

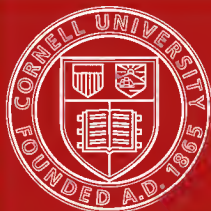
ON HORSEBACK THROUGH NIGERIA



J · D · FALCONER

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY





Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

ON HORSEBACK THROUGH NIGERIA



A GRANITE DOME.

Frontispiece.

ON HORSEBACK THROUGH NIGERIA

OR

LIFE AND TRAVEL IN
THE CENTRAL SUDAN

By J. D. FALCONER, D.Sc.

LECTURER ON GEOGRAPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
AUTHOR OF "THE GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHERN NIGERIA"

WITH A MAP AND 32 ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN

1911

32 1115 B.

(All rights reserved.)

TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE

NORTHERN NIGERIA is the most recent acquisition of the British Empire. Its area is approximately 250,000 square miles, and its population, at a moderate estimate, 8,000,000 inhabitants. Its mediæval civilisation and its medley of tribes and races were first described by Barth some sixty years ago, and up to the closing years of the nineteenth century there were few or no changes in the internal condition of the country. The pagans of the forests and the hills continued to be ruthlessly raided by the Mohammedan slavers of the north, while the Fulani administration of the ancient Hausa States became more and more corrupt. The British occupation in 1900 was dictated first by motives of humanity and later by considerations of policy, and, curiously enough, the greatest resistance to the extension of the Protectorate has been offered by the pagans themselves, whom experience has taught to look upon all strangers as hereditary foes. The main purpose of this book is to exhibit,

Preface

through the medium of a narrative of travel, the present condition of the country under British rule and the remarkable prestige which the white man has secured within a few short years amongst pagans and Mohammedans alike.

The tour of the Protectorate was not wholly accomplished by me in a single journey, as described in the text. Some portions of the country were visited at an earlier date in the course of my wanderings as the principal officer of the Mineral Survey. The journey as described, however, is by no means an impossible one for an experienced traveller, able to obtain fresh horses and carriers as required throughout the course of his travels.

I am indebted to the executors of the late Mr. Arthur Longbottom for the photographs from which have been prepared the illustrations facing pages 24, 28, 32, 72, 112, 140, 162, 176, 238, 260.

J. D. F.

August, 1911.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
ON THE NIGER	15

Arrival at Forcados—the *Empire* and her skipper—Cooks and steward boys—The creeks of the delta—Trading stations on the river—Rectangular wattled huts—The head of the delta—Native convicts at Onitsha—Aground on a sandbank—The harmattan haze—“*Allahu akbar*”—The frontier of Northern Nigeria—Picturesque scenery—Bush fires on the river bank—A stranded steamer—In sight of Lokoja.

CHAPTER II

LOKOJA TO KEFFI	35
---------------------------	----

Lokoja and Mount Patti—Carriers and traders—A public lecture in the courthouse—Departure from Lokoja—The R.M.S. (*S*)*Tork*—Careless navigators—The port of Loko—Disembarkation—A fruitless search for horses—On foot to Nassarawa—Wandering traders—A deserted town—The fatigues of travel—A broad English road—Rebuilding the Residency—Nassarawa and its warrior king—Picturesque country—Professional beggars and native magicians—The discontented mallams of Keffi.

Contents

CHAPTER III

	PAGE
THE BAUCHI PLATEAU	60

A bush camp—A trader's zungo—A deserter—Christmas Eve—Market day at Jaginde—The margin of the plateau—The Sho-sho people—Rectangular compounds and cactus hedges—The tailed women of the hills—Peculiarities of the natives—Chilly nights—Striking scenery—The summit of the plateau—The descent of Polchi—The discovery of tinstone on the plateau—The settlement of Naraguta—Doubtful reception by the natives of Ngell.

CHAPTER IV

BAUCHI TO IBI	89
-------------------------	----

Scenery around Bauchi—The origin of monkeys—Pagans and Fulani—On the way to Kereng—The grassy plains of Panyam—The sarikin Kereng makes obeisance—Climbing the Kereng cone—Truculent natives—The Angass people—The Wase Rock—The Gurkawa pagans—Character of the country—Ibi and the Benue—Ferrying horses across the river—Leaving for Arofu—An unfortunate occurrence—Kokanda and Nupe canoes—Camping on a sandbank—The lead mines of Arofu—Precautions against alarm—Salt-making at Awe—A characteristic letter—The Ankwe River—A waterless march.

CHAPTER V

WASE TO GOMBE	124
-------------------------	-----

The hills of Kanna—Reception at Bashar—A game reserve—A local superstition—The power of a ju-ju—Ancient lead-mines—The rocks of Ligri—The pagan mind—First view of Tangale Peak—A night march—Native iron-furnaces—Smelting the ore—Bush Fulani—The river Gongola and its faddama—A picturesque village—Arrival at Gombe.

Contents

CHAPTER VI

	PAGE
NAFADA TO TANGALE	146

A garrison town—Stung by a scorpion—The ruins of Burmi—Trouble with the carriers—Willing helpers—The Peak in the distance—A stronghold of paganism—An importunate chief—Approaching the rocks of Ture—The galadima's smile—A solitary grave—The base of the Peak—Giant baboons—The effects of guinea-worm—The galadima acts as guide—The hills of Chongwom—Deadly enemies—Reception at Tangalto—Picturesque country—The prestige of the white man.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF BORNU	169
--	-----

The Bima Hills—A dreary prospect—An obliging sariki—Hostile pagans—The rocks of Chibuk—An alarm of fire—The recent history of Bornu—On the way to Chad—Characteristic scenery—Luxurious travelling—The Residency at Mongonu—Salt-making in the marshes—The silent city of Kukawa—The shores of Chad—A disappointment—Canoeing on the Lake—Mosquitoes and horseflies—Last view of Chad—The saltbush or siwak-tree—A magnificent sunset—Kukawa by moonlight—On the way to Gujba—An impossible request—Approaching Kerri Kerri.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE BORDERS OF HAUSALAND	210
---------------------------------------	-----

The Kerri Kerris—In the Golden Age—Cañon valleys—The margin of the plateau—The sarikin Daia—The kings of Jellum—Into Hausa country—A disappointed sariki—Hospitable natives—A Hausa welcome—Hausas and Fulani—The rocks of Shira—A midnight thief—Searching the village—The Ningi Hills—A pagan stronghold—Ari, Ningi, and Bura—The magnificence of the sarikin Bura—A striking contrast.

Contents

CHAPTER IX

	PAGE
THE PLAINS OF HAUSALAND	243

Entering Hausaland—The old king of Jemaari—An ancient desert surface—Katagum and Hadeija—On the way to Kano—Comfortable travelling—History of Kano and of the Fulani conquest—The British occupation—The capture of Kano—Kano in 1909—A rumour of insurrection—Departure for Kazaure—On the way to Katsina—Cordial welcomes—An unpleasant experience—Pagan Hausas—Through Fulani country—Recent history of Sokoto—The old city of Wurnu—The valley of the Sokoto River.

CHAPTER X

THE GULBIN KEBBI AND THE MIDDLE NIGER	279
---	-----

The history of Argungu—Hearty welcome by the sariki—Birnin Kebbi—A narrow path—Southward to Yelwa—A decaying city—Approach of the rainy season—The Niger at Bussa—The scene of Park's disaster—The river gorge at Jebba—The Juju Rock—The history of Kontagora—Its capture by the British—The Kaduna at Zungeru—The "jirigin kassa"—Farewell to Mount Patti.

APPENDIX

THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA	298
INDEX	307

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A GRANITE DOME		<i>Frontispiece</i>
ON THE FORCADOS RIVER		FACING PAGE 24
CONVICTS AT ONITSHA		28
ON THE NIGER NEAR IGBO		32
LOKOJA AND MOUNT PATTI		35
A BYWAY IN NASSARAWA		54
THE PLAINS OF KEFFI		58
A TRADERS' CAMPING-PLACE		62
MARKET-DAY AT JAGINDE		66
THE HILLS BEHIND JAGINDE		72
A WAYSIDE HALT		82
THE REST-CAMP AT POLCHI		88
THE COURT-HOUSE AT BAUCHI		92
THE ROCKS OF PANYAM		98
THE WASE ROCK		104

List of Illustrations

	FACING PAGE
THE REST-CAMP AT WASE	108
ON THE BENUE	112
CAMP NEAR AKIRI	122
ON THE KUDU RIVER	132
THE THINLY WOODED PLAINS OF BAUCHI	140
A WAYSIDE POOL	154
A MOUNTAIN STREAM	162
CROSSING THE GONGOLA	170
THE ROCKS OF CHIBUK	176
THE RESIDENCY AT MONGONU	186
CAMP AT BRE	192
ON LAKE CHAD	196
THE MARKET-PLACE AT SHIRA	228
A TURTLE-BACK OF GRANITE	238
A VILLAGE MARKET	248
ON THE WAY TO KANO	260
TYING UP THE LOADS	295

On Horseback through Nigeria

CHAPTER I

ON THE NIGER

"Ay, here am I in Arden; the more fool I; when I was at home, I was in a better place: but travellers must be content!"

Arrival at Forcados—The *Empire* and her skipper—Cooks and steward boys—The creeks of the delta—Trading stations on the river—Rectangular wattled huts—The head of the delta—Native convicts at Onitsha—Aground on a sandbank—The harmattan haze—"Allahu akbar"—The frontier of Northern Nigeria—Picturesque scenery—Bush fires on the river bank—A stranded steamer—In sight of Lokoja.

No one who is not quite callous to his fortune returns to Nigeria without feeling in full the force of Touchstone's argument. Those happy, sunny days at home press upon one's heart; in vain one thinks of busy cities and sweet companionship, of green fields and leafy lanes—those dank mangrove swamps are all too real! And beyond is a land of darkness, of sickness, of discomfort, of trial: the land where life at best is but existence, where one lives in the past and in the future, least of all in the present! "But travellers must be content,"

On Horseback through Nigeria

and your West African is proverbially stoical. Not a sound, not a sigh of regret escapes him ; with a laugh or a jeer he steps ashore ; a man must live and a man must die—it matters little where !

It was early in the morning of Tuesday, the 24th of November, 1908, that the good ship *Burutu* anchored off the bar at the mouth of the Forcados River, the most westerly navigable branch of the Niger delta. It had been high water at 3 a.m. ; but the night was dark, there was no moon, and the lesser candles of the night were insufficient to allow our worthy captain to pick up the buoys which mark the channel ; so perforce we had to lie there until the afternoon. All the morning we gazed at the dark and dreary line of mangroves which fringed the eastern sky, and at the tiny blank on the horizon which marked the river mouth and seemed to beckon us on with the hope of passage. And, as if impatient to claim us, the brown water of the Niger came racing over the bar at ebb and joyfully encircled us, only to be met and broken up and streaked with blue by the flowing tide.

By three o'clock we were under way and steaming towards the line of surf which marked the sandy bar. Over it we bumped at four, and by five we were anchored in the port of Forcados, near the floating dock and five or six other English and German steamers, smaller than ourselves. Meanwhile the mails and baggage had been slung on the after deck and the fore hatches opened, ready to begin the work of transhipping the Lagos cargo. Branch boats immediately grappled with

On the Niger

us alongside ; native cooks and steward boys came off in canoes to look for masters old and new ; the Customs clerks came on board to gather in their 10 per cent. on dutiable goods ; and the rattling of chains, the spluttering of donkey engines, and the shouting and talking of the Kroo boys intimated to the melancholy swamps that yet another steamer had come laden out of the great Unknown.

Forcados should always be visited by night, for by day it is a dismal place. A few houses built on a spit of mud and mangrove-roots accommodate the Resident, the doctor, the Customs officer, and the Company's agent. The native population consists of a dozen or so amphibious creatures, who inhabit a few waterlogged huts half-hidden amongst the mangroves and eke out a precarious existence upon the produce of their fishing nets. Moreover, "the rain it raineth every day," the sky is ever dull and cloudy, the very daylight is sick, and the air hot and steamy and heavy with the rotting odours of the swamp. But at night the scene is transformed ; the twinkling lights of the steamers give a homelike aspect to the port, and the eye cannot reach in the darkness the murky mangroves which line the shores. Almost can one imagine piers and wharves and shuttered warehouses behind the lights, with a sleeping city beyond ; only the damp and stagnant air and the clammy odour of the night remind one that things are not what they seem.

The Northern Nigerian Government steamer came leisurely down from Burutu in the morning,

On Horseback through Nigeria

and with much blowing of the siren made fast alongside. It proved to be the *Empire*, a strongly-built double-decked stern-wheeler, one of the oldest and most serviceable steamers on the river. The lower deck and the shallow holds accommodate the engines, cargo, and native passengers; the upper deck is reserved, as the Notice says, for the convenience, comfort, and recreation of Europeans. The skipper, Williams, a half-caste American negro, is a character in his way. Exiled from the States some fifteen years ago, when his shanghaiing den was cleared, he has made his home on the Niger, and, with a wife in every port, is spending the evening of his days in honourable employment. He considers himself as much superior to his native crew as white is to black, and to hear him rating his sailors as incapable black lubbers is a constant source of amusement. With the instinct of the black man, however, he has proved himself an excellent river navigator, and without the help of a pilot he steers the *Empire* safe and sound, year in, year out, through all the changing seasons.

By nine o'clock our goods and chattels had been safely stowed aboard the *Empire*, and after breakfast we bade goodbye to the *Burutu*, with its cleanly cabins, its tidy saloon, its iced drinks, and its airy decks. Another stage of our journey had begun; another step away from the homeland—and yet another step nearer the return! In two hours we had reached *Burutu*, a station somewhat more inviting than *Forcados*. Here are the headquarters of the

On the Niger

Niger Company in Southern Nigeria, with their engineering shops, shipping stores, and canteen; also the post-office, bank, rest-house, Northern Nigerian marine station, and a native market. There is practically no native town. The houses are built on a sandbank which has been cleared of mangroves, and a few ornamental shrubs and trees help to hide the fact. We lay at the wharf for two hours to lay in provisions and stores for the journey up-river, for on these steamers every one must cater for himself. By three o'clock, however, we were off, the old *Empire* bravely pounding away and making, with the help of the tide, five or six knots an hour up-stream. By dusk we had more or less settled down in our allotted spaces, and soon after dinner the mosquitoes and the fireflies buzzed over a sleeping ship.

There were nine of us on the *Empire*, and we were each lucky enough to secure half a cabin, and this was comparative comfort. On the *Empire* there are four cabins and a messroom fitted with electric light. The skipper's cabin is in front in one corner of the upper deck, and by day he sits in his chair forward and directs the man at the wheel with a wave of his hand to port or starboard. There is one small ladder leading to the lower deck, and below boys, cooks, native passengers, crew, and cargo are mingled in wild confusion. There is a tiny galley, in which the cooks are half-hidden in smoke, and the wonder is, not so much that the food is passably clean, in spite of the crowd and the smoke and the dirt below, but

On Horseback through Nigeria

that the cooks are able to cook at all in such a primitive kitchen.

Cooks and steward boys are among the necessities of existence in West Africa. They are sometimes grouped with mosquitoes and sandflies as necessary evils, but the classification is barely justified. Boys will be boys all the world over, and West African boys are largely what their earliest masters make them. A native lad of eight or twelve is, as a rule, much brighter in intellect than the average English boy of the same class and age; and an unreasonable master will invariably make an unsatisfactory servant even out of the best material. That many boys are thieves and liars is, unfortunately, true; but, if the whole truth were known, it would probably be found that the fault was not so much on the side of heredity and environment as is commonly supposed. When reasonably treated, the black, man or boy, is as faithful as the white, and if well clothed and cared for by an appreciative master, a boy will patiently endure all the fatigues of constant travel in the bush and be ready and willing to attend to his numerous duties as soon as the camp is pitched.

As a rule a small boy aspires to become in time a cook, a post which carries with it more money and better hopes of matrimony. Native cooks, indeed, are worthy of the greatest admiration. With a minimum of saucepans, a few old tin cans, and a bundle of firewood, a native cook can turn out a five or six course dinner with the greatest ease. The cooking

On the Niger

is done, moreover, over an open fire, sometimes set in the lee of a giant kuka-tree, but more often exposed to all the winds of heaven; and yet the viands are rarely smoked, and ashes conspicuous by their absence. In half an hour's halt by the wayside a breakfast of Quaker oats bacon and eggs, or a luncheon of broiled fowl, can be cooked and dispatched with the greatest ease. Needless to say, however, for such a feat activity and experience are required on the part of both the master and the cook, but the dexterity of the latter is such as even a European chef might envy.

Unfortunately, occasions do arise upon which even the best of cooks may fail, when the soup is watery, the fowl tough and leathery, the paw-paw dirty, and the pudding like rubber; and at these times the language of the master is better imagined than described!

It is customary to engage a cook and one or two boys at Burutu for the river journey only, and if on arrival at Lokoja the master is dissatisfied with his servants, he may there discharge them and renew his staff locally. As a rule down-river boys are of little use in Northern Nigeria. The principal point in their favour is that they have fewer friends up-country and that they are therefore less inclined to frequent the towns and villages after dark. Against this, however, must be placed the fact that they have been bred in a country where water is more plentiful and the paths much softer, and that consequently their feet soon give out on the rough

On Horseback through Nigeria

stony roads of the north. Moreover, they have not a fluent acquaintance with Hausa and other tribal languages, and consequently make bad bargains in the local markets.

The *Empire* had anchored for the night about thirty miles up the Forcados River, and beyond the mangrove-roots and the brackish waters of the tidal stream. Next morning the banks became higher and densely fringed with palms and ever-green trees. Tributary creeks opened on either hand, broad and clear and placid, or narrow dark and full of mystery. The primitive peoples of the delta were little in evidence. Now and then from the dark shadows of a smaller creek a black canoe, with a dusky maiden in the stern, clad only in wristlets and anklets of ivory, would dart out into the sunshine, only to beat a hasty retreat into the depths of the forest; or a dug-out, moored to a stake on the river-bank, would be the only indication of a native village hidden behind the leafy veil. The old *Empire*, however, with its motley crew, was probably the cynosure of many eyes; but the inaccessibility of the primeval forests of the delta has delayed the development of their primitive inhabitants, and they are still shy of the white man and all his works. With their shyness, however, is coupled a certain inherent truculence, which is exhibited whenever the white man wanders out of the beaten track. To the native the river is now irretrievably in possession of the foreigner, but he still hotly resents any intrusion into his leafy domains on either bank.

On the Niger

In a few hours we reached Ganna Ganna, one of the first trading stations to be established on the river. Its very aspect and situation are redolent of times gone by. The bungalows and store-houses are built on an island in mid-stream, and the shores are strewn with the keels and prows of departed barges and river boats. The station from the first occupied a coign of vantage, being naturally fortified by its insular position; but it is easy to cast the mind back to the days when, on dark and cheerless nights, the island was beset by mobs of naked savages thirsting for the blood of the white men and the riches of their stores. But now on the river climatic foes alone are to be feared, and of their virulence we were strongly reminded as, at the sound of the *Empire's* siren, an emaciated European dragged himself up to the verandah and in a weary voice ordered his native attendants to launch a canoe and bring off the mails from his far-off home.

The delta trader's lot is not a happy one. He must remain cooped up in his dismal store, bargaining and bartering with his dusky neighbours, from early morn till dewy eve. His chances of exercise are very meagre, for he dare not venture far inward from his post. His only excitement is the coming and going of the steamers. Little wonder, then, that even a sick man rises from his bed to rest his eyes upon those links with home and to bless the hearts and hands of the distant friends who have thought of him in his loneliness.

Above Ganna Ganna the white roofs of the

On Horseback through Nigeria

trading stores become more frequent on either bank. Perched almost on the water's edge, they represent a distinct advance upon the hulks and barges of the early days, which were moored at night in mid-stream and drawn up to the bank by day to trade and barter with the treacherous natives. As each store comes in sight the skipper rises to the occasion; and, full of authority as the master of an R.M.S., viciously blows the siren and vigorously rattles the engine-room telegraph, to the open-mouthed amazement and delight of the boys and native passengers. With voice and gesture also he urges on the canoe which pushes out from shore as if even on the confines of the Empire His Majesty's mails must not for a single second be delayed.

As we ascend the river the natives gradually become less shy and more demonstrative. Their villages of wattled huts, rectangular in shape and plastered with mud, are set in clearings on the river bank, while the boys and girls, the youths and maidens rush wildly to the canoes, paddle out towards the steamer, and dive and swim excitedly after the empty tins and bottles which the boys delight in throwing from the upper deck. And despite their professed indifference and their conscious superiority as servants of the white men, our boys themselves look as if they would dearly love to join in the scramble with their less sophisticated brethren.

As we approached the head of the delta the character of the vegetation and the aspect of the



ON THE FORCADOS RIVER.

On the Niger

river gradually changed. Coarse rank grass began to appear on the river bank and to form, with creeping and twining plants, a thick undergrowth to the forest of palms and evergreen trees. Here and there above the general level of the forest there rose the lofty crown of a deciduous tree, while in places on the water's edge the bank had slipped and the graceful crests of the palms alone protruded from the stream. An occasional sandbank, moreover, added a touch of colour to the gloomy waters of the river, and spoke eloquently of the winding channels and the golden sands of the open north.

Presently we passed Abo, a large native town and trading station situated at the head of the delta. And now at length we changed our course to stem the waters of the lordly Niger. Behind us we left the dreary swamps and the dismal creeks of the ill-omened delta, and joyfully we turned our faces northward to greet the land of sunshine and of promise. We thought of the bygone heroes who for weeks and months at a stretch had braved the reeking odours of the swamps and the poisoned darts of the riverain natives, to find in the delta's maze this passage to the golden north. In two short days we had traversed the work of years, and in peace and comparative comfort and luxury reached the gateway of the promised land.

Soon the aspect of the river began again to change. The shallowing waters laid bare extensive sandbanks, peopled by egrets, cranes, and vultures. Here and there a fisherman had fixed his nets in

On Horseback through Nigeria

the falling stream, or lazily towed them behind his canoe in the quiet waters. Now and then a crocodile could be seen basking and gaping in the sunshine, while a hippo splashed in a neighbouring pool. By the time Onitsha came in sight the margins of the river were less densely wooded, while many of the sandbanks in mid-channel were grassed over and studded with scrubby trees and bushes. Over the broad sandy river-bed the channel wound about from right to left and left to right, with the deeper water and the more precipitous banks now at one side, now at the other, with broad and shallow reaches between. The steamer likewise wound about, following the deepest water, with the quartermaster steadily heaving the lead over the sandy shallows.

It is a common occurrence when the river is low for these flat-bottomed steamers to ground on the river-bed, and the shallows below Onitsha are notably difficult to cross. Sandbanks also in course of formation are not always visible even to the practised eye of the pilot. When the steamer runs on a bank it is customary in the first place for the master to order the crew overboard. Fifteen or twenty stalwart sailors at once hop over the low gunwales, which are only a few inches above the water-level, and, with much shouting and struggling, attempt to push the steamer backwards off the bank. The attempt usually fails, however, from want of united effort, the crew being individually sufficiently dexterous to avoid any muscular over-strain. The master then decides

On the Niger

upon more determined efforts, and orders the crew to shoulder the kedge anchor and carry it some distance astern into deeper water. The anchor line is then attached to the drum of the donkey engine and the steamer hauled backwards into the channel. This operation is usually successful ; but in very refractory cases the crew are set to dig away the sand from beneath and behind the steamer until she slips backwards into the stream.

Onitsha is one of the most important towns on the Lower Niger, as well as a local administrative centre in Southern Nigeria. The European quarters are built on a ridge of high ground which runs inland behind the native town, while the traders' stores and bungalows are set lower down by the riverside. At this season the banks are steep and high, and in the absence of cranes and other conveniences the process of unloading heavy cargo is rather a tedious one. As a rule the native porters are fairly dexterous ; but, as it happened, the *Empire* had on board a considerable quantity of Government stores in the shape of casks of rice and cases of provisions, and a gang of convicts had been sent down from the prison to unload them. The convicts, some of whom had their feet loosely chained together, were clad in short white tunics and loin-cloths stamped with the broad arrow, and looked a strong and lusty crowd. Under the charge of their native warders, however, they proved to be quite Gilbertian workers. Six men would struggle valiantly with a packing-case which, after some little persuasion by a warder, one

On Horseback through Nigeria

man would take on his head and carry off quite cheerfully. Twelve men would bravely endeavour to get a cask into position, until the two warders, in despair, would order them to stand aside while they put the matter right themselves. Occasionally a warder, by way of correction, would tap a convict lightly on the shoulder with his cane, and thereupon the convict and all his fellows would at once stop work, and a prolonged and heated altercation would ensue between the warder and his charges. To crown all, at four o'clock, after a little cheerful conversation with the convicts, the warders decided to stop work lest they should tire the prisoners, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the skipper persuaded them to renew their united efforts until five!

We lay at Onitsha all night, and next morning the same hopeful band returned to complete their labours; but in spite of, or perhaps on account of, their ardour, it was again five o'clock before the *Empire* at last got under way. Night fell clear and starry, and soon the moon rose in all its tropical brilliance. For a time the skipper pushed ahead, but soon after dinner the *Empire* plunged hopelessly into a sandbank, and all efforts to move her were, by one consent, postponed till dawn. A gentle breeze on the river kept the decks free from mosquitoes and other insect pests. We lay outstretched on our camp chairs, enjoying the calm radiance of the tropical even. The black waters lapped gently round us, the sandbanks gleamed white and clear in the moonlight, and far off on



CONVICTS AT ONITSHA.

On the Niger

either hand was the dark fringe which marked the limits of the river-bed. Now and then the breezes brought us the muffled sound of tum-tumming and native merriment, while an occasional gleam of light on the river bank warned us that we were not unseen. For a time we speculated upon the nature of the reception which we might expect if by any chance we were thrown adrift upon those gloomy banks, and we guessed that even now at many points upon the river our fate, if separated from the *Empire*, would be little different from that of the earlier explorers. We then fell back upon the perennial amusement of the old coaster; and, for the benefit of the new-comers, drew lurid pictures of the dire diseases and the treacherous natives of the north, and recounted with much embellishment all the tales of horror and alarm that the bush had ever produced.

The skipper and the crew were early at work in the morning tugging the *Empire* off the bank, and we awoke to find ourselves surrounded by another reminder of the north. A thin blue haze lay upon the water like a light November fog, but it smelt and felt quite dry and dusty, without a trace of vapour in the air. It was the first touch of the harmattan, that unpleasant companion of the northern sun. As the day wore on the haze thickened, and the dusty atmosphere dimmed the sunshine and limited our view from the steamer. At a little distance the river passed into a bluish-grey mist, while the ill-defined banks became fainter and fainter, until they also were lost in the haze. As we approached

On Horseback through Nigeria

Idah the sun sank in the west like a gleaming golden sphere; and the night fell chill and cold and dark, with a dank, sulphurous odour rising from the waters of the river.

At the first streak of dawn we were roused by the call of the muezzin from the mosque of Idah, by that familiar call of "*Allahu akbar*" ("God is great"), which reminded us that we were once more on the threshold of the Mohammedan north. A certain feeling of kinship rises in one's breast at the sound of that piercing cry at break of day, a feeling which all the heathen rites and charms of the southern tribes can never hope to rouse. Equally truculent though they may be, the Mohammedan or even the professedly Mohammedan tribes seem nearer to the white man in mind and morals than the ju-ju worshippers of the south: and after travelling through a pagan country it is with a feeling of relief that one hears again the welcome call to prayer at morning, noon, and eve. Here at Idah, however, the presence of a mallam is the result of missionary effort from the north, for all the river tribes to the south and for some distance to the north of Lokoja are still hopelessly wrapt in the mysticism of paganism.

Idah is the northernmost outpost of Southern Nigeria, and the Residency is picturesquely situated on a low ridge which meets the Niger in a steep cliff of white sandstone. A little farther north on the other bank is Igore, the southernmost outpost of Northern Nigeria, and between the two we crossed the boundary between the two Pro-

On the Niger

tectorates. Nearing Igore a bolt snapped and the engines were partially disabled, so the skipper hove to for repairs. Being the frontier Customs station, the beach is guarded by a native policeman, resplendent in a blue serge tunic and knickers, with a belt, a yellow sash, and a wand of office. While on duty his bearing is dignified and unapproachable, but as soon as his watch is over he sheds his sash, the badge of office, and on the river bank offers for sale tame parrots in a basket!

By midday the engines had been temporarily repaired, and we set out up-stream once more, only to run full tilt into a sandbank a few miles up. The usual delay occurred while the anchor was carried astern and the steamer hauled back into the channel. By four o'clock, however, we had reached the point where the river banks lose their dull monotony and assume the picturesqueness which is characteristic of the Niger Valley to the north. Low rounded and somewhat flattened hills began to rise on either bank, covered with brown grass and scattered trees, and with narrow defiles between the hills decorated with green clusters of palms. At the mouth of each defile was set a tiny village, half-hidden by a clump of bananas, while similar hamlets were dotted over the hills, each with its little green patch of guinea-corn and cassava. The river seemed narrower and the water clearer, and the sandbanks appeared like fairy islands in the midst of the stream, decorated with green tufts of grass and prickly shrubs. On many of the larger banks, moreover, little groups of travelling

On Horseback through Nigeria

traders had halted for the night, their canoes moored to stakes by their sides and their mats set on end to ward off the morning dews.

The harmattan had thickened steadily, and now we could almost feel the dusty particles floating in the air. Our eyes were smarting, our lips were parched, our hands and faces hot and dry. A thick grey mist settled upon the banks and shut out our view of the hills on either side. Slowly the *Empire* moved ahead, for the channel was beset with many rocky obstructions. Night had closed in before we reached Itobe, and a bush fire behind the town cast a lurid light upon the river, while the dark walls and conical roofs of the native huts were silhouetted against the glare. As we moved still northward in the darkness the channel lay between lofty granite peaks, whose outlines were barely visible in the gloom. Here and there on their slopes, however, the dry bush grass was burning red and low, while occasionally a flame would shoot up and for a few seconds illuminate the mountain-side. Higher up off Igbo, where we anchored for the night, it seemed as though the demons of the bush were rejoicing at our coming. On the slopes and summits of the conical hills on either bank their caldron fires gleamed red and lurid through the mist as they stirred their brew of woes and ills for the white intruders. And the moon shone dimly through the milky air, as if, powerless to help, she had veiled her face in sorrow at the prospective fate of her pale-faced friends.



ON THE NIGER NEAR IGBO.

On the Niger

Next morning the harmattan had disappeared, and the sun rose clear and bright to sparkle joyfully on the hurrying waters as they eddied round the granite rocks in the channel. Beyond the green line of grass and reeds which fringed the river, the havoc of the evening fires was plainly visible in the bare rocks and the blackened trees on the mountain-sides. Where yesterday the mellowing grass was still in places lush and green and overtopped by shady trees, to-day the soil was brown and bare, and studded with blackened trunks and gnarled stems, from whose skeletal arms there hung dejectedly a few scorched and withered leaves. These bush fires are both a bane and a boon to the countries of the middle Niger. As a direct consequence the timber is gnarled and spoilt, and much that is of use in the forest destroyed. On the other hand, swarms of insect life, which multiplies so rapidly during the rains, are thus annually cleared away; and the country gains decidedly by the change.

