rank, serving in Europe, West Africa and Asia, and finally retiring after the War to enter the British Government Overseas Service.

As a result of his initial tour of duty in West Africa, he wrote the first of his travel books, *Sierre Leone Story*. When *Naked They Pray* was written he had spent more than eleven years in one stretch in the undivided India and later India and Pakistan, in one or other of the two services. During that long stay in the sub-continent, not only by virtue of his work, but also because of a deep desire to 'look see and find out for myself, delve into the why-fors and how-dos' combined with a genuine love of the country and its people, he discovered much of which those born of the land are unaware.

As a result of these countless tours by plane, train, car, on horseback and many miles on foot he has published *This is Kashmir* and *Naked They Pray*, which have been acclaimed not only by the British Press but also by that of India.

His new book, *Of Emirs and Pagans*, is the result of two tours of duty in West Africa covering about four years—one during the Second World War and the other in the period of self-government prior to the independence of the whole of Nigeria. During this time he travelled through all the Provinces, getting to know most of the Emirs and Leaders and meeting many of all sections of the people.