Small ocean-going steamers can ascend the Niger as far as Lokoja and Baro when the river is in flood, but even then navigation is attended by many difficulties and dangers. Though the river may rise in the season as much as thirty or thirty-five feet, it is as necessary to keep to the channel when the river is high as when it is low, and it is only a very experienced pilot who can pick out his course when the river-bed is nothing but a sheet of water and all the familiar landmarks are submerged. Of these hazards we were

On Horseback through Nigeria

forcibly reminded as, a few miles above Igbo, we passed, hard and fast upon the rocks, a small ocean-going cargo steamer which had veered a few yards out of its course when the river was high. Her pointed keel and unfamiliar build caused much comment among the native crew, while the skipper, with his accustomed superiority, jeered at the carelessness and stupidity of the native pilot who had run her on the rocks.

The granite hills had now died down and given place to an irregular hummocky plain on either bank. The buttressed fronts of the table mountains which guard the confluence of the Niger and the Benue at first loomed dim in the distance, but gradually became more defined as we entered the straight reach of river below Lokoja. Little by little also, the red roofs of the cantonment came into view, with the white walls of the trading stores beyond, and the painted decks and funnels of the steamers at the wharf. Soon we saw the flags flying gaily over the Government quarters, and heard the mixed music of the native buglers practising their calls on the river bank. And then the *Empire's* siren burst forth and woke the echoes amongst the hills. A crowd of natives in cloths of many colours rapidly collected on the beach to witness the arrival of the steamer, while the skipper and his native crew, resplendent in clean uniforms, swelled visibly with importance, as the *Empire* was slowly berthed and made fast at the Government wharf.



LOKOJA AND MOUNT PATTI.

To face p.

CHAPTER II

LOKOJA TO KEFFI

" You may be jogging, whiles your boots are green."

Lokoja and Mount Patti—Carriers and traders—A public lecture in the courthouse—Departure from Lokoja—The R.M.S. (*S*)*Tork*—Careless navigators—The port of Loko—Disembarkation—A fruitless search for horses—On foot to Nassarawa—Wandering traders—A deserted town—The fatigues of travel—A broad English road—Rebuilding the Residency—Nassarawa and its warrior king—Picturesque country—Professional beggars and native magicians—The discontented mallams of Keffi.

THE native town and cantonment of Lokoja, situated as it is at the confluence of the Niger with its great tributary, the Benue, is the natural emporium of European commerce and the distributing centre for all the river-borne merchandise which enters the Protectorate. As a township it cannot claim age as an asset. Its history dates from 1841, from the time when Captain Allen obtained from the Attar of Idah a grant of a plot of land six miles long by four miles wide at the confluence of the Niger and the Benue, whereon to establish a model farm. The venture, however,

On Horseback through Nigeria

proved unsuccessful, and it was not until 1860 that Dr. Baikie founded the town of Lokoja on the site of the unlucky model farm of 1841. With a few liberated slaves he established a small settlement, and gradually induced the pagans amongst the neighbouring hills to come down and clear and cultivate the adjoining land. From this small beginning has sprung in fifty years the present township, which is now one of the most important markets in the Protectorate. The native quarters are set farthest north, on the narrow strip of land between the river and the base of the hills. To the south follow in succession the traders' stores, the civil and military lines, and the hospital hill, the whole dominated by the wooded crest of Mount Patti, whose precipitous sides rise a thousand feet above the river, and from whose level summit in times gone by the anxious eyes of the early settlers gazed wistfully southward to catch the first glimpse of the long-expected steamer.

On reaching Lokoja it is customary to report oneself to the Cantonment Magistrate, whose task it is to find temporary quarters for new arrivals and to provide porters to carry the baggage from the steamer to the rest-house. As a rule, watchful eyes upon the beach have been quick to spread the news, and almost as soon as one is settled in one's quarters the grinning faces of former native friends appear on the verandah. Their welcome, however, is not entirely disinterested, as, besides hopes of further service, they are artful enough to expect a "dash" (a small present) for their former

Lokoja to Keffi

efforts, satisfactory or not as they may have been. Moreover, any casual promise which may have been made to them on former journeys is at once remembered, and anxious inquiries are speedily made for the pocket-knives or watches or other gifts which constituted the promise. With so many willing helpers messages are speedily conveyed to those henchmen of former days who happen to be in the vicinity, and long before nightfall the headmen are busy in the native town collecting carriers for the new expedition.

The carrier or porter class has arisen as the result of the coming of the white man. Not content with exploring the river banks, the latter struck out along the native tracks to visit the inland tribes, and, disdaining to live entirely as a native, engaged a few men to accompany him and carry his tent and baggage and European provisions. As the numbers of such wandering whites increased, a greater demand for porters arose; and thus there sprang up a class of men who live partially or entirely on the fruits of their labour as porters. Of this class Lokoja, the principal starting-point of expeditions to the interior, is the natural headquarters, while subordinate centres are Loko and Ibi on the Benue and Zungeru on the Kaduna. The greater number of the porters are freed or runaway slaves, who, having no real home or country of their own, are willing to follow the white man wherever he may go. It is customary to find, therefore, in any gang of carriers, representatives of many different tribes; and it is charac-

On Horseback through Nigeria

teristic of the country, and of the white man's prestige in it, that in the company of a European a porter will cheerfully enter the domain of even his deadliest tribal enemies. For the sum of ninepence, and at the rate of fifteen to seventeen miles per day, he will plod along steadily with his load of sixty pounds or over, live comfortably and even sumptuously in the bush on threepence per day, and hoard the remainder to spend on dress and dissipation in the first large town he enters.

In addition to the porter class, the floating population of Lokoja includes many native traders, who come from the north by way of the Niger and the Benue, to buy and barter in the southern markets. From the north they bring the so-called potash of the Sudan, and to the north they carry salt, kola nuts, European fabrics, and hardware goods. Large quantities of provisions, moreover, are daily brought in by the neighbouring tribesmen, and thus in the markets of Lokoja, under the eye of the white man, the southern pagans meet in safety their hereditary foes of the north; while the canoes which of yore brought armed raiders to the region of the confluence, now peacefully transport the travelling merchants to the sheltering base of Mount Patti.

Besides the carriers and traders, native and European storekeepers, and Government officials, there is in Lokoja a considerable number of educated negroes—clerks, artisans, and skilled workmen, recruited for the most part from Southern Nigeria, the Gold Coast, and Sierra

Lokoja to Keffi

Leone, who, tempted by the high rate of pay, are doing a term of service in the north. These form a class entirely by themselves ; and while the local natives have their own amusements, and the white men have tennis, cricket, golf, and polo, these foreigners have a somewhat tedious time after their official duties are over. For this reason any entertainment organised on their behalf is usually patronised by the official world. On the night of our arrival at Lokoja a public lecture was being given in the courthouse by one of their own class, who had issued the following characteristic advertisement of his performance :—

TWO-SHILLING TRIP FROM WEST AFRICA TO EUROPE.

GRAND TELESCOPIGRAPH DISPLAY.

Straight and striking talks respecting scenes and life in the United Kingdom and France.

MR. MERRIMAN-LABOR,

who is now touring 10,000 miles from London around Africa and back, will lecture on "Five Years with the White Man: or Scenes and Life in England, Scotland, Ireland, and France." The lecture will be found to be witty, chatty, humorous, instructive, and entertaining. It will be accompanied by

LIFE-SIZE PICTURES FROM A POWERFUL TELESCOPIGRAPH

specially constructed for this lecture and superior to anything you have seen for a long time.

DON'T MISS THIS TREAT.

You have never heard the like before. It will take you some time to see the like again. We shall have such a fine time, hours together, to-night, commencing 9 p.m., at the Courthouse, under the chairmanship of the Cantonment Magistrate.

Tickets 2s. each.

COME AND BRING A FRIEND.

On Horseback through Nigeria

The lecturer began by saying that West Africa differed from the United Kingdom not only in its terrestrial position, geographical outlines, and physical features, but also in the colour, customs, and habits of its inhabitants. He then went on to enumerate those features of European life and manners which had impressed themselves most strongly on his West African mind. He showed a bird's-eye view of London, pointing out that all the roads led to the Bank, although some were very zigzag, like the road to wealth. Cheapside was badly named, because things there were not at all cheap. Cleopatra's Needle, one of the works of Africa, he had beheld with a thrill of pride. In Westminster Abbey he had had the pleasure of standing upon the bones of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and all the Kings of England! He was astonished at the crowds and the traffic in the streets, and admired immensely the white covering of snow on the Embankment steps on a winter's morning. He was surprised at seeing ladies on horseback, dressed in hats and coats like men, at the public love-making in the parks, and at the rows and rows of suburban homes, whose sameness made it difficult to recollect one's house unless one remembered the number. When a series of photographs of military and naval reviews, with pictures of the King and Queen, were exhibited on the screen, the whole audience rose and sang "God Save the King," and as the negro is nothing if not loyal, a second rendering of the National Anthem brought the lecture to a close.

Lokoja to Keffi

Next morning, after a number of carriers had been enrolled for the proposed expedition to the bush and the headmen had left to search out more, we set off to climb Mount Patti. An easy winding bridle-path has now been cut on the side of the hill, replacing the shorter but steeper and stonier native track of former days. From the margin of the level wooded summit a magnificent view is obtained of the confluence, spreading out a thousand feet below as a wide expanse of water dotted with green islands and yellow sandbanks. From the summit also we looked down upon the roofs and compounds of the native town, the busy market, the tidy stores, the shady cantonment, the steamers at the wharf, and the level crest of the Bassa hills far off in the distance.

It was a motley crowd which gathered on the beach at Lokoja the following afternoon. The fifty carriers included representatives of the four principal nations of Nigeria—Hausa, Yoruba, Eulani, and Kanuri. They had been engaged for a six months' tour in the bush, and their lady friends in Lokoja had turned out in full force to wish them a good journey and a speedy return. Each carrier was equipped with a roll consisting of his sleeping mat, his pillow and blanket, and his spare clothes; while in addition he carried a bundle of yams and other provisions for the river journey to Loko. As the Benue was rapidly falling, transport had been provided for us in the R.M.S. (*S*)*Tork*, one letter of whose name had apparently disappeared, while a large native canoe was lashed on either

On Horseback through Nigeria

side to accommodate the carriers and the baggage. The (*S*)*Tork* is a shallow-draught, flat-bottomed, sheet-iron steam-canoe with a small paddle-wheel astern, divided into four compartments and fitted with a roof of thin matchboarding supported on iron uprights. The furnace and the boiler are placed in the front compartment and the engine and steering gear in the rear, while the two middle compartments are the living-rooms for Europeans. The furnace is fed with wood, and two dilapidated steam-pipes run along the roof of the middle compartments, thus connecting the boiler with the engine, and incidentally dropping hot water from the joints upon the heads of any unwary boys who may take their stand beneath. The kitchen is in front, in one corner of the furnace-room, and the smoke from the wood fire blows directly into the eyes of any one seated amidships.

With much blowing of the whistle and the usual performance of starting and turning back repeatedly to pick up loiterers, the (*S*)*Tork* at last got under way. The pilot stood in a little crow's nest upon the roof with the steering-wheel in his hands ; but as soon as we had passed the deeper and more dangerous region of the confluence, and were stemming the calmer waters of the Benue, all discipline was relaxed. The pilot squatted down upon the roof and left the wheel to the care of the quartermaster. The engineer left the engine to pound away at will, while he scrambled upon the roof to chat and smoke with the pilot. Needless to say, we soon ran aground on a sandbank, and

Lokoja to Keffi

the engineer clambered hastily down to stop the engine, while the crew and the carriers jumped overboard to push the little steamer off. Repeatedly also we came to a stop in quiet water, as the result of the engineer waking up to find the bearings red hot for want of oil, and, time being of little object, we heaved to until the engine cooled !

The two compartments of the steam-canoe which are reserved for the accommodation of Europeans are not particularly commodious. Each measures only ten feet by ten, and holds little more than a deck-chair, a table, a water-cooler, and a box of provisions. Necessarily, therefore, the compartment has to be in turn bedroom, bathroom, dressing-room, dining-room, and sitting-room. Commonly, however, when there are two Europeans the compartment nearest the kitchen is made the dining-room and the other the sitting-room, while each is occupied as a bedroom by night. As evening fell, a suitable sandbank was selected to which the little steamer could be moored. The carriers and crew were sent some distance off to eat and sleep round their open fires, while, after dining on the sandbank, we claimed the steamer as our own until the grey dawn began to brighten in the East.

We had anchored near Mozum, a large native town with a trading store on the left bank of the river and the principal port of Bassa province. Next morning, soon after starting, we stopped at a small riverside village to ship two cords of wood, and

On Horseback through Nigeria

then at Rumaisha with mails for the Sudan United Mission, who have here established a freed-slaves home. The river now seemed to flow in a broad and shallow trough between two ranges of flat-topped hills which rose in the distance on either bank, decorated by occasional conical and tabular peaks. Long straight reaches, moreover, are characteristic of the Benue, and in the evening we sat on our camp-chairs on the roof, and as the sun went down in a golden glow, gazed idly at the tiny distant blank on the horizon from which the placid waters of the river flowed. On the following day we passed several trading stations on the left bank of the river, and at dawn next morning found ourselves in sight of the solitary tree of Loko, the landmark of watermen for miles on either side.

Loko, originally founded as a slaving centre by the northern Mohammedans, is now one of the largest and most important towns on the banks of the Benue, and has of recent years very largely ousted Ibi from its place as the principal starting-point of expeditions to Bauchi and Bornu. Moreover, since the opening up of the Bauchi plateau and the development of the tinfields, Loko, as the nearest point on the river, has become the port of shipment of the ore and an important centre for native traders and carriers. A broad and well-marked trail runs from Loko, by way of Nassarawa and Keffi, over the plateau and through the tinfields to Bauchi, Bornu, and Lake Chad. Along this route traders, singly or in caravans, are constantly passing, and the road may be found

Lokoja to Keffi

frequented at almost any hour of the day or of a moonlight night. Unfortunately for its future, however, the completion of the Baro-Kano railway will divert much of the transport and the carrying trade, and the importance of this well-defined route will in all probability rapidly decline, as the former trail from Bauchi to Ibi has already done. Meanwhile, however, Loko is quite a centre of civilisation, provided with a trading store, a post- and telegraph-office, and a rest-house, or *bariki*, for Europeans, in a more or less dilapidated condition.

With much tooting of the whistle and shouting of incoherent commands, the R.M.S. (S)*Tork* manœuvred into position and anchored at the steeper end of an extensive sandbank close to the margin of the river. Steamers, however, are a common sight at Loko, and our coming aroused little commotion on the river bank. The women and girls who were washing clothes in the river, or who had come down to fill their waterpots from the filthy stream, merely paused for an instant at their work, while a few loiterers on the river bank roused themselves lazily to gaze at the steamer. The carriers jumped ashore with cries of joy at their relief from their narrow quarters in the two small canoes, and, with much laughter and merriment, began to remove my baggage and provision-boxes from the steamer to the shore. Soon everything had been safely moved, and my companion of the last three days, who was under orders to proceed higher up the river, was left alone with a little more space in which to make himself com-

On Horseback through Nigeria

fortable. The carriers then shouldered the boxes, and marched through the dirty riverside town and through the market-place in the direction of the rest-house, which, with the other Government buildings, is set outside and to the west of the town, and surrounded at this season by groves of drooping guinea-corn.

The headmen were quickly despatched to find a few more carriers to replace a number of undesirables in my troop, while the interpreter was instructed to search the town for horses and bring them and their owners to interview me at the bariki. The odd carriers were easily found, but the horses proved a more difficult quest. In the whole town there were only two to be found—a broken-ankled hack and a decrepit trader's horse with its back all chafed and sore. The headman, or *sariki*, of the town, when he came to see me, explained that the past rainy season had been particularly bad for horses, that all the horses in Loko had died of sickness during the rains, and that the large trading caravans with horses to spare had not yet arrived from the north. The tsetse-fly, whose ravages are confined to the neighbourhood of the rivers and to certain forest belts during the dry winter season, is distributed throughout all the southern provinces during the summer, and in consequence it is almost impossible to keep horses with impunity from one dry season to another. It is customary, therefore, for both white men and natives to send valuable horses to the open north during the rains, and to have them

Lokoja to Keffi

brought south again at the beginning of the winter. Similarly, those who wish to buy horses in the southern provinces at the end of the rains must wait until the northern traders and horse-breeders have paid their first visit of the season to the southern markets.

As there was no available horse in Loko, and as it was impossible to wait there while one was being sent down from Keffi, I determined to walk to Nassarawa, and for that purpose rose early the next morning at the first call of "*Allahu akbar*" from the mosques of Loko. Everything was ready at daybreak, and while the headmen went to summon the carriers who were sleeping in the town, and the interpreter remained behind in charge of the caravan, I walked on ahead to the first village of Ushan Rogo, where I had arranged to halt for breakfast. The road was soft and sandy, and after passing the Loko farms led over undulating country and through thin and scattered bush, obscured by coarse rank grass of a season's growth. Occasional belts of thicker forest crossed the path, through the middle of which ran clear and shallow streams. The carriers had caught me up by the time the village clearings had been reached, and after half an hour's rest we set out again to walk to the next river, a distance of five miles or more. By the time we reached it, the sun's heat was beginning to tell. The carriers were hot and perspiring, and gladly rested on the banks of the stream, while my feet began to feel heavy and sore with the unaccustomed exercise. Never-

On Horseback through Nigeria

theless it was necessary to push on to Ita, and while the carriers now went on ahead, I toiled painfully behind them, and it was with a sigh of relief that at last we entered the patch of forest in which the village was set. The native huts were built in a clearing, surrounded by lofty evergreen trees and well-grown and graceful feather-palms. Patches of tobacco and broad-leaved bananas grew in the odd spaces between the huts, while the pagan inhabitants gazed stolidly at the new-comers or sucked their long-stemmed pipes resignedly as the column filed along the narrow path between the houses. My tent was pitched near the ju-ju-tree, beside a low fan-palm, while the villagers brought wood and water, fruit, eggs, and fowls for the white man, and opened their storehouses to find the grain from which to prepare the evening meal for the carriers.

I was roused in the night by the noise of the traders passing out of the village in the early moonlight, such little as there was. Long distances are covered by these wandering merchants, and, wisely enough, they prefer to go by night when there is sufficient moon to light their path. They carry for themselves loads which are much heavier than the regulation sixty pounds of Government carriers. On the other hand, though they cover the same and even a greater distance per day, they do it in their own time and in their own way. A Government carrier is expected to do his fifteen or seventeen miles per day at a single march, with short rests for food and water, so that the European whose

Lokoja to Keffi

baggage he carries, may reach his destination before the hottest part of the day has come. The trader, however, has no particular desire to shun the sunshine as the white man does, and while he starts earlier, his halts are more frequent and for longer periods at a time. His forked resting-trees in which he fixes his load when he makes a halt, are characteristic features of every trade route, while every shady tree by the wayside is in turn utilised as a shelter when the sun is high.

With the first streak of dawn the cocks began to crow, and by six o'clock we were once more on the march, over undulating sandy country, covered with high grass and scrubby trees. The grass was yellow and dry, in places overhanging the path, and almost ready for the annual fires which clear the bush and scorch the trees and remove the last leaves of summer from the gnarled boughs. The height of the grass made it impossible to see far ahead, and it was only when the winding path crossed the broad clearing, along the middle of which ran the telegraph poles and wires, that a distant view of lofty treetops could be obtained from the crests of the undulations. Soon we passed the ruined wall and ditch of some former town, which, from the length of the rampart, must once have been of considerable size. In places such deserted sites are of frequent occurrence, and it is sad to speculate on the cause of their decay. In some cases a deadly plague mowed down the inhabitants with ruthless hand, and the few that escaped fled in terror from the accursed place.

On Horseback through Nigeria

At other times, and perhaps equally frequently, the armed horsemen of the north raided these peaceful pagan haunts, overcame the faint resistance, put the leaders to the sword, and carried off the whole tribe into captivity. A few refugees may afterwards return to live a sad and lonely life within the ruined walls; and this, it seemed, was what had happened in the case of Obe, where we stopped for breakfast, and which is now a shrunken saddened relic of its former self.

From the rising ground behind Obe we saw in the distance the southernmost kopjes of the Anagoda hills, at the base of whose western slopes our camp was to be pitched that day. Two hours later we reached a river flowing westward from the hills, and while we rested on its banks I amused myself by watching the passers-by. First came a gang of carriers from the tin-mines of Bauchi, well fed and well dressed, each with a neat little sack of tinstone on his head whose bulk belied its weight. Then came the family party of a Hausa trader from the north—a man, two women, and two children. A little girl led the way, carrying a tiny load weighted to her size; then the women, each perspiring under heavier loads, and one with a baby slung tightly on her back; and behind came the lord and master, in a gown that had seen better days, a stout bludgeon in his hand, and on his head a light bundle of mats and clothes. With a cheerful *Sanu, sanu!* ("Hail, hail!") he passed on his way, followed by a small caravan of ten or fifteen donkeys, each laden with bags of *kungwa*

Lokoja to Keffi

(potash) and guided by five or six uncouth figures from the north, while the owner came behind with his women, leading an emaciated pony whose sallet days had long gone by. As each party crossed the river they stopped to drink and rest on the farther bank, where a few rude shelters of grass and twigs marked the former halting-place of some benighted caravan.

Meanwhile my carriers had moved on to the rest-house at Gidan Dutsi, a mile to the north, and, after an hour's rest, I struggled painfully after them. "Not my spirits but my feet were weary;" and on the hot and sandy roads the very air seemed to vibrate under the noonday sun. Everything was forgotten, however, as the camp came in sight, with its promise of refreshment and repose; and in the evening, when all was quiet, I sat at my tent-door in the moonlight, blessing the makers of whisky and sparklet, and thinking of the happy days to come when the tsetse belts would be left behind and I should be able to accomplish the daily journeys on horseback without unnecessary fatigue, when—

" Jack shall have Jill,
Nought shall go ill.
The man shall have his mare again
And all shall be well."

The Anagoda hills rise abruptly from the level plain, and the rest-house and camping-ground at Gidan Dutsi are set at the base of their steep granite slopes. The pagans who cultivate the surrounding plains have their homes amongst the hills,

On Horseback through Nigeria

and they and their stores of food are therefore ordinarily inaccessible to passing caravans and traders. At my request, however, the village headman brought down a small supply of food, sufficient with the meal they carried to provide a scanty supper for the carriers. Naturally, however, they had no desire to linger in such an inhospitable place, and consequently were early astir next morning, eager to push on at once to Nassarawa. We moved off before six o'clock, and for a time travelled along the broad road which the Public Works Department have cleared from Loko to Keffi, with the object of encouraging the wheeled transport of tinstone and other goods. It is curious to note, however, the antipathy of the native to English-made roads. Although the latter may be more direct from point to point, the native prefers the narrow winding bush track of his ancestors; and, travelling on foot as I was, I found it easy to appreciate his point of view. In bush country there is nothing more tedious than journeying along a broad, straight, and open road with a distant view steadily in front. A winding bush track, with possible surprises at every turn, is much less wearisome, while the shade of the occasional overhanging trees is agreeable and delightful, even though one cannot linger to enjoy it. Moreover, the native paths are designed to cross or pass all the available streams and waterholes, so necessary to the natives on hot and dusty days; while the English-made roads, also designedly, run as much as possible along the watersheds, in order to avoid

Lokoja to Keffi

the deep cuttings which the rivers and streams as a rule have made in the level surface of the plains.

The native path which we were following at first crossed and recrossed the broad English road, until ultimately, as we entered stony country, the latter struck off to the east to avoid the hills, while the bush track went straight ahead to Nassarawa over rapidly undulating country, steadily rising and stony. We breakfasted on the second last rise, and from the summit of the next we looked across the shallow valley of the Nassarawa River, all cleared and cultivated, to where on the horizon a long streak of green marked the site of the city. An Assistant Resident is usually stationed here, and his house is built on the summit of the ridge to the east of the town. While the carriers stopped to bathe in the river, I pushed on ahead to the *Gidan Judgie* ("house of the Resident"), and as I passed through a tiny hamlet outside the walls of the town a leper courteously directed me on my way. Then, again, as I came to cross-roads an aged woman equally courteously answered me: "*Hanyar bariki ko? To. So sai! So sai!*" ("The road to the rest-house? Yes. Straight on! Straight on!"), as she pointed straight onward with her arm. When we reached the bariki we found that the judge, or political officer, had gone on tour in his division while a new house was being built for him by the natives. The mud walls were finished and the floor was now being made, a work which evidently provided occupation for about a hundred women. Some were carrying pebbles,

On Horseback through Nigeria

others mud, others water, while many were beating the floor with flattened sticks and shouting and singing as they kept time to the music with their blows. The noise and din went on unceasingly, until in despair at three o'clock I gave my boys some cowries to scatter in the courtyard, after a scramble for which the women departed and left me in peace and quietude.

Nassarawa is a large and populous town with a mixed Hausa and pagan population, and the country all round as far as one can see has been cleared and farmed. There are few large trees except in the town itself, which is shady and cool. The streets are lined with trees, and the compounds are surrounded by matting, except those of the chiefs, which are bounded by clay walls. Each compound is provided with a public entrance-hall or *zauri*, a circular hut with two doors, one leading outwards to the street and the other inwards to the private apartments within the compound. The city walls are low and worn and evidently long disused, and the reason is not far to seek. The sariki, or king, of Nassarawa has been a great warrior in his time, and, himself secure, before the coming of the British, had ravaged and conquered all the country southward to the Benue and westward to the Niger. He had even carried his victorious arms northward to the walls of Keffi, and was on the point of attacking this rival State when the English came, and he wisely determined to throw in his lot with them. Now, being old and corpulent, he devotes himself to agricultural pur-



A BYWAY IN NASSARAWA.

Lokoja to Keffi

suits, and at the time of my arrival he had gone to spend the day upon his farms at some little distance from the town. One of his henchmen, however, waited on me and brought me fowls, eggs, yams, water, and firewood, and everything else that I required. Next day, while I rested in the bariki, the old warrior himself came to see me, and I lost no time in preferring my request that, as I was in a hurry to reach Bauchi, he should either sell me a horse or lend me one to ride as far as Keffi. In reply, he said that his horses also had almost all died during the past season, that several of them were still sick, and that he had none for sale suitable for me to ride. He had, however, a small pony at one of his bush farms which he would lend me with pleasure as far as Keffi, if that would be of any use. I thanked him for his offer, and asked him to be so good as to see that it was sent up to the bariki by dawn next morning.

Soon after six o'clock we turned our backs on Nassarawa, the carriers racing merrily along, while I rode behind them on the sariki's pony, accompanied by a horseboy gaudily dressed in gown and turban and sword. The road led through open country, covered with brown grass and scattered trees, the coarse bush grass growing from five to six feet high, with the flowering stems, stiff and flexible like canes, rising to a height of twelve or fifteen feet. In one shallow valley, where the grass had been already burnt and the trees scorched and blackened, the young green shoots were already growing from the old tufty roots, and

On Horseback through Nigeria

a herd of cows in the distance were picturesquely browsing upon the herbage. We breakfasted at Zomaji, a restaurant town, where the women sat in rows on either side of the road selling calabashes of cooked food to the numerous passers-by. Then we met a large caravan of porters and donkeys carrying tinstone from the tinfields of Bauchi to the river at Loko. Many of my carriers recognised former friends amongst the crowd, and as they passed they stopped for a minute to grasp hands and exchange the usual salutations: "*Ah, Mama!—Ah-ah, Owdu!—Lafia?—Lafia?—Lafia lau.—Sai lafia.—Madala!*" ("Ah, Mama!—Ah-ah, Owdu!—Are you well?—Are you well?—Quite well.—Quite well.—Good!"). Presently we met a former horseboy of my own, who greeted me most profusely and begged hard to be allowed to follow me again, a request to which, to his delight, I at last consented. The track led over gently undulating country through farmland old and new, through strips of forest along the banks of the streams, where the doves cooed and the monkeys chattered incessantly, and over the watercourses, now nearly dry, and marked by strings of pools where white and yellow water-lilies grew luxuriantly, surrounded by banks of convolvulus and petunia. The villages, which now became fairly frequent, were easily distinguished as oases of green in the light brown landscape. The guinea-corn was here rapidly ripening, and in places the villagers were literally "hewing the harvest," for the stalks were fifteen to twenty feet in height and strong as

Lokoja to Keffi

bamboos. The men cut and dry the corn on the farms, and the women carry the heads home in bundles to the granaries, while the thinner stems are used as firewood and the thicker as supports for the thatched roofs of the native huts. At Lamingo, where we camped, preparations were being made for killing a cow in the market-place, and the butchers were drumming and shouting to advertise the fact. A gaudily dressed professional beggar kept calling for alms in the midst of the crowd, while a wretched creature with a withered leg crawled painfully to the door of my tent and on receipt of sixpence moved slowly off, rejoicing at my generosity and muttering prayers for my future happiness. Then a troop of native magicians, ventriloquists, and wonder-workers, dressed in barbaric costumes, came on the scene and performed their little feats before my tent in the hope of a large reward. The old king, whom I had seen before, quite failed to recognise me, and begged to be excused for his remissness. So many Europeans passed through his town, and to him all white men looked the same !

It is a curious fact that begging is quite a recognised profession amongst the Hausa tribes. As in the case of ordinary crafts, moreover, it is a hereditary vocation with a limited membership, the customs and rules of the profession being carefully handed down from father to son. The professional beggar is usually sleek and well dressed, and travels from town to town with a numerous retinue. He frequents the market-place when it is crowded,

On Horseback through Nigeria

and parades up and down exhibiting his finery and calling out in a loud voice the praises of the donors in other towns. Suddenly he stops in front of a prosperous-looking merchant or a well-dressed chief, and, addressing the unhappy individual by name, implores him in the name of Allah to present him with the article of use or ornament which he has seen and covets. Rarely is his request refused, however exorbitant it may be, for the astute beggar knows his power. On the least sign of hesitation on the part of the owner he threatens to brand him as a stingy man, and to spread his reputation far and wide as one who was so mean as to refuse a small donation to one of Allah's chosen beggars. This usually has the desired effect, for a reputation for meanness is that which a petty trader most of all desires to avoid. He hands over his turban or gown, or sword or ring, or whatever may have been demanded, with the best grace that he can muster, while the artful beggar at once begins to call down the blessings of Allah upon his head, and urges the bystanders to imitate his generosity and present him out of their abundance with as much as they can spare.

We left Lamingo at dawn and travelled northward towards Keffi, through well-cleared and cultivated country, with occasional hamlets surrounded by patches of guinea-corn, millet, cassava, yams, tobacco, cotton, and indigo. We met many people coming from Keffi and many caravans of potash and tinstone bound for Loko from the north. A string of ten blind folks—men, women, and



THE PLAINS OF KEFFI.

To face p. 58.

Lokoja to Keffi

children, all well laden, passed us, tramping merrily along the footpath. Many herds of cows were grazing in the distance, and now and again we passed droves of bullocks, sheep, and goats on the way to the markets of Keffi. The city showed first as a strip of green on the horizon, with the Residency, a brick-built bungalow, on a low rise to the east. Its population, of a mixed Hausa, Fulani, and pagan stock, is somewhat greater than that of Nassarawa. Its market is large and important, and its mosque is one of the finest in the Protectorate. Before the advent of the British, Keffi was noted principally for its slave-market, and after their coming it long remained a centre of disaffection towards British rule. It was here that in the early years Captain Maloney, the first British Resident, was treacherously murdered by the natives, and a monument to his memory stands opposite the mosque in the market-square. At a later date also, when the Hausa States were subdued, it was the Magaji of Keffi who urged the Emir Muslimin to make a last stand at Burmi, and, when his master was slain, fled precipitately from the country. Even now the mallams of Keffi look darkly and discontentedly at the white men who have displaced the old regime; and largely for this reason Keffi has been made the seat of government of Nassarawa province and the headquarters of the provincial guard.

CHAPTER III

THE BAUCHI PLATEAU

*"Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever."*

A bush camp—A trader's zungo—A deserter—Christmas Eve—Market day at Jaginde—The margin of the plateau—The Shosho people—Rectangular compounds and cactus hedges—The tailed women of the hills—Peculiarities of the natives—Chilly nights—Striking scenery—The summit of the plateau—The descent to Polchi—The discovery of tinstone on the plateau—The settlement of Naraguta—Doubtful reception by the natives of Ngell.

HORSES being more plentiful at Keffi, I had little difficulty in securing a mount and was therefore able to send back the sarikin Nassarawa's pony as promised. Many of the carriers had gone into the town to sleep and were consequently late in appearing in the morning. I went on ahead, however, and soon after leaving the rest-house crossed the Keffi River, flowing southward through fine open parklike country, dotted with numerous ham-

The Bauchi Plateau

lets set in clusters of trees and surrounded by walls of matting and patches of ripening guinea-corn. A thin harmattan cast a light grey mist in the distance ; and the morning sun, as it rose above a narrow bank of cloud on the horizon, shone through it like a crimson ball. Gradually as it climbed the heavens, the crimson changed to burnished gold and then to the glittering rays of the noon-day sun. I stopped at a wayside village while the lagging carriers came up, and then pushed on to Ungwar Filani through strips of thin bush alternating with patches of farm land and fallow. There was no rest-house or even a good zauri available, so I camped outside the village altogether. The sariki or headman was absent, having gone to Bauchi to buy cows, but his deputy, the *madaiki*, brought me fowls and milk and guinea-corn and arranged for the housing and feeding of the carriers.

It is good to be camped in the bush under a shady tree, amidst the short grass and the wild flowers of the fallow land, with the insects singing in the sunshine, the birds chirping in the shadow, and the doves cooing in the distance. From the village comes the sound of the crowing of cocks, the occasional barking of dogs, the pounding of guinea-corn in the wooden mortars, the grinding of corn and the beating of *fou-fou* (mashed yams) in the compounds. There is a pleasant breeze to temper the heat and the leaves and the grass rustle as the wind blows stronger, while the harmattan is not yet thick enough to be unpleasant. It is

The Bauchi Plateau

northward with loads of kola-nuts and cloth from the markets of the south. Then a caravan of donkeys passed southward to Keffi, heavily laden with the potash of the north. Some of the accompanying traders led young and agile ponies, while others drove before them small flocks of goats, or sheep, or bullocks. Curiously enough, many of the men carried pieces of meat or bone, and presently there came three donkeys with the legs and haunches of a bullock securely roped above their loads. The explanation came later, when my interpreter informed me that a trader's bullock had died of exhaustion by the wayside and its owners had immediately stopped, cut it up, and offered it for sale on the highway. Many traders had now halted for the night at our camp, and amongst them and the carriers the men with the legs and haunches soon found a ready market for their meat.

The night was delightfully cold, and after a sound, refreshing sleep I woke the camp at five a.m. One carrier had deserted in the night, whom the headmen had reported the previous day because "he humbugged them too much for road." This meant that he was slow and lazy and refused to do what the headmen asked of him. He had promised to amend and work better, but evidently he had revised his decision during the night and decamped. Fortunately, however, a substitute was at hand and no time was lost in getting under way. The road led through thin bush, with the grass below for the most part

On Horseback through Nigeria

burnt and beginning to sprout again. The trees were bare and leafless except along the water-courses, where their spreading summits rose fresh and green above a dense undergrowth of fan-palms and creeping lianes, luscious grass and scattered wild flowers. Such strips of greenery are pleasant to pass and most refreshing to the eye after the dreary monotony of the bare and blackened bush.

The road now became rapidly undulating and in places rough and stony. The carriers went well all morning, one sturdy man in front cheering them on with the notes of a ram's horn. We camped at Kwakwassa about eleven, and there I occupied a hut which smelt strongly of smoke and soot and had long black cobwebs hanging from the roof, but was otherwise fairly clean. The village was small, and had been originally founded by a party of Hausa slave-hunters from Zaria. The old king who brought me fowls and guinea-corn, informed me that before the English came he used to raid the pagans of the Mada country to the east, and sell the slaves for four or five pounds each to traders going north to Zaria or south to Loko and Ilorin. He was sorry that the English had come, for now his business was gone and he had perforce to devote himself to agriculture and petty trading.

It was now Christmas Eve, and after dinner, as I sat in my pyjamas at the door of the old slaver's hut under the starry sky, I thought of home, of the brilliantly lighted streets, of the gay shop-windows,

The Bauchi Plateau

of cosy rooms and cheerful company, and again of winter overcoats and heavy furs, of driving snow and raging winds. Here in the quiet village, however, the only sounds were the hissing and chirping of the insects and the distant voices of the carriers as they talked and laughed around their smouldering fires. 'Tis said that use breeds habit in a man; but in spite of philosophy there was a feeling of loneliness in the air, and, somewhat earlier than usual, I turned down an empty glass and sought repose within the darkness of the hut.

The carriers were astir at cockcrow, and at dawn, with much shouting and talking, we left the village and set out upon our march to Jaginde. Christmas morning broke bright and clear with a pleasant chill in the air, while the sun rose hastily in the east, blushing as though it had slept too long. Where the bush was burnt, the leafless trees of fantastic shapes, with their rugged blackened bark, were silhouetted against the clear blue sky. Elsewhere the fallen leaves and withered grass were touched with gold, while the long shadows fell athwart the path, chequering its sandy surface with yellow and brown. Along the watercourses the golden rays of the rising sun lit up the green recesses, while the birds twittered in the morning air and the doves cooed their messages of goodwill to men. The carriers went along merrily, some singing and chanting with their fellows, others indulging in rude banter and repartee, while the headmen lustily shouted their characteristic calls;

On Horseback through Nigeria

"Teffia! teffia! agamma! agamma! achika! achika! sanuku! gaisheka! teffia!" ("Go on! go on! altogether! altogether! close up! close up! hail to you! hail! go on!") We rested on the banks of the Jaginde River, and beyond it we found the bush largely unburnt. Time and again we crossed extensive grassy treeless stretches whose grey-black soil becomes swamp-land in the rains. We passed in the pleasant shadow of a pair of smooth and rounded granite kopjes, separated by a pass on the level of the plain and with their bases strewn with fallen blocks and boulders. As we advanced, even the scrubby trees became scarcer and scarcer, and the eye roamed far over the open plain, over stretches of yellow prairie-grass waving in the sun like the ripened cornfields of home. With the trees the shade also became scarcer and scarcer: whiter and hotter glowed the sun: brighter and brighter gleamed the sandy path: shorter and blacker grew the shadows, and yet we jogged merrily on, for there in front of us were the hills behind Jaginde with their promise of clear streams and cooling breezes. Moreover, it was market day in Jaginde, and what is heat and dust and travel when food and rest and comfort are in sight! With song and jest and laughter the carriers moved gaily along, for were not fura,¹ tuo,² nono,³ nama,⁴ dankali,⁵ and all other varieties of meat and drink waiting to be bought in the market, besides clothes and mats and trinkets

¹ Meal and milk.

² Meal and water.

³ Sour milk.

⁴ Beef.

⁵ Sweet potatoes.



MARKET-DAY AT JAGINDE.

The Bauchi Plateau

and everything that a black man's soul could desire?

“Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.”

Jaginde, originally like Kwakwassa a slaving settlement, is now an important market town, situated as it is at the parting of the ways which lead respectively to Bauchi and to Zaria. I camped in the European rest-house, overlooking the market-place, which had already begun to fill. Hausa merchants were there selling native and European fabrics, ready-made clothes from a simple riga to an elaborately embroidered gown, gaudy wools, needles and thread, salt and sugar, native medicines and powdered galena, and wristlets and anklets of tin and copper and bronze. Hausa women were there behind the food-stalls with crimson agates in their noses, calling out the names of the delicacies they had for sale. Fulani women and girls were there with plaited hair and necklets of coloured beads and bracelets and earrings of copper, offering milk and butter to the passers-by. Basket-makers were there with painted trays and hats, carved calabashes and woven mats: leather-workers with belts and purses and whips and saddlery: butchers with fragments of beef skewered on pointed sticks, roasting in rings round open fires: barbers with a multitude of strops and native razors hanging from their waists: potters with their newly-burnt vessels of clay: and

On Horseback through Nigeria

ragged woodmen who had spent the morning in the distant bush collecting firewood for their richer neighbours.

Several troops of porters carrying tinstone arrived in the afternoon, and they and their friends amongst my carriers feasted and made merry until evening, many of them becoming partially intoxicated with palm-wine. As evening fell the noisy, chattering crowd rapidly dispersed: the sun went down with a lurid glow: the misty harmattan closed down on the horizon: the crescent moon appeared in the western sky, and soon all was quiet except for the humming and singing of insects and the distant sounds of talk and laughter. Christmas Day had come and gone: and as I sat in my chair before the door of the hut, with the inseparable glass by my side, I watched the old moon in the young moon's arms sinking slowly in the west, like the old year passing gently into the dark backward and abysm of time. And after dinner I broached my case of "medical comforts" and drank a solitary toast to the loved ones at home, and to her who was patiently, cheerfully, and with a gladsome heart awaiting my return.

Early next morning we left Jaginde and took the road to Bauchi. Soon we reached the base of the hills which we had seen in the distance on the previous day, and which proved to be the worn and rounded front of the escarpment, running east and west behind Jaginde, which separates the northern tableland from the central and southern plains of Nassarawa. As far as Darroro we

The Bauchi Plateau

followed the base of this escarpment, which was continuous eastward with the precipitous slopes of the Kagoro hills and the steep cliffs of Assab, which marked the western limit of the Bauchi plateau.

Like most of the other towns in this neighbourhood, Darroro was originally founded by slavers from Zaria, whose business it was to hunt the pagan cannibals of the hills and carry them northward to the great slave-markets of Hausaland. At the same time these slaving settlements acted as frontier stations to the great empire of the north and held in check the pagan hordes of the plateau. The walls of Darroro had thus to be necessarily strong, while supplies had to be largely brought into the town, as its occupants had neither time nor inclination to devote themselves to agricultural pursuits. The bush, therefore, around Darroro is very sparsely cleared; and from the rest-house rise the southern plains spread outward, compactly covered with a thick veil of vegetation which securely conceals the pagan hamlets in the depths of the forest.

It is only within the last few years that it has become possible for peaceful traders and travellers to venture eastward beyond the walls of Darroro. Until the coming of the British no Hausa trader had ever climbed the cliffs of Assab and peered into the strongholds of the pagans of the plateau. Now and then a braver spirit had ventured up the long ascent behind Darroro and carried a load of salt to the tribesmen of Kagoro. Some-

On Horseback through Nigeria

times he was favourably received and royally rewarded for his bravery with a couple of wiry pagan ponies. More often, however, his load was confiscated and himself killed and eaten or carried off into perpetual slavery. Little wonder then that the land beyond Darroro was long the home of mystery and that strange tales were spread abroad of the weird peoples of the hills, where the women had tails and the men were red and clad only in caps of woven grass! The road from Loko to Bauchi was then a long and tedious one, involving as it did a wide detour to the north-west by way of Katab and Lere to avoid the country of the dreaded pagans. The new and shorter route by way of Darroro and Naraguta is now, however, thoroughly well established; but while the untutored pagans of the plateau have at length been induced to allow peaceful traders to pass unmolested across their ancient land of mystery, there is as yet but little intercourse between these former tribal enemies. The travellers must not leave the path nor seek nor hope to find hospitality within the pagan towns. Food is scarce upon the plateau, and those who cross it must carry with them sufficient stores to serve until they reach Naraguta. Darroro therefore possesses a considerable native produce market, although supplies are naturally shorter and dearer than at Jaginde. Fortunately the rest-house is without the walls of the town and well distant from the sights and sounds of the native market, and only muffled sounds of song and life and laughter, with the piercing cries of the mallams

The Bauchi Plateau

to evening prayer, rose from the town and reached my ears through the thickening harmattan.

Next morning the harmattan had lessened and appeared as a thin blue haze in the distance. We left at dawn, skirting the town to the right, and passed for a short distance through open grassy fallow land before we entered the thin forest which we had seen as a bank of green from the rest-house hill. Alternately the path led through stretches of bare and blackened bush and through patches of green and grassy undergrowth beneath leafy and shady trees. Parallel with us on the left ran the precipitous front of the Kagoro hills, with their level treeless summit outlined against the misty morning sky. As the sun gained strength, it threw streaks of gold across the path and lit up with a golden glare the projecting knobs and boulders of the grey granite precipices, while the vertical clefts and crevasses shone all the blacker and darker from the contrast. But before we reached our camping-ground on the steep banks of a rapid stream, the harmattan had again thickened and the lofty hills loomed faintly and indistinctly through the misty air.

By morning the atmosphere had cleared again and we were early on the march towards the line of hills, which were again tinted with a rosy light by the rising sun. The path led towards a conspicuous gap in the wall of rock which stretched away continuously to the right and left, and in two hours more we had reached the base of the ascent. It was with a certain feeling of expecta-

On Horseback through Nigeria

tion that we began to climb the rocky path, for we were now on the threshold of the mysterious plateau whose people had remained unconquered and unknown until the white man came to break the charm. A short ascent and a steep and rapid fall brought us to a clear and sparkling mountain stream, from which the carriers gladly slaked their thirst and filled their water-bottles for the main ascent beyond. Up the steep and stony track we toiled in the full glare of the morning sun, now stopping to gaze downward at the green and shady plains below, and then upward at the bare and treeless summit which marked the margin of the upper plateau. From the left came the roar of a waterfall as a stream danced and splashed over a rocky ledge, and we paused again to listen to the welcome sound and to gaze at the sheet of foam which rose and sparkled in the glowing sun.

Now and then as we climbed we met small parties of the hill folk descending to their lower farms. From the constant passing of carriers and traders through their town, they have now lost something of their shyness and no longer run from the sight of a white man or of a black from the plains below. On the contrary, the braver spirits now stand and stare and smile, and even exchange salutations with the passers-by. Some of them had even picked up a few words of Hausa and saluted me with the "*Sanu zaki*" ("Hail, great man") of the north. Their native mode of greeting consists in raising the clenched fist above the head



THE HILLS BEHIND JAGINDE.

The Bauchi Plateau

and uttering an emphatic "*Sho-sho!*" "*Sho-sho!*" and from this characteristic exclamation these denizens of the hills have been dubbed by the Hausa carriers the "*mutane sho-sho*" or the Sho-sho people. Their tribal name, however, is Kibyen or Kibun, a comprehensive term which covers all the dwellers on the summit of the plateau and probably includes many divergent races from one original stock.

The Kibyen town of Assab is set on the rugged brow of the cliffs which we had just ascended, overlooking the wooded plains fifteen hundred feet below. As soon as we entered it we were struck by the differences between these plateau towns and those of the lower plains through which we had passed. The characteristic wall and ditch of the cities of the plain were here conspicuously absent, and so also were the party walls of zana matting which separate the compounds in a Hausa town. The Kibyen compounds are large and rectangular and separated by thick and lofty hedges of green and prickly cactus, and at the upper end stands a cluster of tiny huts and granaries. The paths within the towns are bounded on either side by a row of these rectangular compounds, the lower hedges forming a continuous barrier along the whole length of the street. Passers-by are thus completely shut out of the compounds by these impenetrable hedges, while enemies, when once they enter the narrow path, are helplessly and hopelessly at the mercy of the owners of the compounds in the open squares behind. The greater part of the space within the

On Horseback through Nigeria

compound is in the season devoted to the cultivation of millet, which when fully grown entirely obscures the cluster of huts at the upper end, while after harvest the goats and fowls and small hill ponies of the tribesmen are securely penned within the cactus hedges.

The Kibyen men are comparatively short and sturdily built and, like the other native races of Nigeria, not markedly negroid in appearance. They usually appear with their bodies smeared from head to foot with red ochre, but otherwise clad only in "native nothingness." When attired for travel, they carry a small leathern bag of meal and their weapons, which consist of clubs and light casting spears of bamboo tipped with iron. The women are little in evidence and remain for the most part in the seclusion of the compounds. Their dress is simple and easily procured, for it consists solely of a bunch of leaves suspended from their waists behind and occasionally also in front. The matrons are distinguished by a bobbin-like appendage worn behind, consisting of a wooden frame wound round with iron wire, a peculiar custom from which has been derived the legend of the tailed women of the hills.

We halted at the upper end of the town to rest after the long and tedious climb. The carriers amused themselves by jeering at the women and shouting salutations to the men who peered at them through the cactus hedges. "*Aboki, sho-sho!*" "*Sho-sho, aboki!*" ("Hail, friend!") they would call; and if they had in reply a smile and answering

The Bauchi Plateau

"*Sho-sho*," they followed up their greeting at once by a call for "*atcha*," the Kibyen word for millet, a request, however, which was entirely ignored. As we passed through the town the high cactus hedges had quite obscured our view, but now as we sat on the upper margin of the cliffs we were struck by the treeless aspect of the landscape. Far below us there spread out the thickly wooded plains of Nassarawa, but from the surface of the plateau which stretched away northward and eastward from our feet there rose not a single lofty tree. Only a few wind-worn, stunted stems were scattered at long intervals over the plain, while the surface of the plateau as far as we could see was either cultivated or covered with short rank grass of a season's growth, now dry and brown and in places blackened with fire. Only in the town did the cactus hedges and occasional trees within the compounds cast a pleasing shade and offer a touch of vivid green on which to rest the eye.

Two roads lead across the plateau from Assab to Bukuru, the Government headquarters in the Kibyen country. One passes by way of Hoss and Vom and the other through Rim and Woran, and the latter, though somewhat longer, is the more interesting of the two. The path led over the open treeless plain in the full glare of the midday sun, and yet the heat seemed not excessive, for we had now reached a height of over 3,500 feet above sea-level, and had climbed above the hot and steamy atmosphere of the lower plains. Soon we reached the Kogin Rim, a rapid, rushing stream, which had

On Horseback through Nigeria

cut a deep trench for itself in the level surface of the plateau. We crossed it with some little difficulty, for its bed was strewn with huge boulders of the ancient lava which elsewhere covered the surface of the plain. We hastened on towards a small conical hill, the stump of an ancient volcano, which lay close to Rim, where we proposed to halt for the night; and as soon as we reached it, we saw before us the green cactus hedges and rectangular compounds of the natives, set round a cluster of rocky knolls.

We camped to the east of the town beside a clear stream of running water which flowed close to the outermost cactus hedge. Many eyes peered curiously at us over the granite boulders and between the thick stems of prickly cactus. By and by the natives in their primitive costume began to gain courage and to sidle shyly up to the tent and gaze in wonder at the white man within. My cook had fortunately taken the precaution to bring on some firewood from our last camping-ground, otherwise it would have been next to impossible to make a fire in this treeless land without invading the town, where the only available timber was to be found. As the natives, however, showed a disposition towards friendliness, he began to hold up pieces of wood and make signs to them to bring more out of the compounds, at the same time showing them a handful of salt in token of a coming reward. At the sight of the salt, which to these plateau-dwellers is the greatest delicacy on earth, they clucked and chuckled excitedly to each other,

The Bauchi Plateau

and then ran off to their huts and presently returned with an abundance of firewood, eager to claim the promised reward, which they received with a deep-throated "*ya-a, ya-a*" of satisfaction. Their eyes burned with ardent longing as they watched my boys laying the table for my meals, and when I sat down to eat and drink, they gazed at me in open-mouthed amazement, holding out their hands appealingly, clucking and chattering and muttering "*Gwom, gwom,*" which I was informed was their term for a person of supreme importance.

Next to a handful of salt, these primitive people value most highly empty tin cans, which they fashion into rings and armlets for the decoration of their bodies. Thus here, as with all other primitive races, the love of ornament comes next to the desire for food. For the same reason also, the younger men and women had their bodies smeared over with red ochre, which to a European eye gives them a weird and uncanny appearance. Besides the ornaments of tin, most of the men wear wristlets and anklets of iron in the form of broad or narrow bands, the anklets having as a rule fork-like projections which serve as spurs when riding and are turned towards the front of the foot when walking. Horsemen also wear below the knee a number of twisted grass rings which serve to steady the naked rider on his bare-backed pony. The hill ponies are small and wiry and accustomed to the stony roads of the plateau, and it is a common practice of their owners to make an incision on either side of the backbone, turn the skin inward, and intentionally

On Horseback through Nigeria

cause a swollen sore in order to provide a softer seat for the rider. Such cruelty, however, like the cannibalism practised before the domination of the British, is now largely discouraged, as the natives have not been long in recognising that an unscarred pony will fetch a better price from the passing traders than one that has been mutilated in the customary manner.

Towards evening the wind rose, and while it cleared the air of harmattan and insect life, it blew quite chill and cold. I retired early to the shelter of my tent, while the carriers sought refuge from the biting blast within some deserted huts on the outskirts of the town. In the morning the wind had fallen, but the grey dawn felt wintry still, and my face and hands tingled with the cold as I washed in fresh water from the running stream. The carriers came early, shivering and depressed, and anxious to move on to a warmer place, for the black man cannot bear the cold. They cowered over tiny fires of grass and leaves until I was ready to start, while the few natives who came out of courtesy to see me off sat huddled together in a group, their teeth chattering and their muscles twitching involuntarily in the chilly morning air. In the cold season these plateau-dwellers do not leave their tiny huts until the sun has been up for some time and warmed the air, but in spite of such precautions they suffer much from colds and chills, and consumption and bronchial troubles carry them off soon after they reach their prime.

The morning was dull and grey, but on the

The Bauchi Plateau

eastern horizon, across the open grassy treeless plain, the sun was shining behind a bank of clouds upon the peaks and pinnacles of a jagged range of granite hills, lighting up their summits fantastically with a rosy light while their base was steeped in gloom. Slowly the clouds dispersed until the hills were wholly wrapt in a golden glow. Then little by little the sunbeams danced across the grassy plain, until, as they reached our path, they were hailed by the carriers with cries of joy, for the black man's day had at last begun. And the dew-drops sparkled on the short green grass by the wayside, while the air felt light and buoyant like a summer's morn at home.

In an hour we had entered a tract of country where the scenery was of both a striking and an unexpected character. From the smooth and gently rolling surface of the plateau, the path led amongst a series of detached domelets, conelets, hummocks, and low flat-topped grassy hillocks rising steeply and abruptly from the plain. A narrow bridle-path led up the side of many of the higher hillocks, and every now and then a naked native on his active pony would scramble up the slope to the flattened summit, only, at sight of us, to scramble down again quicker than before, and gallop off with the news to his comrades amongst the hills. And soon, on the summits of all the distant hillocks which commanded a view of our path, solitary mounted sentinels could be seen reconnoitring our progress, ready to report any deviation from the beaten track and any possible

On Horseback through Nigeria

intention of the white man to invade the privacy of their native domains.

The path, however, turned northward and left unentered this country of mysterious hills. Soon we reached Woran, a small village on the verge of a deep-cut gorge, whose inhabitants fled in terror at our approach. Beyond us again there stretched the open grassy treeless plain, whose surface was now, however, diversified by occasional kopjes and short rocky ridges of granite. Several native towns could now be distinguished in the distance, each conspicuous as a broad patch of green on the yellow landscape, with its cactus hedges radiating outwards from the group of rocky knolls amongst which the huts were set. We passed through the middle of Kru, a large town built on two parallel ridges of granite with a running stream between, and as soon as we had left behind us the outermost cactus hedges of the town we saw in the distance on a rounded rise the Residency hut of Bukuru, with the barracks and parade-ground of the native soldiery.

The Government station of Bukuru lies between the two large and important native towns of Bukuru and Ngell, which lie about a mile apart on the summit of the plateau and about 4,000 feet above sea-level. Each is built round a number of rocky kopjes, and the polygonal compounds are fenced and guarded in the usual way by hedges of prickly cactus. All around are jagged knobs and projections of granitic rock, and when the landscape is viewed from the summit of a kopje, the

The Bauchi Plateau

general impression is that of an open treeless plain with an irregular hummocky floor, and with occasional broken ridges of granite rising above the general level. We halted for the night at Bukuru, where there is now a rest-house and huts for passing carriers, as well as a small garrison market to which the local natives now bring their surplus produce. Early next morning we set out for Naraguta, skirting the outer compounds of Ngell on the left and passing over an open cultivated plain until we reached the margin of the upper plateau, where a short but steep descent of fifty feet was accompanied by a sudden and remarkable change in the character of the country. The low cliff ran off continuously to the right and left, while above it was the level treeless plain, and below broken undulating thinly wooded country, with a few detached flat-topped hillocks fringing the cliff and rising to the level of the upper plains. Soon we entered the wooded valley of the Kogin Delimi, and near Jos, the last of the pagan towns, we touched the main stream itself and followed it as far as Naraguta, a cosmopolitan mining settlement which has grown up on the banks of the Delimi within the last three years, the name being that of a neighbouring pagan town amongst the hills to the south.

We spent the night at Naraguta, where in the well-stocked market the carriers were able to procure those native delicacies which they had had to forgo since leaving Jaginde. Just below the mining camp occur the falls of the Delimi, at the

On Horseback through Nigeria

upper end of a narrow picturesque and densely wooded gorge which the river has cut in the margin of the plateau. A wide road, moreover, has been cleared along the native track from Naraguta to Bauchi, and about half a mile beyond the mining township it leads over a steep and rocky descent of a hundred feet, which represents one step in the irregularly broken and faulted margin of the plateau. The road follows the base of the escarpment as far as Tilde, a Fulani village, whence it runs eastward to Toro, an ancient Hausa town set amongst rocky hillocks of basaltic lava. Beyond Toro, and just at the point where the road from Zaria joins the road from Naraguta, another steep descent of five hundred feet, representing the second step on the broken margin of the plateau, leads down over a bare and smooth surface of granite from the higher plains of Toro to the lower plains of Polchi.

Thus between Darroro and Polchi we had crossed the summit of the Bauchi plateau, unchallenged and unmolested by those dreaded pagans who, secure in their rocky fastnesses, had retained their independence from time immemorial, who had dared the conquering armies of Hausa and Fulani braves to ascend the steep cliffs that guarded their secret homes, but who had submitted with little trouble, though not without some show of resistance, to the white man and his guns. The history of the opening up of the plateau and its mysterious tribes is intimately connected with the history of the development of the tinfields, tinstone



A WAYSIDE HALT.

The Bauchi Plateau

being found in the surface alluvium all over the summit and northern margin of the plateau, from Bukuru and Ngell northward to Tilde, Toro, and Polchi. The presence of tinstone in this neighbourhood has been known to the natives from very early times, and long before the coming of the British the people of Liruei were accustomed to wash the sands of the Kogin Delimi, smelt the tinstone in their native furnaces and mould the white metal into slender wires for purposes of trade and barter: and the first hint of the occurrence of tinstone in the interior was given when the native merchants began to bring down from the north these wires of tin to the Niger Company's trading store at Lau on the Benue. The secret of the exact locality of its occurrence, however, was well and securely kept, and it was not until the Niger Company fitted out an expedition in the year 1902 to search for tinstone to the east of Zaria that it was at last located in the sands of the Kogin Delimi around and to the south of Badiko. The next step taken by the Company was to secure an exclusive prospecting licence over a considerable area in this neighbourhood and to send out a party of prospectors and engineers to make a detailed examination of the whole area, with the object of ascertaining the exact position of the richest and most workable deposits. The first mining camp was established on the banks of the Delimi near the Fulani town of Tilde, and at the northern end of the picturesque gorge which the river has cut in the margin of the plateau. Explorations were

On Horseback through Nigeria

gradually pushed southward and upward on to the plateau itself, and the most valuable deposits were in time located in the neighbourhood of the present township of Naraguta. In 1904 a clearing was made in the bush and a few huts erected, and from this small beginning has sprung the extensive settlement of to-day, whose name and fame are known throughout the whole Protectorate.

Naturally enough, the pagan tribes of the plateau whose country was thus invaded, offered considerable hostility to the advance of the working parties. Moreover, it was necessary, in transporting the ore to Loko on the Benue, for shipment to England, to send the carriers by a long and circuitous route by way of Badiko, Lere and Katab in order to avoid any contact with the pagans of the plateau. This involved, however, the unnecessary expenditure of much time and money, and representations were accordingly made by the Company to the Government of the Protectorate, urging the advisability of opening up a new and shorter route over the plateau from Naraguta to Loko. Ultimately two expeditions were fitted out against the hitherto unconquered pagans, one ascending the plateau from its southern margin behind Darroro and the other working southward from Naraguta. Considerable armed resistance was offered by the two frontier towns of Assab and Ngell, but after their subjection the remaining towns along the proposed route voluntarily submitted. After the road had been thus opened, a Government station with a small garrison was established at Bukuru, and for

The Bauchi Plateau

a time the caravans of tinstone were accompanied by an armed escort across the plateau. Even this precaution, however, has now been abandoned, and traders may now pass across the plateau singly or in groups from Naraguta to Darroro without the least fear of molestation by the pagans.

My first acquaintance with the plateau was made in the early months of 1905, before the military expeditions had passed across its summit. At that time it was impossible to ascend the plateau from the south, and I had therefore to approach it from the north by way of the mining camps on its northern margin. The principal camp of the Niger Company's engineers was then fixed on the now deserted site near Tilde, at the northern end of the gorge of the Delimi, while subordinate camps were in process of being established at Naraguta and Jos. Rapid prospecting journeys had been made over the country to the south of Jos and on the margin of the upper plateau, but the attitude of the natives was still extremely hostile to any intrusion by the white man. As we moved southward from Jos towards the low escarpment which bounds the upper plateau, we could see the naked horsemen standing sentinel on the summits of the flat-topped hills which fringe the lofty treeless plains beyond. At sight of us they turned at once and galloped off to spread the news that strangers were approaching, and as we marched slowly southward over the open plains we could see on the skyline a long row of armed horsemen moving slowly forward as we advanced. When we reached Ngell

On Horseback through Nigeria

we found the town apparently deserted, but on either hand we caught glimpses of horsemen galloping up to the outer compounds and of armed men in full war-paint slinking stealthily forward to line the hedges where we passed. With an assumed carelessness we moved slowly along the narrow path between the high lines of cactus until we reached an open space in the middle of the town, where we halted to rest and wait for the approach of the natives. After much suspicious peering between the cactus stems, some of the braver spirits, apparently convinced that we were peaceful travellers, ventured out into the open and were soon accepting gifts of salt and tobacco from the carriers. Unfortunately, however, we could not communicate with them by word of mouth, for we found that the guide whom we had brought with us from Jos was useless as an interpreter, each town on the plateau speaking apparently a different dialect and having little or no intercourse with its neighbours. By and by an old Hausa slave-woman, a captive of former days, came forward and knelt at my feet, pleased to hear again the sounds of her native tongue, and through her our requests were at last communicated to the people of Ngell. We asked to be directed to a suitable spot near a stream of running water where we could camp for the night, and to be supplied, if possible, with some food from the town. After a long and excited consultation amongst themselves, during which we could plainly see that there was a party for and a party against us, it was at length decided that we should

The Bauchi Plateau

be received in a friendly manner, and a small party were detailed to lead us to a suitable camping-ground on the outskirts of the town and catch for our sustenance a few of the goats which were feeding around. Needless to say, we were in some little doubt as to whether the hostile party might not gain the upper hand in the course of the evening, and our horses were kept standing by ready saddled all night, so that in the event of attack we might not be entirely cut off from all hope of escape. Happily, however, the night passed quietly, and in the morning we decided to penetrate no further into the unknown, but to retrace our steps to Naraguta and Tilde.

Now, however, the scene is changed, and it is no longer possible to have such an experience unless one wanders far to the south off the beaten track. British arms and British prestige have accomplished a remarkable and speedy change upon the plateau within the last few years. The internecine wars which raged between the neighbouring towns have stopped: the naked denizens of the plateau are learning both the value and the use of clothes: and the narrow lonely paths which led across the open grassy plains are now the scene of constant life and action as caravans of traders come and go and pass in safety to the plains below. The rapid development of this portion of the plateau is due, as already indicated, to the discovery of extensive tin deposits on its northern margin and to the necessity of finding the shortest and quickest route from the tinfields

On Horseback through Nigeria

to the river. The tinfields lie for the most part to the north of Bukuru and Ngell, and many syndicates are now exploring and prospecting around Tilde, Toro, and Polchi. The tin is abundant and of excellent quality, and the transport difficulty is the only thing which stands in the way of this part of the Protectorate becoming an important mining centre. All the ore which is washed from the streams or mined from the lodes has at present to be carried by porters in 60-lb. sacks for ten or twelve days before it reaches the river, and the organisation and working of such a system of transport is naturally found to be an item of very considerable importance on the debit side of the balance-sheet. It is hoped, however, to obviate this difficulty of transport in the near future by running a branch line from the new Baro-Kano Railway, where it crosses the Kaduna, through eastern Zaria to the neighbourhood of the tinfields. The present system of transport, however, is picturesque and occasionally humorous. Many of the pagans of the plateau have been persuaded to act as carriers between Naraguta and Darroro, and it is a not uncommon sight, when a new company arrives fresh to the work, to see those who have brought their ponies mounting first and then placing the 60-lb. bag of tinstone on their heads, in the belief that they are thereby saving their ponies at the expense of themselves!



THE REST-CAMP AT POLCHI.

CHAPTER IV

BAUCHI TO IBI

*"Hills and valleys, plains and fields,
And lofty craggy mountains."*

Scenery around Bauchi—The origin of monkeys—Pagans and Fulani—On the way to Kereng—The grassy plains of Panyam—The sarikin Kereng makes obeisance—Climbing the Kereng cone—Truculent natives—The Angass people—The Wase Rock—The Gurkawa pagans—Character of the country—Ibi and the Benue—Ferrying horses across the river—Leaving for Arofu—An unfortunate occurrence—Kokanda and Nupe canoes—Camping on a sandbank—The lead mines of Arofu—Precautions against alarm—Salt-making at Awe—A characteristic letter—The Ankwe River—A waterless march.

THE rest-camp at Polchi is quite an ideal spot. The round thatched huts are set beneath a number of large and shady trees, while each is fitted in addition with a fair-weather runfa, or rectangular extension, of zana matting, which forms a cool and pleasant sitting-room during the heat of the day. The harmattan thickened in the afternoon, and we could barely distinguish the outlines of the distant hills which formed the margin of the plateau, while at night the moon shone through the

On Horseback through Nigeria

misty haze like a pale white disc and the stars were quite invisible in the gloom. The morning broke chill and cold, though the harmattan had thinned to a faint blue smoke. We set out early on our march to Kathenawa, the carriers moving quickly in the cool morning air, calling and shouting to each other and blowing lustily at intervals on their ram's-horn flutes. We crossed several large tributaries of the Polchi River, all of them nearly dry, and followed the telegraph line eastward along the broad clearing in the thin and blackened bush until Zul and Kathenawa came in sight. The two towns are set on parallel ridges of gneiss, Zul being a pagan and Kathenawa a Fulani settlement; and representatives of both towns came to see me—the naked pagan and the well-clad Mohammedan, the former tolerated by the latter only in the white man's presence.

We left at dawn for Bauchi. The harmattan was thick, and Zaranda Hill, a local landmark, was almost invisible in the haze. We passed the ruins of several large pagan towns which had originally offered a determined resistance to the coming of the British and had been punished accordingly. The majority of the inhabitants had fled elsewhere and never returned, and only a few scattered huts had been rebuilt amongst the farms. Soon, however, we entered the open plains around Bauchi, and in the absence of bush the characteristic scenery at once impressed itself upon our minds. From the open cultivated fields, decorated only with scattered trees, there sprang up at intervals

Bauchi to Ibi

numerous lofty domes and turtlebacks of granite, with their bare and smooth and rounded surfaces falling steeply to the plains around. Some of them were scaling off in concentric layers like the coats of an onion; others were covered in part with broken blocks and boulders, while on the crest-line of others large rounded fragments were perched in apparently most precarious positions. The plains, now ripe for harvest, were cultivated right up to the bases of the solitary hills, on which troops of monkeys were gambolling and playing, or sheltering from the brilliant sun in the shadow of the boulders.

Here is the story of the origin of monkeys as the mallams tell it in the market-place. Long ago—five thousand years ago—there was a country, far, far away, where many different kinds of men dwelt side by side—white men, black men, red men, yellow men. A large river flowed through this country, and it was teeming with fish. The people lived entirely on fish, and every morning the men, black, white, red, and yellow, trooped down to the river banks and caught the day's supply. The fish, however, petitioned Allah that they might have one day's respite from persecution every week, so that they might dance about upon the surface of the water in no danger of being caught and eaten. Allah granted the request, and ordered the men to refrain from catching fish one day every week. All went well for a time. The fish hid themselves in the depths of the river for six days in the week, but on the seventh day they

On Horseback through Nigeria

came up and danced in thousands on the surface. At length, however, the sight of so many fish on the surface tempted a number of the men, and a company of them, black, white, red, and yellow, proceeded one forbidden day to disobey Allah and draw the fish from the river. Allah was very angry, and to punish the men changed them and their wives and children into monkeys. And so to this day there are found in the woods different kinds of monkeys living side by side—black monkeys, white monkeys, red monkeys, yellow monkeys. And such is the story as it is written in Al Koran, the book of Allah.

The European quarters at Bauchi are admirably situated on rising ground some little distance to the west of the native town, and pleasantly sheltered by large and shady trees. A number of bungalows have now been erected for the accommodation of the officials, and the court-house is a massive, flat-roofed, oriental-looking building of native construction and dignified appearance. The walls of Bauchi are several miles in circumference, and enclose, as is the custom, a considerable amount of farmland as well as the township itself, which is built round a number of low hillocks within the walls. The word "*bauchi*" means "slavery," and indicates in itself the origin of the town, which was founded as a slaving centre in the middle of the pagan country by a Hausa colony from Kano and Zaria. After the conquest of Hausaland and its dependencies by the Fulani, their victorious arms were pushed southward and



THE COURT-HOUSE AT BAUCHI.

Bauchi to Ibi

westward up the Gongola Valley as far as Lere, and settlements were established over the fertile plains. The pagans thus displaced retired to the rough and hilly portions of the province, where in their rocky fastnesses they were more than a match for the armed horsemen of the north. Until the coming of the British, however, the pagans dared not show themselves upon the open plains without running the risk of being chased and captured as slaves, while now they even bring the produce of their farms to the markets of Bauchi. Situated as it is on the highroad to Bornu, and also within easy reach of Ibi, on the Benue, Bauchi has long been an important market town. Famine and plague, however, have of recent years greatly reduced the numbers of its inhabitants, and ruined compounds and deserted farms are much in evidence even within the walls themselves.

I had reached Bauchi from Loko in seventeen easy days, and I now decided to make a circular tour through Southern Bauchi and Muri as far as Ibi, returning again to the neighbourhood of Bauchi before setting out for Bornu and Lake Chad. Several of the carriers were tired and foot-sore with crossing the plateau, and these were paid off at Bauchi and replaced by others. I also secured a second pony in order to avoid over-fatiguing the one I had bought at Keffi, as the roads we should have to pass were many of them rough and stony and very trying to the shoeless hoofs of the native horses. As I proposed also to visit Sura *en route*, a district which had just been

On Horseback through Nigeria

opened up by force of arms, our little party was accompanied from Bauchi by half a dozen native police in blue serge tunics and open knee-breeches, and armed with rifles and a few rounds of ammunition. We crossed first the open cultivated plains around Bauchi and then passed to the right of Mount Buli, whose pagan inhabitants we could see rushing excitedly up and down the rocky slopes. Beyond Mount Buli and the neighbouring lesser hills we entered again the open park-like plain studded with small Fulani villages, each composed of a few family compounds surrounded by zana matting, but conspicuously without the earthen ramparts and ditches of the Hausa towns. The landscape, moreover, still retained its characteristic scenery, with domes, turtlebacks, and kopjes of granite rising like islands from the level surface of the plain. We camped for the night at Lugge, and next day continued our march through very similar country, passing now a rounded dome, now a rocky kopje, and now a short, isolated range of granite hills. We passed many more Fulani hamlets, and the chiefs, who were mostly mounted, came out to meet me and do me homage and lead me through their villages, while as soon as I came in sight of the huts the women trilled their shrill Fulani greeting from the shelter of their compounds. As we approached Bula we could see on the right the fantastic peaks of the Dass and Polchi hills, hazy in the distance, while our path led across many fair-sized streams, the tributaries or head-waters of the Gongola. Beyond Bula the

Bauchi to Ibi

farm clearings began to alternate with stretches of thin and open bush, while beyond Shell, where we halted for the night, the path gradually became rougher and stonier, until Lere came in sight. The old king and his chiefs were waiting for me on the banks of the Lere River, and we followed him through the town to the bariki, which was set on rising ground to the south. I informed him of my intention to push on southward to Kereng, in the Sura country, and arranged with him to send on a messenger that evening to the next town of Pyem to warn the inhabitants that a white man was coming on the morrow.

The town of Lere is the last Mohammedan settlement which one passes before entering the pagan country to the south. It lies on the eastern slope of the Bauchi plateau, where the latter merges gradually without any precipitous descent into the open plains of the Gongola. The people of Lere, moreover, have established friendly relations with the Pyemawa, the frontier pagan tribe, although the intercourse between them is necessarily somewhat limited. There is a perceptible rise all the way from Lere to Pyem, while the country is somewhat broken and rocky and covered with thin and open bush. As we neared Pyem we heard the sound of native drums, and on reaching the base of the low rise on which the rest-camp was set we saw the cause of the commotion. The king of Pyem, on learning that a white man was on the way, had come out to the rest-camp with a number of his men to make everything neat and

On Horseback through Nigeria

clean for the visitor. As soon as he saw me the old king, who was himself directing operations, came running forward to salute me, accompanied by one or two of the principal men of the town, dressed in well-worn gowns and rigas. All the other workers were either quite naked or simply clad in a small apron of antelope skin. From the rest-house an excellent view could be had to the west of an apparently unbroken plain, covered with low and scrubby trees and stretching away as far as one could see in the direction of Bukuru and Ngell. Eastward lay the town of Pyem, built round a number of rocky hillocks, consisting of isolated hamlets set in large rectangular compounds fenced with prickly cactus, after the manner of the Kibyen towns on the summit of the plateau. Behind Pyem also there were prominent in the distance the lofty peaks of the unexplored Wadai hills, which rise to a height of six thousand feet above sea-level and form the eastern boundary of the plateau proper.

It had been arranged that the king of Pyem, who was able to speak the Sura tongue, should accompany me on the morrow, and we accordingly set out early on our march to the country of these southern pagans. We passed at first through alternating farmland and open forest, where the low trees were set in bushy clumps with grassy glades between. Occasionally we crossed a stream densely fringed with thickets of bamboo, and soon we reached the summit of a rise from which the plains of Sura could be seen stretching southward

Bauchi to Ibi

in the distance. The high bush now gradually disappeared, and was replaced by thin and open scrub, which in its turn gave place to the grassy cultivated plains of Panyam, picturesquely decorated only by belts of palms along the watercourses. We had now reached a height of 3,500 feet, and had apparently passed above the forest-line and entered open treeless plains similar to those around Bukuru on the summit of the plateau, and with which the plains of Sura were in all probability continuous. Their treeless aspect, however, was evidently not due to altitude, but rather to artificial deforestation in times gone by, for roots and stumps were still occasionally to be found on the open plains, while large and shady trees still flourished amongst the rocks around which the towns were built.

Panyam, the first of the Sura towns, is built round a number of rocky granite hills, and, like all the other towns of the plateau, is protected by thick hedges of prickly cactus. The king of Panyam, dressed in a short kilted gown and accompanied by a number of naked retainers, came running out to meet us. Many of the men wore, as their only dress, greaves of polished iron on their legs, and these, I was informed, were the "big men" or chiefs of the town. After they had bowed to the ground and put dust on their heads in the most approved fashion, they took their place at the head of our little column and led the way along a broad drive through the middle of the town to the camping-place on the banks of a clear and rapid

On Horseback through Nigeria

stream, which ran close to the base of a string of low granite hills. The king of Pyem then retired to the town with his friends of Panyam, with instructions to urge upon the headmen the necessity of bringing out a supply of food for the carriers before sundown. From our camp we could see on the skyline the twin cones of Kereng, which seemed to beckon us on with the hope of new and wondrous things, and when the kings brought out the food in the evening I arranged for their company and escort to the summit of those hills next day.

The road to Kereng led over the open, treeless, cultivated plain to the base of a much denuded volcanic hill, at the foot of which lay the town of Yoss. The inhabitants, at our approach, retired into their huts, but the king of Panyam went into the town and brought out the sariki to make his obeisance and accompany us to Kereng. Then the path rose over some low granite hillocks at Kogul and crossed a narrow plain to Kereng, which is set on some rocky hummocks at the base of the remarkable double peak which we had seen from Panyam. As we rounded the last of the granite kopjes before the town came into view, we met the king of Kereng, a tall spare man with a morose and sullen countenance. He it was who had led the attack upon the British column a few months before, and his defeat and loss of independence had left him a sour and disappointed spirit. When his sentinels had warned him of my approach, however, he had apparently decided that discretion



THE ROCKS OF PANYAM.

Bauchi to Ibi

was the better part of valour, and with a couple of retainers had taken his way to the outskirts of his town to do me unwilling homage. One of the native policemen who accompanied me had been on the previous expedition, and at sight of him began to curse him as a vile rascal who had dared to oppose the British arms; and it was amusing, as the king knelt down and put dust on his head in token of subjection, to see him come forward with an air of much importance and, remarking "*Sa diawa! Sa diawa!*" ("Put plenty! Put plenty!"), clap a large handful of mud on the shaven crown of the unfortunate king.

With the five kings of Pyem, Panyam, Yoss, Kogul, and Kereng in line in front of me, the royal procession moved on through the half-deserted town and up to the base of the great cone which dominates the landscape around. Here I dismounted, and in the same order we began to climb the main peak, which rises to a height of about eight hundred feet above the plain. There was now a thin harmattan, obscuring a distant view, and the air was hot and stifling; but with frequent halts to draw our breath we at last reached the summit. We found that the composite cone enclosed two extinct volcanic craters, one much more perfect than the other, while the ridge up which we had climbed was the old northern wall of the more imperfect crater. From the summit we gazed down upon the open treeless plains which stretched away westward as far as we could see, with the low granite hills and kopjes appearing

On Horseback through Nigeria

as quite insignificant hummocks on the level surface of the plain. To the south also there was visible in the hazy light quite a number of smaller volcanic cones and craters, some of them, to all appearance, very perfect in form and structure. Unfortunately the harmattan rendered a clearer view impossible, but nevertheless it was with a feeling of considerable satisfaction that I at last turned to descend the old crater wall and retrace my steps to the camp at Panyam.

In the evening, as I was resting in my tent, my interpreter came up and informed me that the carriers were beginning to fear that the townspeople might attack them by night, instead of only sullenly resenting their presence as they had hitherto done. According to him, the pagans had been remarking that the policemen who were our escort were not real soldiers, since they were dressed in blue serge and not in the khaki which they had learnt to fear. Nor did they believe that, though they carried rifles, they could be the same as those which, in the hands of the soldiers, had dealt such terrible destruction from so great a distance. They were, moreover, inclined to become insolent and to disobey even the commands of their king when he issued orders to his people to prepare extra food for the maintenance of the carriers. When, therefore, the king of Panyam and some of his people came out with only a very small quantity of meal, I instructed the corporal in charge of the police to place his men behind the little group of townspeople and fire a couple of

Bauchi to Ibi

rounds of ammunition in the air, so that those who were sitting in front of me and their friends in the town behind might, when they heard the sound of the rifles reverberating amongst the hills, recall their former experiences of the white man's weapons and modify their demeanour accordingly. Apparently this had the desired effect, for the king and the chiefs had barely had time to reach their compounds when the former returned with an ample supply of food for myself and the carriers.

Next morning we left early for Pyem, the king of Panyam accompanying us for a considerable distance from his town and protesting slyly, as he said goodbye, his everlasting devotion to the white man, to whom he now stood in the happy relationship of son to father. At Pyem we bade farewell to the kindly old king, who had accompanied and stood by us on our visit to Kereng at much discomfort and inconvenience to himself; and after a short rest we pushed on to Lere, the carriers and myself being equally pleased to find ourselves once more in the vicinity of a Mohammedan town. On the following day at dawn we set out for the rocky Angass country *en route* for Wase. First we crossed the open cultivated plains around Lere, and then passed through pleasant parklike country to the village of Sara, at the base of the Wadai hills. A steep descent immediately beyond led into a narrow cultivated valley which, as we traversed it, gradually opened out until we entered another grassy parklike plain at a somewhat lower level, bounded in the distance on the right by a semi-

On Horseback through Nigeria

circle of hills which marked the margin of the plateau. The path led straight across the open plain to where the hills again projected towards the north, passing on the way the village of Boi, a fair-sized Angass settlement, built round a few rocky knolls in the middle of the plain. After a short halt we hastened on to Goshin Duchi, a small Angass town built at the base and on the slopes of the hills, which had now again curved round to meet our path.

The Angass tribe consists of two sections—the Angass of the plains and the Angass of the hills. The former, from their position, have in the past come more into contact with the northern tribes, and are somewhat more civilised and less suspicious of strangers. The hill Angass, however, have inhabited their rocky fastnesses from time immemorial, unmolested and unvisited by the peoples of the plain. With few wants in the way of dress, and no luxuries but tobacco and home-brewed ale, and no excitements but a native dance or an occasional intertribal war, they have found contentment in cultivating the narrow valleys amongst the hills and in scraping together in terraces the scanty soil on the mountain slopes whereon to grow their winter's grain. Naturally, therefore, they are disinclined to welcome strangers, and from the lower plains we could see their sentinels on the heights above keeping a watchful eye upon our movements. We camped, however, amongst the Angass of the plains, who, while not actively resenting our presence, by no

Bauchi to Ibi

means welcomed us with enthusiastic hospitality. We troubled them therefore as little as possible, and then only for the necessaries of existence, and left early in the morning for Ampier, the next stage on our journey to Wase.

The path led first through several Angass villages, and then into a tract of broken, rocky country, over which the road descended from the upper plains of Bauchi to the lower plains of Yergum and Wase. The road was one of the worst and roughest which we had yet experienced in the Protectorate, and when we reached Ampier after a long and weary march, both men and horses were much fatigued. The town itself, the last of the Angass settlements along this route, is large and scattered, consisting of a number of detached hamlets, each set on the summit of a low and rocky hillock, and surrounded by the stony terraces on which the natives grow their grain. We camped beside a tiny stream in the centre of a circle of these rocky eminences, from the summits of which the natives gazed sullenly at our preparations for the night. Towards evening their headmen, after much persuasion, brought down a small quantity of meal, sufficient to provide a scanty supper for the carriers, who, though weary and footsore, were early on the move next morning, anxious to push on to Wase, where in the native market they would be able to procure abundance of both the necessaries and luxuries of life. For a time the road continued stony, but soon we entered a broad and sandy valley, over which we made rapid progress ;

On Horseback through Nigeria

and as we reached the summit of the rise beyond, the carriers hailed with a cry of joy the distant Rock of Wase, whose summit, white and shining in the morning sun, towered high above the wooded plains of Yergum, to which our path descended.

As we crossed the thinly wooded plains, decorated with scattered kopjes of granite and occasional hummocks of basalt, we passed several Yergum towns, whose inhabitants seemed very similar in appearance and demeanour to the Angass of the plains whom we had left behind. We hastened on, however, to the Wase River, which we forded at Salve ; and here we joined the direct road from Bauchi to Wase, which followed the left bank of the river up to the immediate neighbourhood of the town. Wase itself is a large and important place, originally founded as a Hausa slaving settlement from the north, for which its position made it peculiarly fitted, situated as it is in the immediate neighbourhood of all the pagan tribes which inhabit the rocky margin of the Bauchi plateau. Built round a number of hillocks of sandstone, enclosed by a well-preserved wall and ditch, and protected on the south and west by the river, the town offered at first a stubborn resistance to the advance of the British as they forced their way northward from Ibi to Bauchi. Now, however, it possesses one of the finest rest-camps in the Protectorate, the huts being well and substantially built and picturesquely shaded by large and leafy trees. Moreover, the resources and position of the town make it an ideal residen-



THE WASE ROCK.

Bauchi to Ibi

tial station. It lies about a thousand feet above sea-level, in country which has been cleared of bush all round, and on the banks of a pleasant running stream, while from the town can be procured fresh meat and fresh milk in abundance, with fowls, eggs, yams, onions, limes, and paw-paws, and all the other necessaries of a white man's life. So health-giving and restful indeed is the atmosphere of Wase that semi-invalids from the banks of the Benue are frequently sent northward to recuperate underneath the shady trees of the rest-camp and away from the clammy air and the insect life of the river bank.

The Rock of Wase, which dominates the town and the landscape for miles around, is a feature of remarkable interest. In form columnar, it rises precipitously from the open plain to a height of about eight hundred feet like some great monument to the mighty giants of old. Its summit is capped with a deposit of white guano, which reflects all the changing tints of the rising and the setting sun. In the harmattan it looms dark and mysterious through the misty air, and in the sunlight it shines clear and grey as it beckons distant travellers to the pleasant city at its base. Besides the spirits of the rock, it is inhabited only by a number of giant baboons, who effectually guard the secrets of the summit, and, aided by the precipitous character of the sides, have hitherto successfully prevented any intrusion from below. The Rock itself, moreover, speaks eloquently of bygone ages, for it consists of a pillar of trachyte, the

On Horseback through Nigeria

neck or stump of an ancient volcano, from the summit of which there once belched forth smoke and steam and molten rock upon the plains of Muri.

The old king of Wase was most attentive to my wants, but in spite of his entreaties to accept his hospitality for another day I decided to push on at once to Ibi, and for that purpose we left at dawn for Yelwa. The road led first alongside the outer wall of the town and then across the Wase River, out of the farmland with its pretty parklike aspect and through a stretch of thin and open bush to the ruined villages of Gurkawa. These are set on the southern slope of the Gurkawa hills, and were formerly inhabited by a truculent pagan tribe whose joy it was to levy heavy toll upon the passing traders, and, more frequently than not, to confiscate the whole of their goods and ill-treat or murder the traders themselves. So many complaints were received at Ibi of their insulting behaviour that at last instructions were issued to a passing column to visit the tribe, and if they would not promise to amend, to inflict upon them condign punishment for their past misdeeds. Needless to say, however, the pagans retired to the hills at the approach of the soldiers, so that the only punishment that could be inflicted on them was to burn the roofs of their huts and granaries and break down their defences and the blackened walls of their compounds.

Between Wase and Gurkawa we had passed several conical hills, the remains of ancient

Bauchi to Ibi

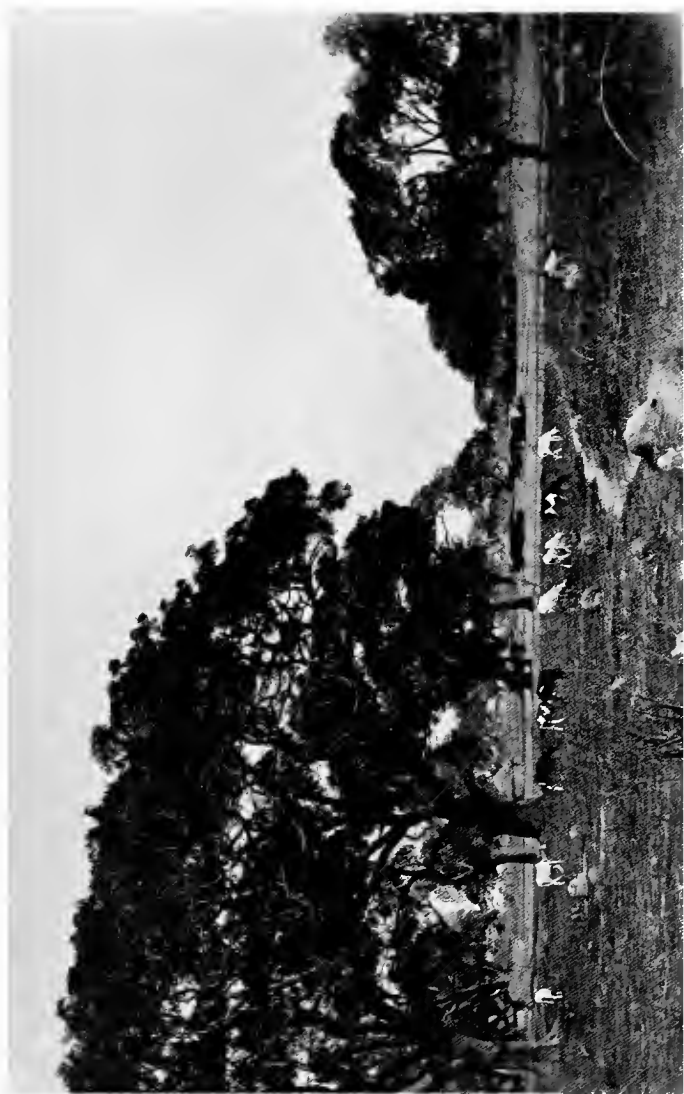
volcanoes, and beyond Gurkawa we met them again in the neighbourhood of Donkwon, a stockaded pagan village whose inhabitants have now given up their ancient custom of raiding passing caravans and devoted themselves entirely to agriculture. We stopped to rest at the pools beyond the village, and then moved on to Yelwa, a semi-deserted Hausa settlement in the midst of the country of the Ankwe pagans. The walls of the town and of the king's compound were sorely dilapidated, and the king himself, of only four years' standing, professed the direst poverty, and in undignified fashion, like a simple pagan, squatted down in front of my tent to watch me eating and drinking, until I had to ask him to be so good as to retire to his own quarters.

Next morning we struck off southward through the Ankwe country, and after passing out of the Yelwa farms traversed stretches of thick bush alternating with open grassy glades. We passed Ajikumai, a small Ankwe village surrounded by a dilapidated stockade, and then entered a belt of open grassland, burnt bare and black in places, which intervened between the village and the Simanka River. These belts of grassy country, with few and scattered trees, lie at a lower level than the adjoining tracts of bush-covered land, and are found for the most part wherever the banks of the rivers and their tributaries are so low as to permit of the flooding of the adjoining country during the summer rains. Besides having apparently a deleterious influence upon the growth

On Horseback through Nigeria

of trees, this annual flooding leaves behind a deposit of black clay and sand, which has accumulated to a considerable thickness in the course of years. This material can retain a considerable quantity of water, and in the dry season, after the grass is burnt, the water evaporates and the clay shrinks into less bulk, and the surface of the ground becomes covered with a network of polygonal cracks. Moreover, the clay, which is plastic and slippery in the rains, sets firm and tough when dry, with the result that the projecting edges of the cracks are sharp and hard as stones and most painful for both men and horses to tread upon with unshod feet.

We crossed the Simanka River at Lakoshi, where we camped for the night, and then moved on over the plains of Muri through pleasant grassy and parklike country on the right bank of the river until we reached Kudu, a small Ankwe village set on a sandstone knoll overlooking the plains of the Simanka and the Benue. The rest-house was set on the summit of the rise, and from its door we could see spread out below the densely wooded plains at the confluence of the rivers, while far away in the distance to the south there projected above the green and leafy sea another of those immense columnar rocks which, like the Rock of Wase, form such remarkable features in the landscape of the Protectorate. This was the Rock of Bantaji, likewise a pillar of trachyte and the remains of an ancient volcano, which rose on the banks of the Donga close to the town of



THE REST-CAMP AT WASE.

To face p. 108.

Bauchi to Ibi

Bantaji, thirty miles away to the south of the Benue.

As Ibi was now close at hand, I sent a messenger ahead to give notice of our approach, and to arrange about canoes for transporting the carriers and horses across the Benue. In the afternoon we left Kudu, and after travelling for a short distance through the forest on the right bank of the Simanka River, we crossed to the other side, and almost immediately entered the open grassy country which here fringes the Benue on the north. Soon we reached the margin of the river itself, marked by no steep banks of alluvium, but only by a gently shelving shore, on which the grassy plains behind gave place gradually to the broad expanse of yellow sand which formed the river-bed. The southern bank, however, was high and well defined, and we could already see on the left the trading wharf and the white walls of the Company's store, and on the ridge to the right the row of red-roofed bungalows which marked the extent of the Government quarters. After traversing the loose sand for fully half a mile, we reached at length the dry-season channel of the river, and found there a number of canoes waiting to transport our party to the other bank. There were a few small canoes for the accommodation of the carriers, a larger canoe for myself, and a still larger one for the horses. Many traders from the north were also waiting on the beach for transport to the other side, some with horses, others with droves of cattle, sheep,

On Horseback through Nigeria

or goats. It is customary when the river is low and narrow, to swim the animals across, but as yet the channel was too wide for this to be safely attempted. The horses had therefore to be enticed into the canoes, which with much struggling and kicking was at last accomplished, and two men steadied them by the head and tail while they were being ferried across the river. The canoes themselves are propelled by polers, one in the bow and one in the stern, who have recourse to paddles when in mid-channel the depth of the river exceeds the length of their poles.

Ibi was the first trading station to be established by the Niger Company on the Middle Benue, and it still remains the district headquarters and the most important of all the stations to the east of Lokoja. It is now, moreover, the seat of government of Muri province; and the Resident's office and bungalow occupies the site of the original building erected by the Niger Company, and which, enclosed within a rectangular wall of European bricks, did duty as a fort in the early days of the British occupation. The town, originally a small Jukum settlement, has grown rapidly under the wing of the British, until now it covers quite a considerable area and possesses a large permanent and floating population of a cosmopolitan type, as well as the largest native market in the southern provinces. Before the new road was opened from Loko to Bauchi across the plateau, Ibi was the starting-point for all the expeditions and caravans to Bauchi and the Upper Gongola, and at that

Bauchi to Ibi

time, therefore, it was a good centre for carriers. Now, however, it shares this reputation with Loko, and is the point of departure for expeditions to the south—to Tagum, Katsina, and the German border—rather than to the north.

I had, however, little difficulty in replacing with fresh men the sick and weary members of my troop; and while we rested for a day at Ibi I took the opportunity of explaining to both the old and the new members of my retinue that it was my intention after visiting Arofu and Awe to strike across country from Wase to Gateri and thence northward to the Gongola and eastward to Bornu, and that I should expect them to accompany me on my journey at least until I returned to Hausaland. I then arranged for canoes to be ready at the wharf the following morning to transport the whole party to Tunga, the port for Arofu, two days down river from Ibi. Next morning, therefore, we embarked, accompanied by a few native soldiers as escort to Arofu, who were to return to Ibi by road after our visit was over. The horses were induced to enter their canoes with a little less difficulty than on the previous occasion, and after we had pushed off they soon became accustomed to the motion of the canoe and able to steady themselves without the assistance of their attendants.

Besides the rude dugouts of the riverine pagans, two principal types of canoe are utilised by the habitual travellers on the Benue. These are the Kokanda and the Nupe canoes, the former built

On Horseback through Nigeria

for speed and the latter for the carriage of heavy and bulky goods. The floors of each type are fashioned out of a single log, the former being round-bottomed with pointed ends and the latter flat-bottomed and sharply squared off in front and behind. The sides of both types are boarded up to the requisite height, the roughly trimmed planks being held together by straps and pins of iron and the seams stuffed with cotton fibre. The Kokanda canoes are shorter and wider, and from their shape more easily propelled by poles or paddles than the Nupe type. The latter, on the other hand, are more stable and lack the centre-poles and cross-bars of the former, while they alone are so designed as to make it possible to carry and accommodate cattle, horses, and other animals. A large and roomy Nupe canoe, moreover, can be made quite a comfortable houseboat for a river journey. A portion of the forward end is fitted with a trellised arch of supple twigs and covered either with native mats or with the canvas sections of a tent. A camp-chair is set beneath this shady arch, and in it one may recline at one's ease, fanned and cooled by the gentle current of air which circulates beneath the canopy through the gentle motion of the canoe. A provision-box in front serves as a table, while the meals are cooked behind in the well of the canoe over an open fire in an earthen pot. The canoemen as a rule are particularly strong and muscular men and possessed of a wonderful power of endurance. They are accustomed to pole and paddle day after



ON THE BENUE.

To face p. 112.

Bauchi to Ibi

day from dawn to sunset, with only short rests for refreshment, and they are ready to continue their work by moonlight if necessity should arise. The poling of a loaded canoe up-stream, moreover, is no easy task, and they can therefore be readily forgiven for taking the down-river journey more deliberately than one is sometimes disposed to approve of.

Our canoes were dropping gently down-stream with the current, winding about with the channel from one side to the other, now floating peacefully over deep water close to the river bank, now being vigorously propelled by the polers over the broad and shallow stretches intervening. Many crocodiles were stretched lazily on the sandbanks, gaping and basking in the sunshine, while from the deeper pools hippos would raise their ugly heads to gaze in wonder at the white man. Every now and then, as we circled round a sandbank, the carriers would leap overboard, splash about in the water for some time, and then run at full speed over the yellow sand to rejoin their canoes. We met many traders passing up-stream to the markets of Ibi, now in roomy Nupe canoes with their merchandise safely stowed away underneath the arching canopy, now in well-filled Kokandas, with flags and streamers flying from the centre-poles and the canoemen singing lustily as they dug the water with their slender paddles. At midday we stopped to lunch at our ease and stretch our limbs on a terraced sandbank in mid-stream. The sun was hot, however, and it was a relief to be once

On Horseback through Nigeria

more afloat, sheltered by the shady canopy of the canoe, while the carriers covered themselves with cloths and mats to ward off the burning rays, and the horseboys every now and then woke up from their slumber to sprinkle water on the backs of the patient animals in their charge.

It happened as the heat began to lessen in the afternoon that my cook espied a herd of antelope on the farther margin of an extensive sandbank. As he professed a thorough acquaintance with European weapons, I allowed him to borrow my rifle, and, accompanied by the steward-boys and the interpreter, he set out over the sand, eager to show his prowess and confirm his reputation as a hunter. Unfortunately, however, owing to carelessness either on his part or on the part of his companions, the rifle accidentally went off and the bullet splintered the upper arm of the elder boy. He bled profusely as they carried him back to my canoe, and in the absence of proper appliances, I could do little but bind up the arm in a temporary fashion and send off some men to a neighbouring village on the river bank to secure a canoe to take him back to Ibi. It was painful to sit by him on the river sandbank as he moaned and cried, "*Zafe, zafe, zafe!*" ("Hot, hot, hot!"), while he gradually became weaker and colder. He bore it well, however, and even stoically, like a true Mohammedan. He would call out to me, "*Aquoi Allah, Baturi!*" ("There is a God, Master!"), recite his *ladan* or common prayer, and then begin to cry because he would be unfit

Bauchi to Ibi

to work for me any more. I cheered him as best I could, and as soon as a canoe had been secured, I despatched him to Ibi in charge of one of my headmen, who, when he rejoined me later at Awe, informed me that the boy and his friends in Ibi would not allow him to take the case to the European doctor lest the latter should amputate the arm. To be maimed is to a negro worse than death, and the native medicine man to whom the boy was taken readily promised retention of the arm and complete recovery within a very short time. Months afterwards, however, I heard that the poor lad ultimately died under the treatment.

Towards evening, as the sun sank in the west and the air became fresher and cooler, we began to look about for a suitable sandbank on which to camp for the night. Many of the banks were already occupied by parties of traders passing up or down stream, who had moored their canoes by the waterside and lit their camp fires on the sands beyond. At length we drew into a clean and tidy stretch of sand, close to a patch of brushwood on the river-bank, to which the carriers at once made off to gather firewood before evening fell. My bed was comfortably arranged upon the sandbank before darkness fell, and soon my table was spread with quite a sumptuous repast, but unfortunately the gleam of my lantern attracted all the flying ants and water insects for yards around, and as they ceaselessly persisted in thickening my soup and gravy and even my favourite drinks with their wings and bodies, I at last gave up the struggle

On Horseback through Nigeria

and sought refuge and repose beneath the shelter of my net.

We arrived at the landing-place for Tunga, on the right bank, early the following afternoon, and on inquiry found that the road to Arofu struck inland from Gidan Zebu, a small Jukum village, a little farther lower down on the left bank. I decided, therefore, to go on at once to this village, camp on the river-bank for the night, and proceed to Arofu the next day, leaving the canoes at Gidan Zebu to await my return in order to ferry our party across again to Tunga. It was my purpose in visiting Arofu to inspect the lead-mines from which Hausaland draws the bulk of its supply of galena, whose principal use is as a cosmetic for the dusky beauties of the north. Arofu itself is a Hausa and Jukum settlement on the borders of the Munchi country, and the latter tribe looks with a suspicious eye upon the northern intruders who come to dig the ore in the country of the pagans. When the trading station was first established at Ibi, the Niger Company for a time worked the lead-mines of Arofu for the sake of the pockets of silver which are sometimes found associated with the galena. The neighbouring Munchis, however, became turbulent, and in the end attacked the European engineers and their native labourers, who threw what machinery they had into the pits and fled for their lives to the banks of the Benue.

We set out early from Gidan Zebu, and after a short march of about eight miles through some-

Bauchi to Ibi

what thickly wooded country arrived at Arofu, after passing a well fortified Munchi village, whose inhabitants peered curiously and suspiciously at us over the walls. At Arofu, where we camped on the outskirts of the village, we were received somewhat sullenly, but food and water and corn for the horses were, after some delay, duly forthcoming. The day was spent in examining the lead-mines and the country around. The native workings consist of a row of pits about thirty feet deep along the outcrop of the lode, connected by a narrow underground gallery. For the greater part of the year the pits are full of water, and it is only towards the middle of the dry season that the water becomes sufficiently low to allow of its being baled out by the native workers. The lode itself is narrow and, worked as it is in primitive fashion, the amount of galena extracted in a season is comparatively small, since a considerable amount of barren rock has to be extracted before the ore itself can be obtained.

In the course of the afternoon, as I wandered about the workings, old and new, in the bush outside the village, I noticed a number of the townspeople sullenly following me about, and my guide, who seemed to feel himself responsible for my safety, kept urging me to hurry on and not delay my return to camp. There appeared to be also a considerable amount of coming and going of armed natives between Arofu and the neighbouring villages, from which came the sound of rapid and excited drumming. As the Munchis have an

On Horseback through Nigeria

evil reputation, I began to suspect that some mischief was brewing, but as a hurried departure would probably have precipitated matters, I decided to stay where I was for the night, and as a precaution against alarm posted sentries, one at either end of the main street of the village, one beside my camp, and one some distance along the bush road beyond. These preparations evidently impressed the natives, for although the drumming continued in the neighbouring villages to a very late hour, my rest was peaceful and undisturbed. Next morning, as the river was not far off, we set about our departure in deliberate fashion, and, retracing our steps, reached Gidan Zebu and the bank of the Benue in time for luncheon pleased with our little excursion to the far-famed mines of Arofu.

We crossed the river again to the Tunga beach, and after discharging the canoes set out for Tunga itself, which is an hour's march inland from the river. The town, a Hausa settlement, is situated on the main road from Ibi and Arofu to the salt-fields of Awe, and in the dry season is particularly badly supplied with water. My camp was pitched outside the town near some muddy water-holes, the best that could be found, and after the abundant supplies to which we had been accustomed on the river, we took somewhat unkindly to both the quantity and the quality of the water available. Even the carriers I found were anxious to push on to Awe, where supplies of all kinds were obtainable, and next morning they were early on the

Bauchi to Ibi

scene, ready for the march of twelve miles to the salt-making city, which they accomplished in little more than three hours.

Awe, the centre of the salt-making industry in western Muri, is a large and closely built Hausa town, with a well preserved wall, set on an island, as it were, in the middle of a circle of bare and rocky ground, from which the soil has been almost entirely removed. It lies, moreover, in the bottom of a hollow between two parallel ridges of rising ground, and as one approaches from the south the city suddenly comes into view as a green and palmy oasis in a brown and grassy plain. All round the town for a considerable distance the plain has been cleared and cultivated, but beyond the farms the wooded plains can be seen stretching away to the west and surrounding the bases of a number of the isolated and conical hills which rise conspicuously in the distance and bear witness, like the Rocks of Wase and Bantaji, to the former presence of volcanic activity upon the plains of Muri. The Awe River, moreover, flows close to the city wall and drains the surplus water of the springs around the town.

We crossed the rocks, all encrusted with salt, which lie in front of the Tunga gate, and passed through the middle of the clean and prosperous-looking town, past the market-place, the *masalaji* or mosque, and the king's compound, and out again at the northern gate to camp on the banks of the Awe River, which was at this season nothing but a string of pools. The salt, which made the

On Horseback through Nigeria

original Jukum village of Awe a desirable possession in the eyes of the Hausa conquerors, is won from weak brine which rises in springs around the walls of the town. The brine is carried by the women in water-pots from the springs and sprinkled upon loose dry earth spread out in a thin layer upon a hard and smooth surface of rock or clay. As soon as the heat of the sun has evaporated the water, the earth is scraped up and recrumbled and again spread out and watered. This process is repeated twice or thrice daily for about a week, when the particles of earth are fairly thickly encrusted with a deposit of salt. The earth is then scraped up for the last time and carried into the compounds within the walls of the town, where it is placed in large earthenware pots perforated at the bottom. A small quantity of water is then thrown on top, and this filters down through the pot, dissolving the salt and dripping slowly from the holes in the bottom as a concentrated solution of brine. This is then placed over an open fire and the water slowly evaporated, leaving in the pot a solid mass of sodium chloride, with a greater or less amount of earth and other impurities. The whole process is long and tedious, but even so, a considerable amount of salt is thus annually recovered from the weak brine of the springs. Unfortunately, however, this work cannot go on during the rainy season, for the saltfields, owing to their low-lying position, are then under water, and even when the waters have receded a considerable amount of time has to be wasted

Bauchi to Ibi

in cleaning out the springs and clearing away the deposit of mud and silt which the floods have left upon the surface of the saltfields. The competition in the native markets between this salt of local manufacture and imported European salt is very keen, and already many of the lesser villages around Awe have been compelled to close their saltfields. It would seem, indeed, that there is little hope of preserving this native industry, for the brine, though in places abundant, is so weak that the return in salt would never repay the cost of erecting and maintaining an expensive evaporating plant.

At Awe a party of labourers from Lokoja and a native engineer were at this time engaged in boring for new salt-springs. Upon my arrival the engineer, who hailed from the Gold Coast, presented me with the following characteristic production of the half-educated native:—

“SIR,—I beg mostly respectfully to submit to you this my resignation as the boring engineer. The chief of my resignation is on account of frequently trouble that I am received from two of the labourers as they are willful intentionally to spoil my character as themselves. So therefore if I were to force myself into this work with them, they would surely spoil my character without the least hesitation. And more also they will change the other labourers not to work again.

“For instance day before yesterday they fought with one of these countrymen on account of a

On Horseback through Nigeria

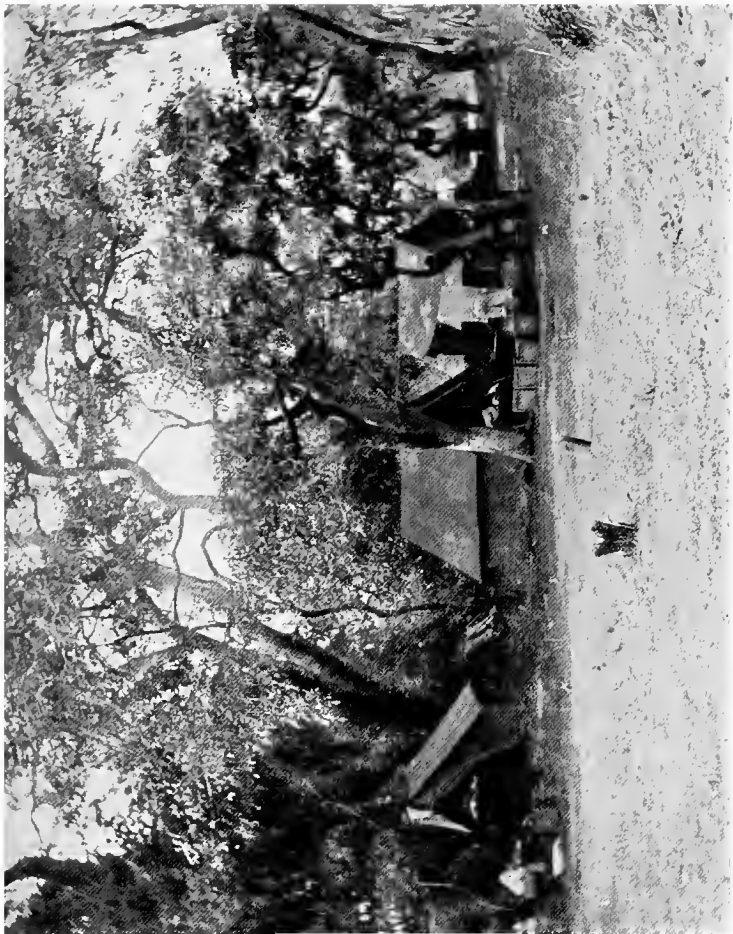
woman. The man was so annoyed he took a sword after them and promised to kill them and hang himself. Soon as I heard the noise I went there and began to comfort the man: had it not been so, I speculated we had civil war day before yesterday on account of this case when they were drunk. Now if I not go there in time soon as I heard the row and it happen they killed themselves, I believed you would put blame upon me who have to teach them what to do: while if I tell them to keep themselves in order, they would harden their hearts: so therefore I am afraid of these two men not to put trouble on my neck, because I came here to work but not to fight. This is the reason of my resignation.

“Your obedient servant,

“L. O.”

As on inquiry I found that the fault lay as much on the one side as on the other, I accepted his resignation and let him go.

I spent two days at Awe exploring the salt-fields and the volcanic rocks in the neighbourhood, and each evening I was entertained by troops of native dancers. We then moved on over rapidly undulating and somewhat stony country to Azara, a town whose principal industry is also salt-making, and beyond it we camped in a shady grove on the banks of the Ankwe River, within easy distance of the town of Akiri, which is set at the base of some low hills of ironstone and possesses one brine-spring of considerable strength, surrounded by a small saltfield. Though small, however, the



CAMP NEAR AKIRI.

Bauchi to Ibi

saltfield is quite perfectly and scientifically arranged, the orifice of the spring having been artificially raised and the water being led from it through narrow aqueducts of clay to the various parts of the saltfield. From Akiri we struck north-eastward again to Yelwa, over the undulating, thinly wooded plains of Muri; and, as time was now of some object, I decided to push on at once to Wase, a distance of twenty-three miles, and for that purpose set out at the first streak of dawn and breakfasted at the pools of Donkwon. All went well until we reached the ruined villages of Gurkawa, but after that the fierce heat of the noon-day sun began to tell upon the carriers. There was no water to be found between Gurkawa and the Wase River, and long before we reached it many of the weaker carriers had begun to feel faint from thirst. They staggered on for a time with their loads in a brave attempt to reach the shelter of the Rock, but soon collapsed in a heap by the wayside. The headmen dragged them off the path and left them with their loads beside them under the shelter of a shady tree until they could return with succour from the town. Most of the stragglers found their way to the rest-camp in the cool evening air, but of some of them no trace could anywhere be found. Their loads were discovered where they had dropped them by the wayside, but they themselves had evidently, on partially recovering, crawled off blindly into the bush, and had either perished there or fallen victims to the pagans of the hills.

CHAPTER V.

WASE TO GOMBE

*"Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require."*

The hills of Kanna—Reception at Bashar—A game reserve—A local superstition—The power of a ju-ju—Ancient lead-mines—The rocks of Ligri—The pagan mind—First view of Tangale Peak—A night march—Native iron-furnaces—Smelting the ore—Bush-Fulani—The river Gongola and its faddama—A picturesque village—Arrival at Gombe.

AS a number of my carriers were now *hors de combat* as the result of the fatigues of the previous day's march, I decided to leave them behind for two or three days to rest and recuperate at Wase while I myself, with all the stronger men, made a detour by way of Kanna and Kantana to Bashar, where the others were instructed to join me in four days' time. We set out, therefore, from Wase to travel northward along the old trade route from Ibi to Bauchi, which leads through the country of the Kanna pagans. As far as Salve the road was familiar, but beyond the village we passed through stretches of thin and open bush, interspersed with patches of farmland, until, as we approached

Wase to Gombe

Kwankyam, the road rapidly became rougher and stonier as it led gradually upward to the foothills of the plateau. Kwankyam is a small and scattered pagan village set within a circle of granite hills, and now semi-deserted since the British occupation, for a reason that is not far to seek. Before the new road from Loko to Bauchi across the plateau was opened up, white men were constantly passing up and down this road between Ibi and Bauchi, attended as the case might be by troops of native soldiers or gangs of carriers, and Kwankyam being a stage in the journey, constant demands were made upon the unfortunate villagers for supplies for the passing caravans. The country all round being rocky and stony and capable of being cultivated only with the greatest difficulty, the villagers could obviously produce only a very small surplus of corn, and they naturally resented being called upon to draw upon this surplus at the request of every passing European. As they dared not refuse, however, for fear of punishment, they took the wiser course of migrating to the neighbouring villages farther off in the bush, where they could live quietly and peacefully without being subjected to the unreasonable demands of the white man and his native satellites.

It was now well known, however, that there was a shortage of food at Kwankyam, and the carriers had accordingly provided themselves at Wase with sufficient food for one night. The king of the village brought me an emaciated fowl and a few ancient-looking eggs, at the same time pleading

On Horseback through Nigeria

the direst poverty and distress. Early in the morning we set out for Kanna, which lies on the plateau more than one thousand feet above the level of the plains of Muri. The road soon became very rough and stony, and led over rapidly undulating and hilly country until we reached the base of the ascent which leads up to the plains above. With much panting and perspiring we at last reached the summit of the pass, and after a few minutes' rest we pushed on to Kanna, which proved to be only a short way off. The town of Kanna consists of a number of scattered hamlets set partly on the summits of the surrounding cliffs and partly in the narrow valley between. The people are pagans and for the most part scantily clad, but their king and headmen are now accustomed to appear in Hausa robes. The king of Kanna, indeed, is a warlike chief, who before the coming of the British had not only successfully defended his own country from the attacks of the conquering Fulani, but had also brought assistance to the neighbouring pagan tribes in their struggles with the common enemy. In this way he had gradually extended his power and jurisdiction amongst the hills, until now he is one of the most powerful chiefs in southern Bauchi.

There is a good rest-camp at Kanna and substantial huts for both Europeans and carriers, while food seemed to be quite plentiful and the natives willing to sell. On inquiry I found that the road to Bashar led through the neighbouring town of Kantana, which lies off the beaten track,

Wase to Gombe

and I accordingly arranged with the king to have a messenger sent on ahead to warn the townspeople of my approach. Next morning we left Kanna and moved eastward through a narrow cultivated valley shut in by rounded hills and heaps of granite boulders. As the farmland ceased, we entered again a belt of rough and stony country, and at a little distance we could see the steep escarpment which bounded the flat-topped sandstone hills on which the town of Kantana was built. The ascent, however, was fairly easy, and on reaching the summit we were met by the *galadima* of the town, who expressed his regret that the king was ill and unable to come out to meet me. I stopped for an hour to examine the native iron-furnaces, for which the town is famed, and then, having secured a guide from the *galadima*, pushed on over the plateau on my way to Bashar. The surface of the plateau had been cut into in a peculiar fashion by narrow, steep-sided, flat-bottomed valleys, which drained eastward and southward to the plains below. For a time the path ran parallel with the edge of the southern escarpment of the plateau, and as we followed the narrow track through cultivated fields and scrubby bush we obtained a distant view of the shining summit of the Wase Rock, standing sentinel as it were over the wooded plains below. Soon we began the descent from the plateau down a long and narrow valley bounded by rocky slopes of red sandstone. We found the village of Tukkur situated almost at the mouth of the valley where it

On Horseback through Nigeria

debouched upon the plain, and there we camped for the night, continuing our journey to Bashar on the following morning.

Bashar is a large and important Hausa settlement, picturesquely built on a ridge of rock which rises somewhat abruptly from the open plains. The walls enclose a large area of farmland, within which the compounds are scattered singly or in groups. The king of Bashar, who had evidently received news of my approach, was waiting for me amongst the farms a considerable distance from the walls of the town. He was dressed in a green silk cloak over somewhat worn and dirty Hausa robes, and accompanied by several mounted retainers and the royal band, which consisted of a drummer, a trumpeter, and a player on a sort of reed instrument, all of them mounted. As soon as I came in sight at the head of the line of carriers, the band struck up their music and the king's attendants galloped forward to meet me, holding their right hands high in the air and pulling up their horses sharply on their haunches within half a dozen yards of mine in true Hausa fashion. The procession then reformed with the band in front, followed by the king and his courtiers, who conducted me in state to a roomy hut close to the earthen walls of the royal palace. Abundant supplies of food for myself and the carriers were immediately forthcoming, the king being apparently anxious to show his respect for the white man and his pleasure at our visit.

Next morning we left our comfortable quarters to follow the bush road to Jeb-Jeb, across the Kudu

Wase to Gombe

Valley, the king accompanying us as before to the outer margin of the farms. He had informed me on the previous day that it would be necessary for our party to camp for one night in the bush, as the nearest village was more than thirty miles away. I had taken the precaution, therefore, of buying two bags of meal from the king as food for the carriers, and of obtaining as guide a native hunter who was thoroughly acquainted with all the bush tracks in the Kudu Valley. This broad valley, which is largely uninhabited, forms a sort of game reserve between the provinces of Bauchi and Muri; and as we went along, the hunter entertained me with tales of his prowess in hunting the bush-cow and the wart-hog and the other denizens of the forest. Elephant and giraffe are both fairly common, and we found the tracks of the latter frequently crossing our path. Neither, however, is hunted by the natives, for the story goes that once a man trapped and shot a giraffe, and soon after his body swelled up and his skin cracked and split, and he died in the greatest agony. Hence the natives believe that these larger animals have been endowed by Allah with the *magani*, or marvellous power of killing their destroyers, and so great is the power of this superstition that it is sufficient to prevent even their bravest men from attempting the capture of these lords of the forest.

We camped in a shady grove beside some muddy water-holes which in the rains are connected by a running stream, and next morning we moved on over the gently undulating plain through belts

On Horseback through Nigeria

of forest alternating with open grassy stretches decorated with clumps of bushy trees. At length we reached a prosperous hamlet surrounded by extensive farms, which had been founded two years before by the son of the king of Bashar. Like his father, he welcomed me profusely, and begged me to do him the honour of camping for the night in his village. On my expressing a doubt as to whether he would be able to find food for so many carriers, he eagerly replied that he could feed them without the slightest difficulty if only I would agree to accept his hospitality for the night. I pleased him by conceding his request; and soon from the compounds there came the sound of the cheerful singing of the women as they beat and ground the corn, while my host busied himself with finding quarters for the carriers and arranging for a supply of wood and water to be brought to the door of my tent. Soon he returned with an ample supply of food for my party, fowls, eggs, and groundnuts for myself, and corn, meal, rice, and other delicacies for the carriers. In the evening, also, he brought in addition several pots of *kono* (a native drink) and many calabashes of cooked food for the carriers and a large bowl of fresh milk for myself.

I had heard at Bashar that galena had at one time been mined in the bush somewhere near the spot which I had now reached. The story, indeed, was that in the palmy days of Bauchi, Yakubu, the great king, had founded a mining settlement called Kerrem near the place where the galena was

Wase to Gombe

dug. During his lifetime extensive operations had been carried on, but after his death the pagans of the hills closed the road, sacked the town and filled in the pits, and although they were afterwards severely defeated, the mines were never reopened, for Yakubu alone knew the ju-ju rite which had to be performed before the galena could be successfully extracted, and with his death the ju-ju had been lost and in its absence no one was brave enough to begin working the lead again. I had found the king of Bashar, although professedly Mohammedan, strongly imbued with the idea of the efficacy of this ju-ju, and now his son professed entire ignorance of the site of the ancient workings. He said, however, that he would make inquiries for me amongst the hunters of the neighbouring hamlets, as some of them might possibly have stumbled upon them in the course of their wanderings in the bush after game. In a short time, after consulting his fellow-settlers, he returned to say that he believed that if I were to go to the adjoining village of Pai, the headman there would be able to direct me to the spot. I set off at once, accompanied by my host, but when we reached the village, its headman in turn likewise professed entire ignorance of the whereabouts of the ancient workings. He was obviously lying, but it was equally obvious that he feared the power of the ju-ju more than the displeasure of the white man. This was disappointing, but happily a sick man who was sitting at the door of his hut and who had overheard the conversation, apparently think-

On Horseback through Nigeria

ing that the ju-ju could do him no further harm, spoke up and said that he knew where the place was and would send his boy to show me the way. This assumption of responsibility apparently cleared the air and the frowns departed from the countenances of the villagers, some of whom followed me, cheerfully shouting out directions to my youthful guide whenever he seemed to be in doubt as to the way. At length in a patch of low scrub and undergrowth, where formerly had stood a busy town, we came upon the line of ancient pits, now almost levelled with the surface and all but covered by the coarse bush-grass. Fragments of galena and other ores were scattered about the surface, and after collecting a few as samples I retraced my steps to the camp, pleased that I had at last fathomed the mystery of the ancient mines.

It was a brilliant moonlight night and our genial host entertained his visitors to quite a late hour with the deep-voiced notes of a drum. In the morning we bade him a cordial farewell and set out on our march to Jeb-Jeb, about midway crossing the Kudu River, shallow and easily fordable at this period of the year. Jeb-Jeb is a small and now semi-deserted town, situated on the margin of the saltfield of eastern Muri, where, as in the Awe district, the competition of European salt has largely killed the native industry. After the lavish hospitality of the king of Bashar and his son, we were vividly impressed by the shortage of provisions in this poverty-stricken town. This, however, only made the carriers the more ready to



ON THE KUDU RIVER.

Wase to Gombe

quit it the next morning, and at dawn we set out on a long and tedious march to the country of the Ligri pagans. For two-thirds of the way we traversed still the open grassy plains of the Kudu Valley. Far to the right rose the misty peaks of the Wurkum hills, while in front were the rounded summits of the Ligri and Gateri hills, which we were slowly approaching. As we reached their base, the road rapidly became rough and stony, and soon we entered a narrow valley amongst the hills, down which there flowed a clear and gurgling stream. At the head of the valley, however, the road led almost perpendicularly up a stony path, obstructed by many rocky barriers, to the town of Ligri, built for defensive purposes on the broken summit of the hills. After much searching I at last found a vacant space where the soil was sufficiently thick to hold the tent-pegs, and while my tent was being erected I interviewed the king of the town, who came forward sullenly to greet me. As soon as I had explained that I and my party were only passing through his town on our way northward, and wanted nothing from him but food and shelter for a night, his countenance visibly cleared, and in a brisk tone he gave a few orders to one of his attendants, who immediately departed, but soon returned with an ample supply of wood and water. Quarters were speedily found for my men, and a little later came fresh provisions for myself and my party, and very soon the carriers were chattering and laughing like old acquaintances with their more primitive brethren.

On Horseback through Nigeria

It is a common experience when travelling through a pagan district to find, as at Ligri, that the people are at first very suspicious of their visitor. Their experience of the white man, indeed, has hitherto not been very attractive. Protected by his rifle, he has climbed into their rocky fastnesses, which had resisted the attacks of the Hausa and Fulani warriors. He has defeated their chosen braves, broken the hereditary independence of their tribe, commandeered their stores, levied an annual tribute, and placed in the name of civilisation an iron yoke around the necks of a hitherto unconquered people. They rarely see a white man, almost their only visitor being the Resident on his rounds, urging and enforcing the immediate payment of the tribute; and among these primitive peoples, as among the civilised nations of the north, the tax-gatherer is a person whose absence is always preferable to his company. Every white man, therefore, reminds them of their servitude, and his visit is usually a source more of discomfort than of pleasure. It is with considerable surprise, therefore, that they learn that it is possible for a white man to pass through their town seeking nothing but food and shelter. When they have grasped the fact, however, their innate sense of hospitality is touched, and as a rule they draw freely on their winter's stores. A stay of more than one night, however, in any pagan town is for obvious reasons little appreciated. It is only after much toil and labour that they are able to win from their rocky soil sufficient corn for the

Wase to Gombe

winter's food, and the incursion of a large party of visitors naturally depletes their scanty surplus to a serious extent. While, therefore, they are prepared to welcome the coming guest and give him food and shelter for the night, they much prefer to speed his departure on the morrow, and if for any reason departure is delayed, supplies become scarcer and scarcer, a very effective method of hinting that one has overstayed one's welcome.

We set out, however, for Gateri on the following morning, parting in quite a friendly manner, and after again descending from the rocky height we traversed slowly and painfully a narrow stony valley which led toward the Gateri hills. Again we climbed a steep ascent and found the town nestling in a broad and shallow hollow surrounded by the summit ridges of the hills. The messenger whom I had sent forward on the previous day had evidently reported favourably on our party, for the king and his chiefs were waiting to receive me on the brow of the hill and conduct me to a suitable camping-ground near the springs. Abundant supplies were soon forthcoming, for the town is a large and populous one and the soil is richer and more productive than the bare and rocky fields of Ligri. In the afternoon I climbed the highest of the rocky hills which encircled the town, and was rewarded for my exertion by an extensive view over all the surrounding country. To the north there lay the undulating plains of Bauchi, to the west the wooded levels of the Kudu Valley, with the hills of Kanna and of Duguri in the distance. To

On Horseback through Nigeria

the east lay broken rocky country, dominated by the distant Peak of Tangale, while to the south, across a deep and narrow valley, there rose the rocky heights of the Wurkum hills, the home of many pagan tribes whose very names are yet unknown.

Towards evening, as I made inquiries about the road to Bauchi which I now proposed to traverse, I discovered that a distance of thirty miles lay between Gateri and Panguru, the nearest Hausa settlement to the north. Moreover, after passing the Gateri hills and the river at their base, there was no water to be found anywhere on the road with the exception of some tiny pools, which as a rule had quite dried up before the middle of the season. Warned, therefore, by our unfortunate experience of the waterless march from Yelua to Wase, I decided to strike our camp at once, and in the remaining hours of daylight move down to the banks of the stream at the bottom of the hill, rest there for a few hours, and set out for Panguru in the darkness of the early morning. When the carriers were called they also saw the wisdom of this course of action, and briskly hauled down the tent, packed up their various loads and set off down the stony path to the halting-place at the stream below. The king of Gateri and his attendants accompanied me for some distance on my way, expressing deep regret at the necessity for my departure, but at the same time obviously much relieved to find that such a necessity had itself arisen to call off their visitors sooner than they had expected.

Wase to Gombe

We reached the stream at the base of the hills just as darkness fell, and there we rested until midnight, when we again moved slowly on over the undulating plain. There was no moon and the path was only barely discernible in the starlight. As it happened, however, the bush grass for some considerable distance on either side of the road had not yet been burned, so I sent my interpreter ahead with a supply of matches and instructions to set the grass well alight at intervals of every forty or fifty yards. Thus as we passed along in the dead of night our path was naturally illuminated by these miniature bush-fires, which sprang up in front of us one by one and behind us united into a sheet of flame. After some time, however, we entered a tract of country where the grass had been already burnt and where the path was still at times obstructed by occasional roots and boulders. I now had my four lanterns lighted and distributed along the column, and the boys who carried them had instructions to shout out in a loud voice whenever they found a root or a stone projecting above the path. Thus with the headmen shouting their characteristic calls and the boys giving timely warning of occasional obstacles with a loud-voiced "*Duci! Duci!*" ("Stone! Stone!"), "*Itachi! Itachi!*" ("Stick! Stick!"), and with a few reckless spirits blowing lustily on their rams' horns in the darkness, we moved carefully on until four o'clock, when we stopped to rest until the first streak of dawn appeared in the eastern sky.

We had now accomplished more than half of

On Horseback through Nigeria

our journey and with the coming daylight the carriers stepped out briskly with the intention of reaching Panguru before the sun became hot and oppressive. By ten o'clock we had entered the farmland, and soon the town itself appeared in sight. With a final effort the carriers hurried on, and, weary and perspiring, deposited their loads underneath a shady tree in the middle of the town just as the sun shone forth in its full and thirsty brilliance. Panguru, it appeared, was noted for its ironworks, and as I wandered round the town in the evening my attention was attracted by some curious conical structures close by in the middle of the plain. On examination they proved to be the earthen furnaces in which the natives had been smelting their iron ore, each pierced at the base by six or eight holes, in many of which their primitive tubular tuyeres of clay still remained inserted.

The native iron industry appears to be doomed to the same fate as the salt industry of Muri. The importation of European bar-iron by the trading stores and its circulation throughout the country by the native merchants has adversely affected the native industry, and iron is now smelted from the local ores only in those places which are either far from the river or unapproached by the main trade routes throughout the Protectorate. The native process of smelting, indeed, is a long and tedious one. First the ore, which is mostly poor in quality, has to be laboriously grubbed out of the ground and broken up into tiny fragments. Then much timber has to be hewn in the neighbouring

Wase to Gombe

bush and set to smoulder in heaps under a covering of earth in order to make the charcoal which is necessary for smelting the ore. Then the ore and the charcoal are thrown into the furnace in alternate layers, in the proportions of two or three of charcoal to one of ore: the prepared material in the bottom of the furnace is set alight and six or eight men sit round the outside, each provided with a native skin bellows and blowing into the tuyeres for all he is worth. When one set of blowers is tired another takes their place, for the blast must not cease for twenty-four hours or more. At the end of the requisite period the furnace is allowed to cool and a breach then made in its side, through which is drawn forth a mass of slag with a ball of metal at its base. The ball of iron thus produced at the expense of so much labour is worth only from three to five shillings, and at such a price it is obviously impossible in most cases for native iron to compete with the imported European material.

Our path now led gradually upward from Panguru to Pali and the central plains of Bauchi. About midway we crossed a rapid running stream, one of the headwaters of the Kudu River, and in its vicinity were grazing many herds of humped Fulani cattle. Each herd was in charge of one or more wild-looking Fulani herdsmen, dressed in a minimum of clothing, with long and matted hair, and armed with the traditional bow and arrows. These bush-Fulani, as they are called, are of purer blood than the Fulani of the towns, and the direct

On Horseback through Nigeria

descendants of those early herdsmen amongst whom, more than a century ago, rose the warlike spirits who conquered Hausaland for "the moon of Mahomet" and founded the great empire of Sokoto. The bush-Fulani have no fixed abode; they wander about with their herds in patriarchal style over the length and breadth of the land, ever in search of pastures new, pitching their camp in the bush wherever they please and living for the most part on the produce of their herds, while their surplus milk and butter they sell in the neighbouring towns or exchange for the produce of the farms. It is amongst these wandering herdsmen, who have never intermarried with Hausa women, that the purest Fulani types are now to be found. For the most part they are tall and spare, with well-marked aquiline features of an Arab type, copper-coloured complexions, long straight hair and full beards. The men speak little Hausa, are somewhat shy of strangers, and rarely enter the towns, devoting themselves entirely to the care and control of their herds, while the women do all the necessary buying and selling in the local markets.

The central plains of Bauchi run eastward from the Gongola, open grassy or thinly wooded, and extensively cleared for cultivation in the neighbourhood of the towns. They support an abundant population, located in numerous towns and villages and consisting for the most part of a mixed Hausa and Fulani stock. The walls of the towns are largely dilapidated and disused, or in the case of recent Fulani settlements, entirely absent, the com-



THE THINLY WOODED PLAINS OF BAUCHI.

To face P. 140.

Wase to Gombe

pounds being merely surrounded by a high screen of zana matting. We camped at Pali for the night, where the streams had cut deep cañon gorges into the sandstone of the plain, laying bare in one locality thin beds of white clay, which is dug by the native women and used for dusting their cotton threads when spinning. Next day we moved on over the hot and dusty plains by way of Lafiangale to Kirifi and Deu. Kirifi is set at the base of some low, flat-topped hills of grit and ironstone, and at one time was an important centre of the native iron industry. Deu, on the other hand, is built on the right bank of the Gongola, on a narrow platform which intervenes between the river and the base of the sandstone hills. The wall of the town is almost obliterated and the compounds are fenced with corn-stalks. The people are Fulani and possess large herds of cattle, which find abundant food on the swampy plains of the river. The king of the town had gone to Bauchi, but his deputy, the *magaji*, a weak-eyed, kindly old man who spoke only broken Hausa, provided me with accommodation in the zauri of his compound and found quarters for the carriers close by. The Gongola had now shrunk to a comparatively tiny river, and the mosquitoes and flying ants which found shelter in the grassy swamps by day spread over the whole flood plain by night, compelling the natives to sit and sleep in an atmosphere of smoke, and myself to retreat at an early hour to the shelter of my net.

We left at dawn next morning, and instead of

On Horseback through Nigeria

following the base of the hills where the path to Golo runs when the river is high, we took the shortest cut across the flood plain or *faddama* of the Gongola, which becomes swampy and impassable during the rains. The proximity of the water made the air feel damp and chilly and the peculiar aromatic odour of decaying vegetation rose from the grassy *faddama*. All along the right-hand side of the broad river-bed there ran in the distance a line of rounded and flat-topped hills, with many towns and villages nestling at their base beyond the reach of the summer floods. Much of the *faddama* was cultivated in patches of guinea-corn, rice, millet, indigo, cotton, and tobacco, with calabash and onion beds on the river bank. On the fallow land many herds of cows were grazing, the property of the neighbouring villages, and near the water-holes strayed many mares and donkeys with a numerous progeny around them. At a little distance from each village lay a group of dye-pits, with the dyers already busily at work in the early morning. We stopped to rest at Keffin-Iya, where the main road from Bauchi to Gombe and Bornu crosses the Gongola, and as I sat I watched the traffic come and go—traders singly or in groups panting under their heavy loads, travellers on horseback and on foot striding out briskly in the morning air, herds-men with their droves of cattle, sheep, and goats, and blind men and beggars moving slowly on, asking alms from every passer-by.

After breakfast we left for Golo, following the

Wase to Gombe

right bank of the Gongola all the way. The town is built on a spur of the hills extending towards the river and over which the broad, sandy road leads on to Gombe. The *bariki* is set on the banks of the river at a little distance from the town and close to the market-place, where a giant kuka-tree, with its gaunt and weirdly-knotted arms, throws a scanty shade over the empty stalls. The *magaji* of Deu had evidently sent a mounted messenger ahead to report my coming, for the *bariki*, such as it was, had been cleaned and swept before I arrived, and the king's boy was waiting to receive my commands. The huts were old and full of white ants, which kept dropping mud and chewed grass from the roof upon all my belongings. We found, moreover, that the supply of provisions in the town was very scanty, on account of the river having risen much higher than usual during the past season and swept away all trace of the guinea-corn, rice and millet which had been sown in the *faddama*.

At daybreak we left the *bariki* for the march to Gombe. There was now little shade to be had on the road, and it was important, therefore, that we should cover as much ground as possible before the air became hot and stifling. The Gongola here flows in a broad, flat-bottomed valley, bounded on either side by the buttressed escarpments of the tabular hills which form a continuous line on either side of the river. The road followed the base of the escarpment over the spurs of the hills and the air was cold and chilly in the shadow of the

On Horseback through Nigeria

precipice. Presently, as we rounded a projecting buttress, we came upon the village of Zago, surrounded by grassy farmland and shut in by a semi-circle of hills behind. As we approached, the bright rays of the rising sun began to appear over the summit of the hills, touching with gold the thatched roofs of the native huts, and rousing to life and action the sleeping village below. And even as we passed the people began to stir in the town and a blue, smoky haze began to rise from the roofs of the huts, while dogs, fowls, doves, and rooks began with one accord to salute the smiling morn. Three fantastic kuka-trees on the brow of the hill in front seemed to stand sentinel over the village below, while the broad river to the left, flowing placidly on, effectively shut off this little paradise from the world beyond.

Soon the hills on the right with their chilly shadows began to recede inland from our path, and we entered a stretch of open grassy, parklike plain, crossed by many cattle tracks leading westward to the river. In the sunshine the air was now pleasantly warm, like a summer's morn at home, and in the bushy thickets which were scattered here and there about the plain the birds were chirping and the doves cooing in the morning sun, while gaily plumaged but songless birds flitted hither and thither amongst the trees. In a little while, however, the sun began to assert its power, the flies came out to trouble us again, the sandy road assumed its characteristic glare and the thirsty day was on us!

Wase to Gombe

Again we entered the bare and treeless plain through which the river flowed, decorated here and there by green calabash-fields, where the large and yellow spheres rose weirdly above the prostrate stems. Presently the rounded hills of Gombe came in sight and the carriers moved quickly towards the town over the hot and dusty plain. We passed the market-place outside the city wall, filed through the gate and traversed the main street of the town. The Residency and the barracks are set on rising ground beyond the northern wall, at the base of a flat-topped hill, and at the door of the rest-house the carriers gladly deposited their loads, and with their mats and bundles returned to the town to seek refreshment and repose, and then to dress gaily in the evening and strut about the market-place like travellers of importance from the south.

Gombe was originally the seat of one of the Eulani emirates, and the Emir of Gombe still retains his palace in the town. He has now, however, to perform his allotted duties under the eye of the British Resident, who has his headquarters outside the town. From the summit of the flat-topped hill behind the Residency an excellent view can be obtained over the broad valley of the Gongola, which is now no longer, as between Deu and Golo, enclosed within a narrow trench-like channel bounded by steep walls of rock, but which flows from Gombe to Nafada in a shallow and almost imperceptible hollow in the open sandy plain, and spreads out in the season as a shallow flood for miles on either side.

CHAPTER VI

NAFADA TO TANGALE

"Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time."

A garrison town—Stung by a scorpion—The ruins of Burmi—
Trouble with the carriers—Willing helpers—The Peak in the
distance—A stronghold of paganism—An importunate chief—
Approaching the rocks of Ture—The *galadima's* smile—A
solitary grave—The base of the Peak—Giant baboons—The
effects of guinea-worm—The *galadima* acts as guide—The hills
of Chongwom—Deadly enemies—Reception at Tangalto—
Picturesque country—The prestige of the white man.

FROM Gombe I sent on half of my carriers and
baggage by the main road to Nafada, while I
myself made a detour by way of Darazo and the
margin of the Kerri-Kerri plateau, crossing the
Gongola again at Baruo, four miles above Nafada,
on the right bank of the river. Nafada is a town of
similar size to Gombe, situated at the bend of the
Gongola, where the main road to Bornu crosses
the river. It has sprung into importance of recent
years on account of its having been chosen as
an out-station for the native troops, being con-
veniently situated for keeping in touch with the
Kerri-Kerri pagans to the north and the Barbur

Nafada to Tangale

and Habe pagans to the south. The fort and the barracks are situated to the west of the town, and the military force consists of half a company of native infantry with two British officers, a non-commissioned officer, and a doctor. The market is a busy one, as befits a garrison town; and my carriers drew out all their arrears of pay to spend on dress and dissipation. Some of them, indeed, elected to remain at Nafada, ostensibly because they were weary and footsore, and this I allowed them to do on condition that they found other men willing to take their place in my party. It was my intention now to travel southward from Nafada into the Habe country, and if possible to enter the hitherto little known and little visited domains of the Ture and Tangale pagans. My purpose having been explained to the carriers, the headmen were instructed to have the whole party at the door of the rest-house by dawn, ready for the first day's march to Ashaka.

The morning air was cool and bracing as we filed through the sleeping town of Nafada before the sun was up. We made our exit by the Gujba gate, close to which the Niger Company have established a native trading store, where a considerable business is done in skins and ostrich feathers. We found ourselves upon the river bank amidst many herds of cows, grazing quietly on the short green grass. Our path ran close to the water-side, over grassy banks and through bushy thickets, which are partially submerged when the river is high. We passed Gubi, a large Tera town with

On Horseback through Nigeria

dilapidated walls, surrounded by extensive farms, and still we followed the river bank through picturesque and pretty country, with patches of high and open forest alternating with grassy glades or cultivated fields. Occasionally we passed a tiny hamlet within the ruined walls of a once larger town which had been sacked and pillaged in former days by Fulani raiders. Presently we reached Gongila, a small and well walled Tera town, surrounded on the south and west by a semicircle of low rounded sandstone hills, over whose escarpment the road now led to a broken plain above. As we rested in the bush after the steep ascent, my cook was accidentally stung above the knee by a scorpion in the grass. At first, as he rode his pony, he felt but little pain, but before we reached Ashaka his leg was much swollen and he was suffering acutely, and all the afternoon he lay in a semi-conscious condition, moaning and groaning with the excruciating pain. Happily, however, as evening fell, he began to recover, and next morning he seemed to be as well and fit as ever.

At daybreak we left Ashaka and took the road for Tonga, and in half an hour we came to the ruins of Burmi, a place which is justly famed in the recent history of the Protectorate. When the last independent Emir of Sokoto, or *Sarikin Muslimin*, fled from his capital after his defeat by the British in 1903, he made his way eastward, closely followed by a flying column, with the intention of crossing the desert to Egypt and Mecca. When he reached the Emir of Gombe's dominions,

Nafada to Tangale

however, he was persuaded by the fanatical Fulani of the Gongola Valley to make a last stand at Burmi. The British troops available concentrated rapidly from the east and west and south, and besieged the town. When the attack had been well pressed home and the issue was no longer doubtful, the *Sarikin Muslimin* stood in the market-place, surrounded by his ill-starred advisers, who urged him now again to flee. His white horse, his favourite steed, was brought ready saddled to the spot, but the *Sarikin Muslimin* stood and pondered, a deep frown darkening his brow, as he made the choice between duty and inclination. "I cannot go!" he said. "I cannot leave my people!" And at that moment a stray bullet from a British rifle laid low his favourite steed. "See," he said, "it is the will of Allah that I remain!" and seated himself under a shady tree to await the inevitable end, while his cowardly courtiers turned and fled. When the town was taken and the dead were numbered, the *Sarikin Muslimin* and his favourite steed were found together side by side, each done to death by the prowess of the foe. Burmi was sacked and the city walls were levelled with the ground. The site was cursed throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the mandate went forth that never again should a city rise in the midst of those fertile plains. And now, where once were busy streets, the cornfields wave and ripen, with here and there the drooping fragment of a wall mourning for the departed glory of the scene!

On Horseback through Nigeria

Soon after we came to another ruined town, the ruins of old Bajoga, in a grove of large and shady trees. The old town had been sacked and pillaged at the same time as Burmi, but, unlike the latter, a new and modern town, with broad streets and zana walls, has risen on the open plain beyond. Here we stopped to rest, the king and his people being most obliging, and pressing me with gifts of milk and eggs and fowls. Beyond Bajoga the road led over undulating sandy plains, with extensive stretches of farmland alternating with patches of thin and prickly bush. There was little shade or shelter by the way and the road was hot and dusty, and as we passed the tiny hamlets which were scattered over the plain the carriers stopped to ask for water, and mixed with it a little meal to make a cooling drink. When we reached Tongo, however, all our troubles were forgotten, for it was market day and the stalls were stocked with all the delicacies of the black man's table. The Fulani king was again most obliging, and his people saluted politely. The memory of Burmi and of the white man's vengeance is indeed still fresh within the minds of these peoples of the plain, and even casual visitors are treated with the greatest respect.

Next morning we breakfasted at Dukul, where the king, a feeble old man, repeatedly inquired whether he could serve me in any possible manner. I pleased him by requesting the services of a guide to Jurara, where I proposed to camp for the night, and of a messenger to go on ahead to Deba Habe

Nafada to Tangale

and report my intended arrival on the following day. Jurara proved to be quite a small Fulani village, whose *sariki*, however, did all in his power to make me comfortable. We set out again at dawn with the intention of reaching Deba Habe by midday, and soon we found ourselves approaching Deba Fulani, a large cattle-breeding town, set on open grassy rising ground, cleared of bush all round. As I passed quickly through the town the *sariki* came up and earnestly begged me to stop for refreshment. This, however, I decided not to do, as it was still quite early and Deba Habe was a long way off, and it seemed wiser to push on farther in the cool of the morning before stopping for breakfast. As it happened, however, Deba Fulani was the last of the Fulani settlements on the middle Gongola, and as soon as we had left the farms behind us we entered the Habe or Tera country, where the bush was thicker, the towns well walled, the farmland less extensive, and provisions scarcer. The path led over rapidly undulating country, rough and stony in places, and through patches of farmland, separated by extensive stretches of scrubby undergrowth and scattered trees. We passed Lubo, a small well walled village set on a low dome-shaped rise in the midst of the bush, and pushed on to Zembu, a similar town on similar rising ground, where a halt was called for breakfast. As the carriers came up I could see by their sullen looks and sulky faces that they had been grievously disappointed in not being allowed to stop at Deba Fulani and consume the *sariki's* proffered refresh-

On Horseback through Nigeria

ments. A number of them, I noticed, determined to have their revenge, began to undo their loads as soon as they had put them on the ground and retire with their mats and bundles to the background. I sent my interpreter to talk them round if possible and tell them that Deba Habe was now less than two hours away. He returned, however, to say that the carriers professed to be very tired and had quite determined not to go any farther that day. This, however, was equivalent to striking work, so I had them all called up in front of me and gave them the choice of going on with me that day to Deba Habe or of being dismissed on the spot. About twenty of the more turbulent spirits, thinking that it would inconvenience me greatly to be left in the lurch in this way in a pagan country, and that I would therefore ultimately grant their request, decided to take their dismissal, and these, much to their surprise, I had at once drummed out of the village. I then called the king and informed him that as soon as I had breakfasted I intended to go on to Deba Habe with the remaining carriers, leave the other twenty loads in his care, and get the king of Deba Habe to send for them on the following day. He immediately protested, however, that his people and the people of Deba Habe were brethren, that though his town looked small there were many people in it, that he could easily procure twenty men on the instant, and that in any case he was the humble slave of the white man and ready to do whatever I wished. I thanked him for his

Nafada to Tangale

kindly offer so amiably expressed, and asked him to collect the twenty men at once and bring them to my interpreter, who would show them what loads they were to carry. With frequent halts to rest our unaccustomed carriers, we at length reached Deba Habe and made our way to the rest-house, which is situated on rising ground to the north-west of the town. Very soon the king rode up to take my commands and to arrange about supplies for myself and the carriers. Being the chief of the tribe, I informed him how very obliging the *sariki* of Zembu had been, and he dismissed the twenty men with a word of praise. I then asked him to find me a messenger who would go to Nafada and deliver a letter to the officer in charge, asking him to send down twenty new carriers to Deba Habe to await my return from the Tangale country. I also intimated to the *sariki* that it was my intention to visit Ture and Tangalto without delay, and that he would be required to provide guides to Panda on the morrow. All these requests he pleasantly promised to perform, and with many obeisances left me to the calm enjoyment of the evening air. From the rising ground on which the rest-house was set, the level summits of the Bima hills were clearly discernible to the north-west, while thirty miles away to the south towered the mysterious Peak of Tangale, which I had seen from the hills of Gateri, and to visit which was now the object of my present journey.

Our path to the Peak led first from Deba Habe to Panda, and to accomplish this we left the rest-

On Horseback through Nigeria

house at dawn next morning, and, skirting the slumbering town on the left, struck southward through the farmland. At first we crossed much black swamp-earth, hard and dry and cracked by the summer's sun ; but presently the road became more sandy, and knobs and hummocks of sandstone began to appear above the surface of the plain. We stopped to rest where a stream had cut its channel deep into the sandstones of the plain, and then moved on to Panda over undulating and somewhat broken country covered with high and open bush. The old king of Panda met me at the beginning of the farms and conducted me to the rest-camp, which lay to the south of the town and in full view of the hills of Pamu and Awok, with the Peak in the distance to the right.

The country which we were now about to enter was rocky and mountainous, and inhabited by many and varied tribes, which had hitherto been visited only by armed expeditions from the north. This belt of mountainous country separates the central plains of Bauchi from the valley of the Benue to the south, and is one of the most extensive strongholds of paganism still left unexplored within the Protectorate. The inaccessible nature of the country has contributed much to its isolation and neglect, and even now only the merest fringe or margin of the rocky mass has been entered and brought under control. The outer hills of Pamu, Awok, Ture, Chongwom, Tangalto, and the Peak rise in more or less isolated groups from the undu-



A WAYSIDE POOL.

Nafada to Tangale

lating surface of a broken plain and stand in the relation of foot-hills to the continuous rocky mass behind. Each group of hills, with the exception of the Peak, is inhabited by a distinct tribe of pagans, and though their strongholds are separated by distances of only two or three miles, it was formerly the greatest joy of each to make war upon and kill or capture its neighbours.

The effective British occupation of this picturesque and rocky country is primarily due to the importunity of the chief of Ture. The Ture tribe occupies a group of flat-topped sandstone hills which rise precipitously from the plains midway between the strongholds of Pamu, Awok, Chongwom, and Tangalto. The tribe is a small one, and in the past has only with the greatest difficulty held its own against its more warlike neighbours, the people of Awok having been of recent years particularly active in chasing the Ture tribesmen whenever they descended to the plains to cultivate their farms. The present *sariki* of Ture, however, a small and insignificant-looking man, who had once been a slave in Hausaland and had there picked up a fluent knowledge of the Hausa tongue, has been gifted with wisdom beyond his neighbours. Before the British ever appeared at Deba Habe or Panda, the *sarikin* Ture used to slip past the Awok hills by night and make his way stealthily to the Resident at Gombe, to whom he would recount the sufferings of his people and claim for them the protection of the British arms. Again and again he returned to Gombe, humbly impor-

On Horseback through Nigeria

tuning the Resident to come to his assistance, until at last his request was granted, and a British expedition appeared amongst the hills. A battle was fought at Awok, and the rocky fortress was stormed and captured, while the neighbouring tribes gave in their submission. The Ture people went mad with joy, for the day of their deliverance had come at last. Gladly they built a *bariki* for their powerful friends and begged them to remain for weeks to taste their lavish hospitality. Before the expedition retired to the north, the surrounding tribes were warned to leave the Ture people unmolested and unassailed, under penalty of a similar punishment to that which had been meted out to Awok. And now, under British protection, the Ture tribesmen cultivate their farms in peace, while their former enemies have begun to understand that the good old times when might was right have all but departed from their land.

It was therefore with a pleasant feeling of anticipation that we left our camp at Panda and took the road to Ture. The track led down a short descent into a wide grassy valley, well cleared and cultivated by the people of Panda, and then up a long and slow ascent to the base of Pamu hill, surrounded by pleasant parklike country, with farmland and fallow underneath large and shady trees, and a clear pool of water in a patch of thick bush by the roadside. We crossed the intervening plain, and as we rose to the summit of a low ridge of sandstone and rounded a hillock on the left we came full into view of the Awok hills

Nafada to Tangale

and of the native town perched on the summit of the cliffs. Some of the people were farming on the plains below, but they decamped on the instant and scrambled up the face of the rocks like monkeys. A stream of excellent water ran at the base of the cliffs, and here we stopped for breakfast, while the people sat in rows on the edge of the precipice above, keenly watching our every movement. By and by two of their principal men, the *ɟatari* and the *galadima*, ventured down the steep path, approached me with much hesitation, knelt down in front of me, and bowed to the ground and put dust on their heads in token of submission. They apologised humbly for the absence of their king, who was sick and unable to come down to greet me, and when I was ready to set out again they led the way to the outskirts of their farms at the end of the Awok ridge.

The hills of Ture were now in sight, four miles to the west, and towards them the road led across a thinly wooded plain, with occasional hummocks of sandstone and granite. Many of the people were busy in the fields at the base of the hills, the men naked or wearing an apron of hide, and the women attired only in bunches of leaves. As I approached, unlike the people of Awok, they showed no sign of fear; on the contrary, they stood their ground and smiled and saluted me in a pleased and friendly manner. Some of them at once ran off to call the *sariki* and the *galadima*, whose fields were at a little distance from the road, and by the time we had toiled half-way up the

On Horseback through Nigeria

steep ascent to the upper plains the two chiefs had joined us, and after making their humble obeisance to the white man, they led the way to the *bariki*, which is pleasantly situated at the western base of the Ture hills. Meanwhile they had sent two lads ahead to fetch their gowns, and when I arrived at the *bariki* they received me in all the glory of two short and well-worn Hausa rigas, which represented a distinct advance upon the primitive costume in which they had at first appeared. The *sariki* was short and wiry, with well-marked features and a stubby beard, while the *galadima* was tall and big-boned, with ill-defined features and a broad and pleasant smile. His smile, indeed, did duty for words, for he knew not a syllable of Hausa; and every remark addressed to him was answered only by the unfailing smile until it had been interpreted to him by the *sariki*. As soon as all the baggage had arrived the two chiefs begged leave to return to the town to arrange about provisions for myself and the carriers.

The rest-camp at Ture is delightfully situated amidst large and shady trees on the open sandy plain, well cleared for cultivation, which stretches westward towards Chongwom and Tangalto from the base of the flat-topped hills of Ture. From the door of the rest-house, moreover, an excellent and extensive view can be obtained over the western plains. In the distance rise the rounded backs of the Chongwom and Kaltungo hills, and behind them on the skyline the conical rocks of Tangalto and Tall, while the whole landscape is

Nafada to Tangale

dominated by the Peak to the south-west, whose pointed summit rises dim and misty from a flattened rounded base. When the *sariki* came down from the rocks in the evening with the food which his people had been preparing, I informed him that it was my intention on the morrow to visit the Peak and climb at least the lower slopes of the famous landmark, and that I should expect him and the *galadima* to accompany me as guides. I was well aware, indeed, of the perils of attempting the upper and more precipitous portion of the Peak, for only a few yards off to the right was a circle of stones round a solitary grave at the foot of a shady tree, and a marble slab inscribed to the memory of Captain W—, a gallant officer and a fearless mountaineer, who had lost his life on the Peak two years before while attempting to reach the summit.

Next morning, therefore, I set out early in the company of the *sariki* and the *galadima* over the thinly wooded plains to the outer farms of Chongwom at the base of the Peak. The plain was floored by granitic rocks, but the lower part of the Peak was formed of a platform of sandstone, while it appeared from fragments scattered round the base that the columnar summit was again a pillar of trachyte, and the stump of an ancient volcano, like the Rocks of Wase and Bantaji. From the farms below we climbed a steep path which led upward over thick beds of horizontal sandstone to the rocky platform from which rose the upper peak itself. We had now reached a height

On Horseback through Nigeria

of eight hundred feet above the plain, and the path to the summit, if path there was, obviously led up a wooded buttress which reached about half-way up the column. From the platform below we could see that this wooded ridge was inhabited by a troop of giant baboons, who barked and roared as they sat on their haunches watching our movements or paced restlessly backwards and forwards beneath the trees. According to my guides, the baboons were very savage creatures, and had frequently attacked the people of Chongwom as they farmed the lower slopes of the Peak; and this knowledge, together with the fact that the surface rock of the column itself was very crumbly and much decomposed, led me to decide that discretion was the better part of valour and to leave the first ascent of the upper peak to some more experienced mountaineer. I explored instead the southern shoulder of the platform on which we stood, and from its edge obtained a distant view of the Pero hills, a continuous line of jagged peaks which marked the margin of the mountain mass beyond.

I returned to Ture in the afternoon, pleased with my little excursion to the Peak, and as I dismissed the *sariki* and the *galadima* I noticed that the former had begun to limp somewhat painfully along. Thinking that he had hurt his foot on a stone earlier in the day, I called him back with the intention of dressing it for him, but he informed me that his lameness was really due to guinea-worm, and that nothing much could be done

Nafada to Tangale

until the worm matured, when it was customary to lance the spot and cauterise the wound. The growth of this disgusting parasite, to whose attacks the natives are particularly liable during the dry season, is directly traceable to their habit of drinking the dirtiest water without making the least attempt to filter or purify it. The germs of many loathsome diseases are in this way transferred to the bodies of the natives, where they find a suitable environment for rapid development. Europeans, however, are quite immune from those diseases so long as they see to it that their drinking water is properly boiled and filtered before use. Even the filthiest water can in this way be rendered perfectly sweet and wholesome, and the necessary trouble and care involved are amply repaid by the accompanying freedom from disease.

I had informed the *sariki* in the course of the morning that it was my intention on the following day to visit the two groups of hills of Chongwom and Tangalto which we could see in the distance to the west, and if necessary to camp for one night at Tangalto. In the evening, however, when he brought down the provisions, the *sariki* was leaning heavily on his staff, and it was with much regret that I learned that he would be unable to accompany me to Chongwom. As he was the only person in the whole neighbourhood who understood Hausa, I had been relying upon him to act as interpreter to the people of Chongwom, who, with their neighbours of Kaltunga, had the reputation of being somewhat truculent people to deal

On Horseback through Nigeria

with. As I did not care, therefore, to enter their town without being able to communicate with them, I had almost given up the idea of proceeding any farther west, when the *sariki* said that the *galadima* was quite ready to act as guide, and that, although he would be unable to speak to me, he would faithfully carry out all my instructions, provided that they were first thoroughly explained to him by the *sariki*. The people of Chongwom were at this time friendly with the people of Ture, and the *galadima* had evidently no hesitation in going amongst them alone. I pleased him greatly by accepting his offer of service, and the *sariki* then carefully explained his instructions to him again and again, until he declared that he knew exactly what I wished him to say to the *sariki* of Chongwom.

At dawn next morning the *sarikin* Ture again limped painfully down from the rocks and once more put the *galadima* through his lesson before we started. He informed me also that the *galadima* of Tangalto was able to speak a little Fulani, and that I would therefore have no difficulty in explaining things to him through my own interpreter. At length we moved off over the parklike plains towards the hills of Chongwom, the *galadima* leading the way, evidently greatly pleased at the trust reposed in him and turning round every now and then to grin at me in his pleasant good-natured manner. As we approached the base of the Chongwom hills the natives who were at work in the fields ran off at once to the shelter of the town. We crossed the open farmland, rounded a pro-



A MOUNTAIN STREAM.

Nafada to Tangale

jecting spur, and then entered a narrow picturesque valley which led upwards amongst the hills. Presently, as we followed the running stream, we came upon the town of Chongwom, consisting of numerous groups of huts scattered here and there amongst the rocks. I stopped for breakfast in the middle of the settlement, and the *galadima* at once went off to call the *sariki*. In a little while he returned with a morose and sulky-looking personage, whom with considerable difficulty he persuaded to make his obeisance in proper style. I made signs to the *galadima* to explain to the *sariki* the purpose of my coming, and a lengthy conversation thereupon ensued, which appeared to be more or less satisfactory to his suspicious mind. Breakfast over, I indicated to the *galadima* that I was anxious to push on to Tangalto, and, acquiescing with a smile, he again spoke to the *sariki*, who immediately turned and moved on ahead.

The path now led uphill underneath some large and leafy trees until we reached a narrow pass between the summits of the hills, where, if the people of Chongwom had felt disposed, a few of them could easily have wreaked a summary vengeance upon our party. Unlike the eastern slope, the descent to the west was steep and rocky, and from the brow of the hill we had a clear and unobstructed view of the hills around Tangalto and of the undulating plains between. When we reached the foot of the descent, however, the hills of Tangalto were no longer visible, being hidden

On Horseback through Nigeria

by a low ridge of rising ground which projected from the middle of the plain. The Chongwom farms extended up to the eastern brow of the rising ground, but not beyond; and as soon as we reached the limit of the farms, the *galadima* and the *sariki* stopped short and intimated by signs that they could go no farther. It appeared that the Chongwom people and the Tangalto people, although separated by a distance of only two or three miles, were deadly enemies, and the ridge of rising ground which we had now reached was the boundary-line between their respective territories; and whenever the members of one tribe crossed the ridge, even so far as to become visible to the neighbouring tribesmen, they were in danger of being chased and killed or captured by their foes. I therefore dismissed my two guides with a special word and sign of praise for my dusky friend the *galadima*, whose ugly honest face now glowed with satisfaction at the accomplishment of his task, and then, accompanied only by my interpreter from Lokoja, I moved up to the crest of the rising ground at the head of the little party of carriers. At once we came into full view of Tangalto Hill, which was now less than two miles ahead, and as soon as we were observed we could see that considerable commotion arose in the town, which is built in terraces on the slopes of the hill. As we advanced, however, the excitement seemed to die down; and as we entered the farms at the base of the hill we saw a tall figure in a short kilted riga hastening

Nafada to Tangale

out to meet us. This proved to be the *galadima*, who, after making obeisance, welcomed me in words of broken Fulani.

The Tangale tribe is located within six or seven towns, scattered here and there on the slopes of the detached group of hills which we were now approaching. Of these towns Tangalto is the largest and the most important; and on account of the prolonged illness of the *sariki*, the *galadima* of Tangalto now acts largely as the chief of the tribe. The tribe as a whole has the reputation of being very truculent, but at the same time wily enough to keep within the letter of the law and avoid any overt act of insubordination. The people are of a very low type and freely admit that human flesh is their greatest delicacy, while dog makes a very good second. Their dress, when they wear any, is a goatskin apron or a bunch of leaves, and their arms are clubs, casting-spears, bows, and arrows. The *galadima*, who had once been a Fulani slave and had then acquired a few superior notions about dress and deportment, is now somewhat ashamed of the primitive habits of his people, and does his best to impress visitors with the superior qualities of his fellow-tribesmen. It was amusing, therefore, when in the course of conversation I happened to ask the *galadima* whether his people smelted iron for themselves, to have him reply, with a touch of indignation, that his people were Gombe people and not pagans, and that they bought their iron from the uncivilised Habe tribes of the northern plains.

On Horseback through Nigeria

The town of Tangalto, large and closely built on the slopes of the hill, looked quite picturesque as we approached, with a black stump of basalt rising above it like a column at the southern end of a short rounded ridge of lighter coloured granite. I camped at the base of the hill beside a stream of running water, and the people of the town, though somewhat shy at first, soon gathered courage and became quite friendly with the carriers, while they sat watching me in a ring at a respectful distance round my tent, apparently much amused at the antics of the white man. Presently supplies of corn and meal began to arrive from Tangalto and the other Tangale towns, and although the quantity which was brought was much greater than my small party required, I could not refuse it, as the people would have thought it very unfriendly and most insulting of the white man not to accept their gifts of food. According to the *galadima*, his fellow-tribesmen were always very pleased to have a white man visiting their country, for then the Chongwom people did not dare to molest them when they were at work on their farms. I had heard the same remark, indeed, from every tribe, and it is a curious fact that, while these peoples of the hills are all mutually hostile and suspicious of each other, they are all ready and willing to welcome the white man as a superior being whose presence dissipates all fear of a hostile demonstration on the part of their neighbours.

I spent the afternoon in exploring the hills behind Tangalto and Tall, from the summit of

Nafada to Tangale

which I obtained an extensive view over the plains to the north and west. I had now reached the most westerly group of hills, and beyond there was nothing but an uninhabited plain. Far away on the western horizon rose the dim and misty summits of the Gateri hills, while to the south lay the continuous range of jagged rocks which I had seen from the shoulder of the Peak. Below me to the east there lay spread out the broken plains which I had crossed, with the projecting rocks of Chongwom, Ture, and Awok, backed by the cliffs of Tula and Waja. The streams and rivers could be traced as lines of green winding over the parklike, cultivated plains. It was a picturesque and peaceful scene, and yet the inhabitants of this little paradise live in constant terror of each other, unable to enjoy the beauties of the plain and safe only when they remain upon the summits of their rocks.

Next morning I bade goodbye to the *galadima* and the terraced hills of Tangale, and struck across the open plain to the northern end of the Chongwom hills. I breakfasted near the town of Kaltunga, whose *sariki* and *galadima* came out to greet me. I received them coldly, however, for I had been informed that their town had incurred the displeasure of the Resident. A few weeks before my visit, some of their people had killed and eaten a Hausa trader and his wife who had wandered into the town in the hope of doing some business, and, although repeatedly requested to do so, the chiefs of Kaltunga had up to the present refused to give

On Horseback through Nigeria

up the murderers to justice. The town was therefore rightly under a cloud until the Resident had time to attend to the matter of its punishment, and I had accordingly carefully avoided entering it or accepting any gifts of food from its inhabitants.

We arrived at Ture early in the afternoon and spent the remainder of the day underneath the shady trees of the rest-camp. We were greeted cordially by our friends the *sariki* and the *galadima*, the former still suffering much pain in his swollen foot and the latter grinning and smiling as pleasantly as ever. In the evening, as I sat at the door of the rest-house, I watched for the last time the silver moon sinking slowly in the west behind the dark Peak of Tangale, and I thought of the wonderful prestige which the white man has acquired in these pagan lands and of the soothing influence of our British rule upon the turbulent spirits of these savage tribes. Before the morning mists had cleared from the base of the Peak we were well on our way to Panda, and while I rested there I sent the carriers leisurely on to Deba Habe, and rode over myself after the noonday sun had lost its power.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF BORNU

*"Here's a world of pomp and state
Buried in dust, once dead by fate."*

The Bima hills—A dreary prospect—An obliging *sariki*—Hostile pagans—The rocks of Chibuk—An alarm of fire—The recent history of Bornu—On the way to Chad—Characteristic scenery—Luxurious travelling—The Residency at Mongonu—Salt-making in the marshes—The silent city of Kukawa—The shores of Chad—A disappointment—Canoeing on the lake—Mosquitoes and horseflies—Last view of Chad—The saltbush or siwak-tree—A magnificent sunset—Kukawa by moonlight—On the way to Gujba—An impossible request—Approaching Kerri Kerri.

THE twenty carriers whom I had sent for to Nafada, happily arrived at Deba Habe on the day of our return, and next morning we left early for Gwani, accompanied for a short distance by the king and a number of the chiefs of Deba Habe. We rested at Difa, a small well-walled pagan village in the midst of a clearing in the bush, and then moved northward in full view of the western slope of the Bima hills. Presently the path led through a patch of shady forest to the right bank of the

On Horseback through Nigeria

Gongola and then across the sandy river-bed to the walls of Gwani. The town is built at the base of the northern slope of the Bima hills, to the summit of which fled many of the fanatical defenders of Burmi after the capture of their stronghold. In order to hunt them down, Gwani for a time was made the military headquarters on the Gongola, with a fort, barracks, and parade-ground, now deserted in favour of Nafada, higher up the river. I camped under a shady tree close to the grass-grown parade-ground and the ruins of the fort, and next morning moved north-eastward along the base of the hills to Wadi. The Bima hills, with the three Tera towns of Gwani, Wadi, and Gunna, form a detached portion of Bauchi province, known as the Bima enclave, and administered from the Gombe district headquarters, while all the rest of the country to the east of the Gongola and as far south as Gasi is included within the province of Bornu.

Beyond Wadi lay the broken plains of Barbur, backed in the distance by the rocky escarpment of the Bura plateau. The Barbur towns and villages are set for the most part close to the base of the escarpment. All are well-walled, densely populated, and apparently prosperous, and my reception everywhere left nothing to be desired. The people, like the Terawa to the west of the Gongola, are quite a superior class of pagan, and in former days offered a strenuous resistance to the encroachment of the Fulani and Kanuri of the north. The capital, Gulani, is built in a basin-shaped hollow in



CROSSING THE GONGOLA.

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

the midst of a circle of hills, which rise from a gently undulating plain deeply covered with black swamp-earth. The town is surrounded by a well-built battlemented wall and a double ditch, with log bridges at the gates, all in an excellent state of repair. The rest-camp is set on rising ground to the south of the town, and from the summit of the western hills an extensive view can be obtained over the level plains which stretch westward to the Gongola. The prospect, however, at this season was most depressing. The thin and scrubby bush had been burnt and blackened by the forest fires, and between the sombre stems the black earth showed, without a single touch of green. Westward and northward as far as one could see this melancholy plain extended, with only a few low and blackened hillocks to relieve the monotony of the scene, while eastward a similar black and gloomy plain led onward to the base of the dark escarpment which marked the limit of the plateau beyond.

From Gulani I decided to move northward to Bilaraba, halting for a night if necessary at Dusua, which lay almost midway between the two larger towns. The path led out of the circle of hills and then over the irregular blackened plain, with the dark clay which formed its floor cracked and broken and hard to tread upon. Many of the carriers were unprovided with their native sandals, and by the time we reached Dusua were limping slowly and painfully behind the others. The old *sariki* of Dusua, a well walled town on the summit

On Horseback through Nigeria

of a sandstone ridge, came out to meet me, and when he saw the condition of the carriers, urged me to accept his hospitality for the night. I pleased him by agreeing to do so, and immediately he set some of his people to build me a *runfa* and others to carry water and wood and find provisions for myself and the carriers. Next morning the obliging old man brought out four men to help the footsore carriers with their loads, and with their assistance we moved off over the irregular hummocky plain, now over a stony rise, now over a swampy shallow, now through a rocky stream cutting in the surface of the plain. In time we reached Bilaraba, another well-walled town, whence we continued our march eastward to Dukshi, along the base of the precipice which formed the margin of the plateau. On either side of the path there rose lofty conical and flat-topped hills of basalt; and in the afternoon, while the carriers were resting in the town, I climbed the escarpment by a rocky path and then scrambled up the highest hill which rose above the surface of the plateau. Unfortunately, the harmattan, which had been threatening as a thin blue haze for the last few days, thickened rapidly as I climbed, with the result that my view from the summit was much restricted, and I could with difficulty distinguish the undulating wooded plains which stretched northward from the base of the precipice, and the rocky and apparently uninhabited basalt waste which formed the surface of the plateau to the south.

Our road now lay eastward over the plateau to

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

Buratai and thence north-eastward to Hong, at first over alternations of swampland and stony ground, and then over an extensive plain, covered with hard grey loam, which becomes an impassable swamp in the rains. A thin harmattan made the morning dull and misty, and as we travelled over the swampy plain, with the black soil cracked and gaping at our feet and scorched and leafless wind-blown trees scattered here and there amongst the burnt and blackened grass, I was impressed by the bleak and desolate character of the landscape, which in places reminded me of a wind-swept moor at home, sparsely covered with scattered trees. Here and there where the ground was less swampy was a patch of thick and prickly bush, and at times a clump of leafless kuka-trees, whose giant stems and gnarled and knotted arms threw bars of pleasant shade across the path.

We had now reached the limit of the Barbur country, whence it had been my intention to strike south-eastward to Chibuk through the country of the pagan Marghi. As I rested in the evening, however, my interpreter and headmen came up to inform me that the *sariki* of a neighbouring village, who had heard of my intention, had sent a messenger to say that the people of Purpurma, a town which I should have to pass on my way, had been drinking pito and swearing great oaths to kill any white man or white man's messenger who might come into their vicinity. Although this was probably only village gossip, the headmen said that the carriers, who felt much afraid on account

On Horseback through Nigeria

of our party being quite unarmed, had made up their minds to refuse to accompany me if I persisted in my original intention. Accordingly, as I could not myself say how much truth there was in the rumour, I decided to make a short detour to the north round the country of these reputedly unfriendly people, and in the morning took the road to Ndufa, a small Marghi village in the midst of a mass of flat-topped sandstone hills. The *sariki*, being somewhat ill-disposed to the white man, ran off to the bush upon my unexpected arrival, and his brother, who acted the part of host, was able to provide only a very scanty supply of provisions. I had little difficulty, therefore, in persuading the carriers to continue the march until we had left the hills behind and entered the open parklike country of the Marghi of the plains. This section of the tribe had long professed Mohammedanism, and in the past had been the allies of the Kanuri of Bornu. Their numerous villages were large and straggling, each composed of a collection of scattered compounds, without any containing wall and surrounded by extensive stretches of farmland. The people were everywhere loyal and friendly, and when we camped in their midst abundant provisions arrived in the evening from all the neighbouring villages.

As we turned southward the bush became thicker and the road rougher and more stony, until in the neighbourhood of Korongulum we found ourselves upon a broken plain, decorated with projecting knobs and hummocks of granite. Korongulum was

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

the last of the thoroughly friendly Marghi villages, and its chief accompanied me for a considerable distance on my way towards Chibuk. We passed through many villages, but invariably we found them semi-deserted and occupied only by the old men and women, the chiefs and the able-bodied men having decamped to the bush at my approach. Presently the rocks of Chibuk came in sight, a group of granite kopjes, apparently composed from base to summit of huge rounded boulders, amongst which, in places, a few scrubby trees found a precarious footing. These rocks of Chibuk had long been an impregnable stronghold, from which, as a base, the pagan Marghi raided and molested the peaceful dwellers of the plains. Complaints became so numerous and so urgent that at last, a year before my visit, an expedition was fitted out against them from Maidugari. The hostile natives refused all friendly overtures and retired to caves and holes amongst the rocks, known only to themselves, where they had stored considerable quantities of corn, and drew their supplies of water from springs amongst the hills. The defence was finally broken, after several weeks of arduous fighting, by the failure of the water supplies in the caves and the strict investment of the rocks, which cut off all external sources of supply. The result was at the time complete submission of all the pagan Marghi in the neighbourhood; but it would seem from the unsettled state of many of the villages at the time of my visit that some of the more turbulent spirits had escaped

On Horseback through Nigeria

from the rocks and found refuge in the villages around, whose foolish inhabitants they were again stirring up to hostility against their British masters.

Since the reduction of this pagan stronghold the main road from Yola to Maidugari, which used to run along the boundary of the Protectorate, has been diverted to pass through Chibuk. A rest-camp has been established at the base of the hills and a new and friendly *bulama* put in charge of the native town. It is the rule when a white man passes, for the *bulama* to send round the neighbouring villages for contributions of corn and meal for the use of the carriers. The *bulama*, however, is a weak old man who is unable to exercise the authority with which he has been invested; and when I arrived at Chibuk his messengers to the neighbouring villages one and all met with a blank refusal to help him with supplies of food. The old man did his best, however, and provided a scanty meal for the carriers, for the most part out of his own private stores, while I intimated to the surrounding villages that their unfriendly action would be reported to the Resident at the first opportunity.

In the afternoon I made a circuit of the hills and scrambled for some distance up the side of one of the western kopjes. I was rewarded with an extensive view over the northern plains of Yola, which, though only thinly wooded, appeared as an undulating surface of dark green foliage stretching westward and southward as far as one could see, with barely a granite kopje to diversify the



THE ROCKS OF CHIBUK.

To face p. 176.

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

scene, but with the holy rock of Kobshi standing guard in the distance over the wooded plains of Marghi. Towards evening, as I was resting in my hut, an alarm of fire was raised. It appeared that some carrier had carelessly set alight the long dry grass, which was now to be found only in the vicinity of the rest-camp, while elsewhere it had been burnt black and bare by the natives. A gentle breeze was fanning the flames, which were moving rapidly towards my hut and had already enveloped some of the carriers' shelters in the distance. At once my men came running up, and while some of them removed my baggage quickly from the hut and placed it in the middle of the open space in front, others beat down and set alight the long grass which grew close up behind. The greatest danger was from flying sparks from the crackling flames beyond, but as soon as one alighted on the hut and commenced to smoulder there, it was assailed by the staves of the carriers and quickly extinguished. These prompt measures saved the situation, for the flames, which rolled up crackling and roaring, suddenly died down within a few yards of the walls of the hut, and left nothing but the blackened stubble-field to smoke and smoulder all the night.

Next morning we turned our backs on the rocks of Chibuk and their inhospitable inhabitants and set out at an early hour for the northern plains. For several miles we passed through desolate and uninhabited country, but presently we re-entered the land of the friendly Marghi who inhabit the

On Horseback through Nigeria

southern margin of the great plain of Bornu, which stretches northward to Lake Chad without a single rock or heap of boulders to diversify the landscape. We camped at Gumsuri, a large and prosperous town, surrounded by extensive farmland and picturesquely shaded by large and leafy trees, whence the main road runs almost directly northward to Wupti, the first Kanuri town, through a densely populated district studded with numerous Marghi villages. At one of these it happened to be the market day, and we passed or met many groups of natives hurrying onward to the village, some on foot and some on horseback, some carrying the produce of their farms, others driving before them oxen and donkeys laden with the merchandise of the north. It is the custom in the more thickly populated parts of the Protectorate, pagan and Mohammedan alike, for a number of towns within easy distance of each other to arrange to have a weekly market at seven of the more important places. Travelling traders are thus enabled to attend a populous business centre every day, while each market in succession is attended by the people of all the other towns who have produce or merchandise to sell.

From Wupti we moved northward to Dallwa, and thence to Maifoni through alternations of grassy parklike country and thin and open bush, with the fertile soil extensively cleared and cultivated in the neighbourhood of the villages, which lay for the most part on either side of the road and hidden from curious eyes by a strip of forest.

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

Maifoni is the principal military station in Bornu and the headquarters of the Senior Resident of the province. It is situated on a sandy rise overlooking the narrow valley of the Maidugari River, which in the season flows northward to lose itself in a swamp to the north of Gongolan, but at the time of my visit was represented only by a string of pools in the sandy river-bed.

I had now reached a region made famous by the classic travels of Barth, and it was with the greatest interest that I looked forward to visiting scenes and places which that intrepid explorer had described so vividly as he found them sixty years ago. I had now entered what in his day was the outlying province of the ancient kingdom of Bornu, the province of the Gamerghu, one of the most fertile regions of the sultanate, which the warlike Kanuri had snatched from its pagan owners. The fertile soil still remains, but the great and invincible kingdom of Bornu has disappeared. Under the able leadership of the Sheik el Kanemi, the state had successfully repulsed the onslaught of the victorious Fulani in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and emerged from the fray the most prosperous and most enlightened of the kingdoms of Central Africa. But its rise to glory was followed by a rapid decline ; and already in the days of Barth, although he knew it not, the ancient kingdom was tottering to its fall. Its rulers had become effeminate and its people had lost their warlike spirit, and in 1895 its ancient capital, Kukawa, fell an easy victim to the notorious Rabeh

On Horseback through Nigeria

and his rebel hordes. Rabeah established his capital at Dikwa, on the Shari, and assumed the title of Sultan of Bornu; but he in turn and his son and successor, Fadl Ullah, were defeated and slain by the French in 1901, and Bornu was left in a state of anarchy and disorder until in 1902 the British assumed effective occupation of the whole region to the south of the Yo and to the west of the Yedseram, to which in the scramble for Africa they had established their claim. And now under the British flag a nominal Sultan holds his court at Maidugari under the eye of the Resident, his people are again happy and contented, and Bornu, though it has lost its prestige, is slowly recovering from the havoc and devastation which the coming of the barbarian conquerors had spread broadcast throughout the land.

The native town and the Government station of Maifoni are situated somewhere near, if not actually upon, the site of the populous town of Mabani, described by Barth, all trace of which seems now to have disappeared. The whole district is now, as then, extensively cultivated and thickly populated, many of the scattered villages being built of the hemispherical or beehive grass huts which are peculiar to eastern Bornu, and which, while little ventilated, are said to offer great resistance to the violent winds which in the season sweep the sandy plains. Up to the present the British officials at Maifoni have lived in a number of huts of similar structure, but these are now being replaced by bungalows, which will introduce

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

the appearance at least of European civilisation into the ancient kingdom of Bornu.

At Maifoni I made arrangements for a rapid march to Kukawa and Lake Chad, whose shores it had long been my ambition to visit. I took with me as few carriers and as little baggage as possible, in order that I might not be encumbered on the way with a numerous party of followers. A broad and unmistakable road, thoroughly cleared of scrub and roots, runs northward from Maifoni to Kukawa, hedged in, as a rule, where it passes through farmland, by a row of quick-growing shrubs on either side. Just beyond Maifoni the river makes a sharp V-shaped curve to the west, and in Barth's day the path to the north led across the two arms of the V, while now it skirts its base, following the left bank all the way. From the bend of the river the road leads through cleared and cultivated farmland, past the cleanly swept rectangular market-place of Maidugari on the right, with its rows of stalls and shelters, and through Maidugari itself, a populous place which has gained in importance since it became the residence of the present Sultan of Bornu. All round the town the farmland had been cleared of the season's crops, and the grass on the fallow land had been cut or burnt and its place taken by an abundant growth of fleshy sumpachias, with bluish-grey leaves and large bladder-like fruits.

The rest-camp at Gongolan, eight miles from Maifoni, is set on the roadside amongst some shady trees, but the village itself lies some distance

On Horseback through Nigeria

off in the bush to the right and nearer the channel of the Maidugari River. Northward the road led over stretches of desiccated swampland, cracked and broken with the sun, alternating with smooth and hard surfaces of clay and occasional tracts of loose sandy soil. The character of the floor was reflected at once in the nature of the vegetation. The swampland was bare and treeless and blackened with fire; the smooth clayey surfaces supported an open mimosa-bush, and the sandy stretches were more densely wooded with a variety of trees. The mimosa gave off a pleasant perfume in the cool morning air; the doves cooed and the birds twittered in the trees as the sun rose clear and bright at dawn; and faintly from the distance came familiar sounds as the villages, hidden in the bush on either side, stirred into life and action with the coming day.

We made a short halt at some shallow wells, dug in the sandy clay by the wayside, and, rested and refreshed, set out again for Masu. Almost at once we entered an extensive stretch of cracked and broken clay, over which both men and horses made but slow and painful progress. These bare and blackened surfaces, termed "*firki*" by the Kanuri, form the floor of almost imperceptible depressions in the surface of the plain, elongated in an east and west direction, and frequently more than a mile in width. The black or dark-grey clay, which gapes with polygonal cracks during the dry season, becomes plastic and tenacious in the rains, and the shallow depressions become then almost

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

impassable swamps which drain slowly eastward towards the marshes of Lake Chad. The clay itself, however, retains a large amount of water, and as the floods recede at the close of the rains the sandy loam becomes an excellent and fertile soil, and many of the *firkis* are extensively sown with native grain by the neighbouring villagers. After the harvest and the accompanying bush-fires, however, the *firki* lands, as described by Barth, present in themselves a most bleak and dismal appearance, although their alternation with stretches of bush on the road from Maidugari to Kukawa introduces on the whole a pleasant variation of scenery into what would otherwise be a monotonous, uninteresting, thinly wooded plain.

A pleasant breeze from the north-east tempered the brilliant rays of the morning sun as we moved northward over the gently undulating plain, over shallow *firkis* and low rising ground, hard and smooth like a beaten floor or covered with scattered heaps of sand, loose and moving with the wind or fixed by grassy growths. Presently we reached the wells of Masu, shallow pits in sandy clay, in the bottom of which the white and milky water slowly gathered. Several herdsmen with their cattle were standing round the wells waiting to water their flocks, a slow and tedious process when the water is scarce. Near the wells were the village and the rest-camp of Masu, the latter consisting of one large and several smaller huts, enclosed within a prickly hedge. This hedging of the rest-camps is an admirable feature of the

On Horseback through Nigeria

local administration of the province of Bornu. The huts are thus retained solely for the use of white men passing up and down the roads, and the headmen of the several villages are held responsible for the cleanliness and good condition of the camps. The establishment of these rest-camps at distances of a day's march along the main roads adds much to the comfort of travelling within the Protectorate, and I could not help contrasting the ease and luxury with which I was performing my journey with the troubles and trials which assailed the intrepid Barth at almost every town he visited. Instead of humbly asking permission to camp in the villages and being assigned perhaps a filthy and evil-smelling hut, I found a clean and roomy house awaiting my arrival, with the compound newly swept and garnished in my honour, and the headman waiting at the gate with supplies of water and provisions. Instead of living on little else but native food, which requires a digestive system specially tutored to the task, I had my boxes packed with European delicacies with which to vary the otherwise interminable diet of goats and fowls and eggs ; and instead of sleeping at night on a couple of boards, wrapped in a blanket in native fashion, I had my comfortable canvas bedstead, with mattress, pillows, and quilt, and a mosquito net drawn around to ward off the unwelcome visitors of the night. Truly times have changed for the better, at any rate for the white man, and let us hope also for his dusky brother !

Beyond Masu we crossed again the usual alterna-

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

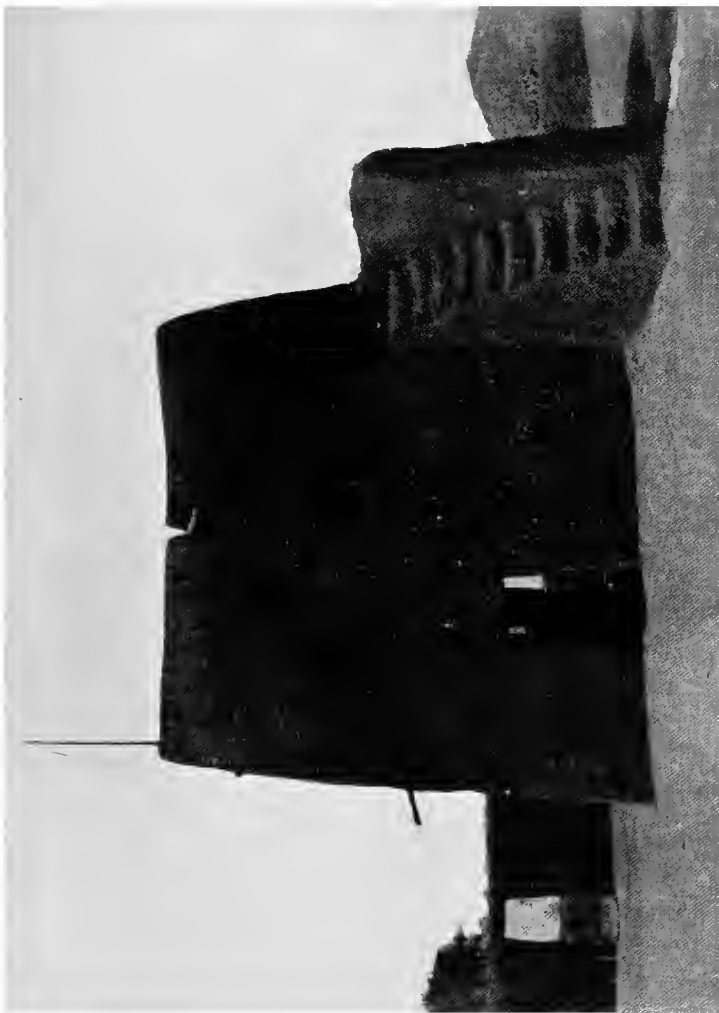
tion of barren *firkis* and sandy rising ground. At Dubula our feet sank deep in wreaths of scorching sand which the wind had blown across our path, and the water from the wells, which the carriers eagerly drank, proved very alkaline and disagreeable to the taste. As we approached Mongonu we crossed the desiccated margin of an extensive low-lying swampy tract which extended to the right towards Chad, and beyond it we could see the town itself, set on the summit of a rise overlooking the plains around. Many herds of cattle and droves of donkeys were watering at the wells, and the market-place outside the town was beginning to assume its characteristic animated appearance. A wide avenue ran up the middle of the town, deeply covered with loose yellow sand, and at the farther end were set the official quarters of the Assistant Resident, who is usually stationed here. At the time of my visit, however, the Resident was on leave and the office was in charge of a native clerk, whose principal duty it was to prevent the smuggling of untaxed salt across the border.

Mongonu, a large and populous town, was originally second in importance to Kukawa, the ancient capital of the state of Bornu, which lies about seventeen miles farther north. At the time of the sack of Kukawa, however, it was spared a similar fate, and it is now the largest and most important town within British territory on the southern shore of Chad. In the early days of the British occupation of Bornu, the Sultan was for a time put in residence at Mongonu and the present

On Horseback through Nigeria

Residency was originally built as a palace for his native majesty. It consists of a fenced courtyard and an inner walled enclosure, containing two oriental-looking and mud-walled flat-roofed buildings, the upper stories of which are approached by outside staircases. Much iron of an inferior quality was originally made at Mongonu from ironstone nodules which were dug out of the black clay around the town, but the industry has now for the most part decayed.

I had heard that in the neighbourhood of Lake Chad an inferior variety of salt was made in times of scarcity from the ash of the grass which grew in the marshes on the borders of the lake, and I now made inquiries at Mongonu as to whether this salt was being made at the time anywhere in the vicinity of the town. I was told that the salt was made only by the very poorest people of the slave class, and that if I were to go to the village of Musara, three or four miles to the east, the headman there would conduct me to the spot where the salt-makers were now working. I therefore secured a mounted guide and rode out to Musara in the afternoon, whence the headman led me still farther eastward to where a party of salt-makers were busy at their labours. He informed me also that for purposes of salt-making three varieties of grass were gathered on the marshes, known respectively as "*pagam*," "*kalasilum*," and "*kanido*." The two latter grow only in the vicinity of the lake, but the first is found all over Bornu, although it is only salt-bearing in the neighbourhood of



THE RESIDENCY AT MONGONU.

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

Chad. The grass is burnt in heaps and the ash put in large conical wicker baskets, which when full are set upright on a wooden frame. Water is then poured on top, a little at a time, and this filters through the mass and drips out below very slowly as a clear brine. One month is required for one man to collect sufficient ash to fill the basket and one week to remove the salt completely in solution. The resulting brine, which can be evaporated in one night in conical earthen pots, is sufficient to make two cones of salt of the value of half a crown each. It is obvious, therefore, that the industry can never be a very remunerative one, and there is little wonder that it is now left entirely in the hands of the domestic slaves and of the poorest members of the population.

We left Mongonu before dawn for the march to Kukawa. We missed our way in the darkness when we reached the outskirts of the town, and stumbled over cultivated fields, full of hyæna burrows, before rejoining the main road to the north. When morning broke we found ourselves travelling through pleasant parklike country, with grassy glades beneath large and shady trees, and occasional clumps of sweet-smelling mimosas. The surface of the road was smooth and hard, and crossed at times by thick wreaths of sand. We breakfasted at the wells of Kopchi, forty-five feet deep in the bottom of a swampy depression, and then pushed on to Kukawa over country which gradually lost all claim to beauty. As we neared the town we crossed a continual alternation of

On Horseback through Nigeria

black and desiccated swampland and stretches of yellow sand, the finer particles of which rose in the breeze like a cloud of dust, as it was stirred by the feet of the carriers. The whole country was bare and naked, having been devastated of forest in the palmy days of Kukawa, and the landscape was dreary and monotonous in the extreme, and a fit setting to the silent city whose site on rising ground ahead was marked by a strip of green on the horizon. The sun was now blazing hot, and slowly we drew near the whitened walls of the phantom city, guarded only by the spirits of the past. We entered a broad and grass-grown street which led northward to an open space amongst the ruins, where, in what was once a busy square, the rest-camp now is placed. On either hand lay ruined huts and ruined palaces, the mansions of the nobles and the hovels of the slaves, conquered by the same wild confusion and the victims of the same sad fate. Here and there the broken walls of a hut had been carelessly thatched to afford some shelter from the sun and rain, and a solitary inhabitant sat dejectedly at the un-screened door, like Marius amidst the ruins of Carthage, mourning over the departed glory of the capital.

Kukawa or Kuka was so named by its founder, who pitched his tent and afterwards reared his palace close to a stunted kuka-tree which is still pointed out to the curious traveller. In course of time a closely built and densely populated city grew up around the famous kuka, and as Kukawa

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

grew in affluence and in power, the Sultan and his nobles built themselves a second city to the east, enclosed within its own containing wall. The two cities were separated by a space of about half a mile, which itself in time became built over and thickly inhabited. A broad thoroughfare, the *dendal* or promenade, connected the two towns and ran eastward from the old palace in the western town to the gates of the new palace in the eastern town. It was this road which, at the time of Barth's visit, was "crowded during the whole day by numbers of people on horseback and on foot: free men and slaves, foreigners as well as natives, every one in his best attire, to pay his respects to the sheikh or his vizier, to deliver an errand, or to sue for justice or employment, or a present." But the conquering Rabe and his savage hordes humbled the proud city to the dust, broke down its fortifications, unroofed its palaces, scattered its peoples, and in one mighty conflagration effaced the splendour and magnificence of the ancient capital of Bornu. After the British occupation an attempt was made to rebuild Kukawa; the eastern palace was repaired and the sultan put in residence in the home of his ancestors, but the attempt was unsuccessful. The climate was found to be unsuitable for Europeans, the site of the recent disaster was held accursed by the natives, and as provincial headquarters Kukawa was found to be too far removed from the centres of life and industry in modern Bornu. The city was therefore

¹ Barth's "Central Africa."

On Horseback through Nigeria

again deserted, the court being removed for a time to Mongonu and latterly to Maidugari, on the fertile southern plains.

The rest-house had been unoccupied for several months ; and when I entered it I was assailed by swarms of the most virulent mosquitoes, which had taken shelter there from the fiercer heat of the noonday sun. I at once retired under my net until the heat abated, and then rode out to view the reliques of the town. I found that the rest-camp was situated within the space which formerly separated the western and the eastern towns : the *dendal*, the highroad of ambition in times gone by, was now grass-grown and crossed by narrow footpaths like the farmland beyond the walls : the mansions on either side were heaps of ruins, the haunts by night of jackals and hyænas : the eastern palace, which had been in part rebuilt for the present sultan, had again fallen into disuse and decay : in place of the " groups of native courtiers in all the finery of their dress and of their richly caparisoned horses," a few slaves sat lazily about the entrance to the palace, placed here by the sultan to guard the tombs of his ancestors : only the fine caoutchouc-tree " in front of the house of Ali Ladan, on the south side," still flourished as of yore, rejoicing as it were over the discomfiture of the puny beings who for a time had encompassed it with lofty walls and sheltered beneath its shade.

I retraced my steps along the *dendal* and entered the western town, where a similar scene of desolation met my view. The crowded dwellings and

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

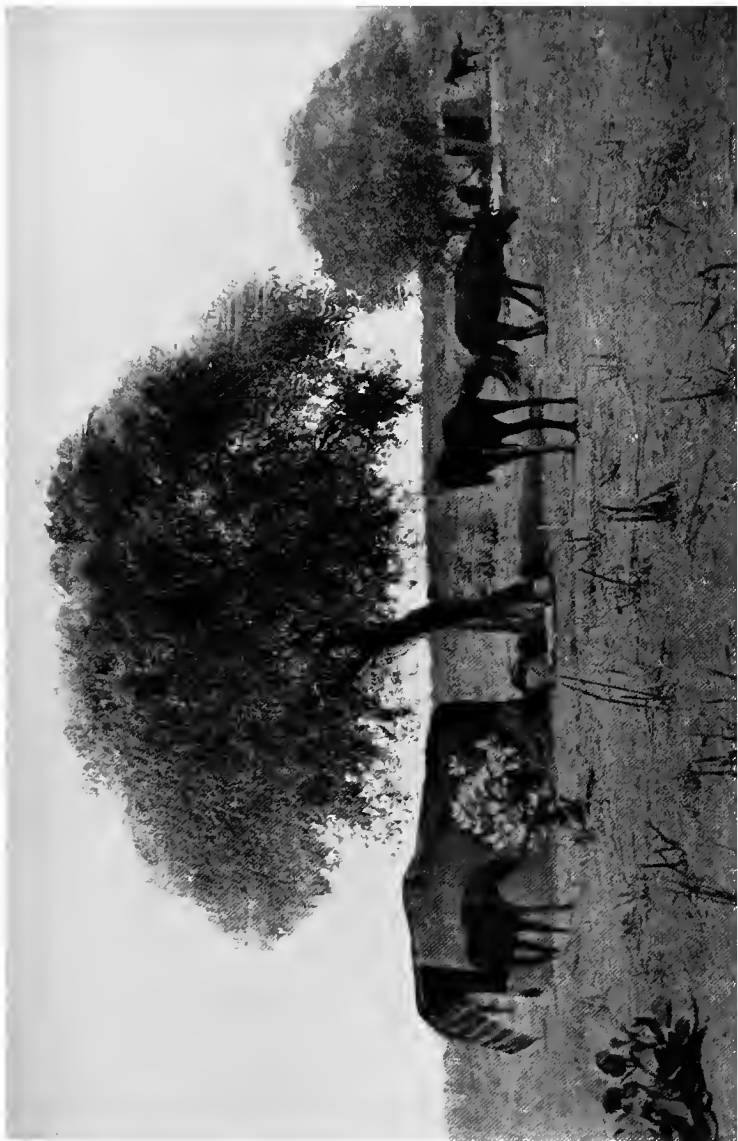
the narrow winding lanes of old were buried now in a mass of grass-grown ruins. Some dilapidated walls, thicker and more pretentious than their neighbours, marked the site of the western palace, and the stunted kuka, with its gnarled and knotted boughs, seemed to twist its features into an evil smile as it watched the ruined walls slowly sinking into dust. I passed through the breach in the city wall which once had been the western gate and visited the spot, now quiet and desolate, where the weekly fair was held. From twelve to fifteen thousand people used to gather here to buy and sell and barter with their fellows, and now their place is taken by the solitary traveller who stops to rest his weary limbs on the scene of departed glory or by the wandering herdsman who drives his cattle slowly onward to water at the wells. I turned and rode back to my camp between the ruined cities, oppressed by a dreary sense of desolation and despair, and by the thought that, but for "man's inhumanity to man," those deserted streets would still be teeming with the varied life of a busy city, and those ruined walls and grass-grown compounds would still resound with the merry voices of children, the cheerful singing of the women at the mill, or the noisy hum of conversation after the duties of the day were done.

I decided to move northward on the morrow to Bre, a small farming and cattle-rearing village five miles distant from Kukawa. The marches from Maidugari had been long and weary, and a short and easy day would therefore be much appreciated

On Horseback through Nigeria

by the carriers. We left the silent city in the cool morning air and travelled first over an extensive stretch of bare and broken swampland. As the soil became more sandy, we entered a tract of scattered mimosa-bush which presently gave place to a patch of cleared and cultivated farmland around a wayside hamlet. We found the village of Bre situated amongst low and rounded hummocks of loose yellow sand, covered with grass and scattered trees and extensively cleared for cultivation in the neighbourhood of the compounds. A *runfa* of mats was rapidly erected for my use near the village well, which had been dug fifty feet deep through the yellow sand to the clay below. All morning a thick harmattan had obscured the view, but by midday it had cleared to a thin blue haze. Away to the east stretched the flat and sandy plains which beckoned us onward to Lake Chad, and as I sat in the evening at the door of my *runfa*, I thought of all the weary marches we had made to reach this goal, and I could not help but wonder whether, after all, the sight of the famous lake would prove sufficient recompense for all we had endured.

We set out at dawn for the shores of Chad, each carrier with a little store of meal, for it was our intention to camp for a night on the margin of the lake. We entered the open sandy plain, covered with short grass and scattered trees in the immediate neighbourhood of the village, and beyond the farms, with long tufty grass and a thick undergrowth of saltbush and mimosa. Presently



CAMP AT BRE.

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

we reached a broad belt of ancient dunes, and as we crossed the gently undulating thinly wooded surface, the carriers' feet sank deep in the loose blown sand and made our progress slow and difficult. We struggled on, however, until the path became firmer under foot and the soil darker and more earthy. Clumps of saltbush became more numerous and heaps of refuse frequent by the roadside. We had now entered the country of the salt-workers, and my guide informed me that the village at which we were to rest was now close at hand. When we reached it, however, we found it quite deserted and the well dirty and almost dry; and a passing goatherd informed us that the villagers, having used up all the saltbush in the immediate neighbourhood, had recently moved on to another locality. This was disappointing, as the carriers had calculated on refilling their water-bottles at the well. There was nothing for it, however, but to push on ahead to Chad, in the hope of reaching it before the heat became oppressive. Again we entered loose sandy country with scrubby trees scattered singly or in clumps over the open plain, and as we moved eastward low fan-palms began to appear, but not in any great abundance. Elephant tracks crossed our path, marked by lines of broken palms and trees. Presently we entered another belt of plain covered with dark earthy sand, very loose and full of shells, where the palms and trees had disappeared and given place to giant sumpachias of three or four years' growth, whose blue grey foliage and bladder-like

On Horseback through Nigeria

fruits introduced a striking change into the character of the scenery. Soon we left the sumpachia belt and the dark shelly sand and entered an open level grassy plain without a single tree, bounded in places on the horizon by level banks of reeds and shrub which marked the beginning of the marshes of Chad. For half an hour we marched across the open plain, until we reached a detached clump of reeds and rushes with stagnant water at their roots; and a little farther on our road was barred and our view was limited by a continuous belt of similar high and swampy growths which separated the grassy plains from whatever lay beyond.

So this was Chad, the object of my long anticipation! And all there was to show for it was a little brown and stagnant water amongst the reeds and rushes. The open lake, if lake there was, was securely hidden from my view. I turned away with a sense of disappointment and thought of how Barth, in very similar circumstances, had "strained his eyes in vain to discover the glimmering of an open water in the distance, and at length retraced his steps, consoling himself with the thought that he had at least seen some slight indication of the presence of the watery element." I thought of how, in order to reach the open water, he had afterwards ridden through the swamp and reeds, often up to his knees in water, and I was about to mount my horse to make the same attempt, when at a little distance I perceived some Budumas emerging from the rushes. The lake-dwellers had

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

evidently come to the western shore to gather reeds to thatch their huts and repair their canoes, and luckily, amongst my troop there was a man from Bre who said he knew their language. I at once despatched him to call them forward and, contrary to their custom in the days of Barth, they approached without the least sign of fear or hesitation. The Budumas, indeed, of recent years have become so much accustomed to the presence of European explorers on the lake that, when I preferred my request that they should take me out upon the waters of Chad, they readily agreed and beckoned me towards the spot where their canoes were moored amongst the reeds. Some of my men ran on ahead to pull the canoes as near the shore as possible, and to beat down the reeds to make a path for me through the swamp. My interpreter then carried me on his back through the shallow water and deposited me safely on the surface of the canoe, which the Budumas at once pushed off into deeper water.

The canoes of the Budumas are now made in a different style from that which was followed in the days of Barth. According to him "they had a very low waist, but rather a high and pointed prow, and were made of the narrow boards of the fogo-tree, fastened together with ropes from the dum-palm, the holes being stopped with bast." Nowadays, however, the canoes are made of bundles of reeds, tightly bound together to form a thick mattress-like structure, whose upper surface is flat and only a little way above the water, while

On Horseback through Nigeria

the under surface is gently rounded and the ends sharply pointed, with the prow produced into a curved and ornamented horn. The canoe was very filthy and in the stern there was a heap of putrefying fish remains, evidently the accumulation of weeks.

To our sensitive nostrils, accustomed to the pure dry air of the open sandy plains, the atmosphere on the shores of Chad smelt foul and stagnant; but on the lake itself the odour of decaying vegetation was quite oppressive, and a greenish yellow scum covered portions of the water and surrounded the stems of the reeds and the water-lilies. The water was shallow and not more than three feet deep, and the bottom was covered with thick brown mud full of roots and leaves, while many clumps of reeds and rushes and maria-bush projected from the surface of the water and sadly obstructed a distant view. Now and then the Budumas pulled up the bulbous root of a reed or lily, which they devoured with relish, but I could not persuade myself to sample the delicacy. They informed me also that during the past month the water of the lake had fallen greatly, and that in the season, when the water is high, the grass and reeds are completely covered and sometimes even the maria-bush is broken down. From the western shore continuous water can then be seen stretching away to the east as far as one can see, whereas at present the really open water was in the middle of the lake, far away from the western shore. My people told me also that the water at the margin of the



ON LAKE CHAD.

To face p. 196.

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

lake amongst the reeds was faintly salt and the water where we went in the canoes still less so, while the Budumas informed me that all the water of the lake at this season was very slightly saline. I could not taste any salt in the water myself after it had been boiled and filtered ; but in the detection of small quantities of salt or alkali in water I am inclined to trust a black man's palate much more readily than my own.

After sailing about for an hour on the waters of Chad in the peculiar craft of the lake-dwellers, I had the canoe drawn in again amongst the reeds, and reached the shore in a similar manner to that by which I had made my entrance to the lake. The sun was now at its hottest, and in the absence of shady trees the carriers were sheltering themselves under cloths and mats. I had my boxes piled in tiers and an awning made with a canvas sheet, but I had no sooner seated myself in the shade than I was attacked by hordes of mosquitoes and other insects, which on the shores of Chad apparently do not wait for darkness to deliver their attack. I observed that the carriers were also struggling with the same desperate foes, while the horses were literally dripping with blood from the wounds and bites of gigantic cattle-flies with which they were assailed. I at once ordered the horse-boys to light smoky fires round the horses in order to protect them somewhat from the vicious insects, and then sent off my guide and interpreter to look for a more suitable camping-ground than the open plain on the margin of the lake was proving itself to be.

On Horseback through Nigeria

Presently they returned to say that they had discovered a small cattle settlement about three miles off amongst the trees on the outer margin of the fringe of dunes which bounded the western plains, and this place they recommended as a suitable spot on which to pass the night. The carriers hailed the suggestion with delight, on the principle that any place was better than the margin of the lake. The horses, as soon as they were loosed, pranced and reared, half maddened by the flies, and it was with difficulty that they could be kept from careering madly across the plains like the wild antelopes which we saw in the distance. We made a bee-line westward across the level plain to the wooded rising ground which was our goal, and as we went we crossed the same successive belts of vegetation which marked our outward journey. First came the grassy treeless plain, with a thin coating of vegetable mould on top of yellow sand; then the giant sumpachias growing profusely on a loose black shelly sandy soil; then, on harder ground, the mixed sumpachia-bush, leading on to typical thin and open bush on the sandy dunes themselves.

It was darkening as we reached the settlement amongst the trees, and the herdsmen were busy penning their cattle for the night, and stirring up their smouldering fires. There were fewer horse-flies, but as darkness fell the mosquitoes again returned to the attack, reinforced by hungry myriads, and after I had dined I lost no time in seeking refuge underneath my net. The day had

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

been an eventful one, and it was with a certain feeling of satisfaction that I reflected that I had at last realised a cherished dream, and on that day actually sailed upon the waters of Lake Chad.

There is little doubt that the belt of reeds and maria-bush, at which I found my progress eastward completely barred by swamp, represents the margin of the more permanent dry-season level of the lake. At this point, within a distance of less than fifty yards the level grassy plain to the west is replaced by open water at least three feet deep. Moreover, in the bottom of the lake there is a thick coating of black and slimy mud, while on the plain outside the reeds, where I camped for a few hours, only a very thin surface layer is blackened with vegetable mould, while underneath there is nothing but yellow sand, mixed in places with clean grey clay. It is clear, therefore, that the open grassy surface outside the reeds represents the flood plain of Chad when the lake is full, while it is only once in every five or seven years, after exceptional rainfall, that the water covers the second belt of sumpachias and reaches the margin of the bush beyond.

In the morning we set out again for Bre, over the sandy dunes, through open and parklike country, covered with low grass and scattered trees and clumps of saltbush and mimosa. For a time the path followed the summit of the outer line of dunes and ran parallel with the margin of the lake. Presently, however, it turned off westward, and I stopped for a moment to gaze for the last time upon

On Horseback through Nigeria

the plains of Chad, as the sun rose bright and brilliant over the bank of cloud which lined the eastern horizon. I thought of Barth's description of sunrise on the lake: "It was a beautiful morning, and I was delighted with the scene around. Clear and unbroken were the lines of the horizon, the swampy plain extending on our right towards the lake, and blending with it, so as to allow the mind that delights in wandering over distant regions a boundless expanse to rove in . . . while the sun rose over the patches of water which spread over the grassy plain." But at this season there were no pools of water to be seen upon the open plain, nor were the waters of the lake visible in the distance; there was nothing but the grassy treeless plain, bounded by a brown bank of maria-bush on the eastern horizon; and as that had been my first, so also it was my last, impression of the famous lake!

Our path now led over the undulating surface of the ancient dunes, crossed and recrossed by the tracks of elephants as they came and went between their browsing-ground and the swampy margin of the lake. Clumps of saltbush or siwak-tree (*Salvadora persica*) became more numerous, and presently we left the main road to visit a village of the salt-workers which was close at hand. These people have no fixed abode, but move their village from place to place, as the supply of saltbush within a convenient radius diminishes by constant collection. The salt prepared from the siwak-tree is much superior in quality to that pre-

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

pared by the slaves of Mongonu and Musara from the grass of the Chad marshes, and its manufacture is quite an honourable occupation. The young twigs and leaves of the siwak-tree are collected and burnt in the bush and the ash carried back to the village, where the filtering and boiling down are carried out in a very similar manner to that already described. The temporary village of the salt-workers is usually well stockaded for protection against the beasts of the forest, and a well is dug in the middle of the enclosure to provide a certain supply of water for the villagers.

The track soon left the belt of dunes and led across the open sandy plains to Bre. The sun was hot and the sand was scorching the feet of the carriers, so I stopped to rest at the village well. The wind was strong, but it failed to cool the air and served only to blow the sand vigorously about, while even the matting of my *runfa* was penetrated by fine gritty particles which filled the air and settled everywhere like a cloud of dust. In the afternoon we moved on to Kukawa, and I camped again in the rest-house between the silent cities. The wind had fallen and the air was clear, and, as if Nature wished to offer some recompense for the want of life around, the sunset was the finest I had seen for long. From the door of the rest-house I had a clear and unobstructed view of the western sky. The golden rays of the setting sun lit up with reddish light the fleecy wispy clouds which pointed towards the west. Deeper and redder still they glowed as the sun sank

On Horseback through Nigeria

like a burnished copper ball behind a red and gleaming bank of cloud which lay on the horizon. Then a clear crimson hue lit up the western sky, and slowly passed through orange tints into a bright yellow light on the horizon, which led upward through a pinkish glow into the pale blue sky above, streaked and flecked with wisps of dark grey cloud. Then, as the silver moon shone out clear and full in the east, the sunset slowly faded in tints of orange and green and grey, and the mosquitoes awoke with a lively hum to claim the night as theirs, and buzz lovingly around the ruined walls and deserted palaces as if they were still inhabited by their accustomed prey.

I roused the sleeping camp at 3 a.m., for now that the moon was full, it was clear enough to travel by night and thus avoid the excessive heat of the sun by day. In half an hour we were on the march, passing slowly through the silent town. The pale moon shone on the ruined walls, standing erect in the deserted compounds, on the dilapidated palaces with grass growing freely on their roofs, on the broken waterpots and other fragmentary relics of humanity around the disused doors, and on the white clay walls which enclosed the ruins of the once renowned Kukawa. It was a weird and uncanny sight, and yet somehow it seemed to blend with the mystic heart of Africa. We threaded our way slowly and silently between the whitened walls of the deserted cities and out upon the black and treeless plain which circled them all round. I turned to gaze again at what

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

was once the proud capital of Bornu, and my last impression of the once mighty Kukawa was of some great cemetery in the midst of a bleak and dismal plain, with whitened walls and broken tombstones and large and shady trees casting dismal shadows in the moonlight.

As the morning broke, clear and bright and cool, we reached the wells of Kopchi. The sun rose in the east like a gleaming golden sphere, its level rays skimming the plain and touching with colour the bare mimosas and the yellow grass and dispelling all the gloomy thoughts of night. The cloudbank round the sun became a mass of golden glory, and the thin wispy clouds in the clear blue sky reflected the morning glow. The birds chirped and hopped in the bushes and the doves cooed amongst the scattered trees, while from a distant village came the crowing of cocks and the barking of dogs as they greeted the morning sun. Bornu would be quite a tolerable place if it could always be morning and the morning could always be clear and bright. The cool dry air is bracing and the sunrise glorious, but every climate has its own disadvantages; and when the morning is thick and stifling with the harmattan, or when the sun becomes hot and gleaming white as the day advances, one begins to think that the land of the blacks is not to be so greatly envied after all!

We reached Mongonu in good time before the sun was hot, and camped again in the Residency compound. The three following marches from

On Horseback through Nigeria

Mongonu to Gongolan were accomplished in a similar manner. Each morning we left the rest-camp at 3.30 in the clear moonlight, and reached our destination by nine o'clock or half-past nine. On the fourth morning we covered the short march from Gongolan to Maifoni, past Maidugari and its tidy market-place, and spent the remainder of the day in making the necessary arrangements for the continuation of our journey into western Bornu.

Until about two years before my visit, the main road from Maifoni and Maidugari to Marguba and Gujba made a long detour to the north by way of Maigumeri, while only a perilous bridle-path, much infested by highwaymen and thieves, ran directly westward through the forest. Recently, however, a broad road has been cut along the former bush path and the forest cleared of robbers, with the result that the journey from Maidugari to Gujba has been shortened by two days' march. This road is now regularly used by traders; and native settlers, subsidised by Government, have begun to build villages here and there in clearings in the bush. Along this road, moreover, runs the telegraph line to Maifoni, and the linesmen are constantly passing backwards and forwards along the path. Messages, indeed, can be sent from Maifoni to London within four days; and it was frequently comforting to reflect, when on long and dusty marches we crossed or followed for some distance the telegraph clearing in the bush, that here at least was a tangible link with home, a living wire which stretched continuously from the

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

inner heart of Africa to the happy shores of England.

As we left Maifoni we passed through open cultivated country, studded with many villages, some of them built of the beehive huts of the Shuas. Beyond Jajel we entered the broad road which has been cut in the open and uninhabited forest. It was evident that much of the country became swampy in the rains, for the hoofmarks of cattle were printed deeply in the sandy loam. The trees were bare and leafless and the surface of the plain between blackened with fire. The road was hard and dry and dusty, but off the beaten path the horses sank deeply in the loose and treacherous soil where the ants and the hyænas had undermined the surface.

We camped at Limlim, a recent settlement in the forest, and set out again before dawn, by the light of the waning moon, through the barren and desolate bush. All the "*tubkas*," or shallow swampy hollows, along the road were now dry and hard and cracked like the *firkis* of the east. It was a cool and cloudy morning, and the carriers walked well on the smooth and sandy road, each with his right hand raised to steady the load upon his head, his bundle of clothes and his water-bottle swinging from his shoulder. The bush was thin and open, with little undergrowth, but with large and spreading kukas rising above the general level of the forest, and when near the path affording patches of pleasant shade when the sun appeared. We reached Marguba, however, before

On Horseback through Nigeria

the heat became excessive, and found the rest-camp situated picturesquely amongst a number of large and leafy trees and surrounded by a well-kept thorn *zariba*. Near the camp in a sandy hollow was a small crescent-shaped lake or pool, full of semi-stagnant water. Close to it were the village wells and onion-fields, and at a little distance the busy market, whose well stocked stalls rejoiced the hearts of the carriers.

It was at Marguba that Fadl Ullah, the son of the great Rabeh, was camped in 1900 when, being much harassed by the French, he opened negotiations with the British with the view of putting himself under their protection, and it was here that he entertained for a fortnight the British officers who were sent to discuss the terms of surrender. Unfortunately for him, however, the French were on his track, having pursued him even into British territory. He retired on Gujba, but the French again followed, besieged and captured the town, and the self-styled Sultan of Bornu perished in the fray.

At Gotumba, a small Kanuri village where we camped on the following day, we found the rest-house not only full of mosquitoes as usual, but full of white ants as well, which kept dropping from the roof upon me and upon my bed, and rose through the floor and began to gnaw their way into my provision-boxes whenever they were left more than an hour in one position. The village being at some little distance, the old king rode over to see me and offer his salutations. Presently, however, in the course of conversation the real

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

object of his visit appeared. He informed me that his skin was becoming dry and wrinkled and his bones and muscles stiff with age, and proffered his request that I should give him of the white man's elixir of youth, or, as he put it, something to rub over his body to make him young once more !

Gujba now lay twenty-two miles to the west, and this distance I decided to cover in two stages instead of one, especially as the marches to Kerri Kerri, beyond Gujba, were to be both lengthy and tedious. We set out, therefore, at dawn for Girboa, where the next rest-camp was situated. It was a cool and bracing morning and the sun rose through a misty haze of harmattan on the horizon. The road led over a gently undulating and featureless plain, covered with thin and open bush, out of which there rose occasional large and leafless kuka-trees. The soil was good and composed of the dark-coloured sandy loam which is so widely distributed over Bornu, and which here, as elsewhere, could be made most productive and capable of supporting a large and industrious population. Like the greater part of Nigeria, Bornu is very scantily inhabited, and long stretches of virgin soil separate the towns and villages. It is to be hoped, however, that the cessation of the inter-tribal wars which formerly at frequent intervals decimated the population, and the progress of the preventive measures which are now being undertaken with a view to avoiding the outbreaks of plague which formerly ravaged the country, may result in a rapid increase in the

On Horseback through Nigeria

numbers of the inhabitants, and that under the peaceful security of British rule more and more of the uncultivated bush may be annually reclaimed and cleared for farmland.

Before the sun was hot we reached Girboa, another small Kanuri village with a clean and tidy rest-camp; and early next morning we arrived at Gujba, the capital of western Bornu. About three miles from the town we crossed a strip of desiccated swamp, with a small and shallow pool of water on the right, surrounded by onion-beds and vegetable gardens. In the rainy season, when the lake is full, this stretch of swamp is most difficult to cross, and it was upon this obstacle that Fadl Ullah too sanguinely relied to give him time to rearrange his army when he retired precipitately from Marguba to Gujba in one night on the approach of the French. Gujba is a large and well walled town, set on sandy rising ground in the midst of an open undulating cultivated plain, with shallow swampy hollows between the sandy ridges. The fort, now disused, with the Residency and barracks, lies about a mile to the east of the town on a parallel sandy rise, and separated from the town by a swampy hollow, in which the wells are dug.

From Gujba the main road and the telegraph line run south-westward by way of Mutwe to Nafada and the Gongola. As it was my purpose, however, to visit the Kerri Kerri plateau to the west, we had here to leave the broad and well frequented highway along which we had hitherto

The Ancient Kingdom of Bornu

travelled throughout Bornu, and follow a bridle-path through the desolate and waterless forest. We camped at Chumga, a small and poverty-stricken Kanuri settlement in the middle of the bush, where the carriers had to subsist on the scantiest of supplies in addition to what they had had the foresight to carry with them from Gujba. We stopped to rest next day at the wells of Abakri, and from a neighbouring sandy hummock we could see, rising from a broken plain, the detached flat-topped and rounded hills and long extended ridges which introduced the Kerri Kerri plateau. A number of prosperous Kanuri towns are situated along the base of the hills, and at one of these a *runja* had been erected for my use under a shady tree outside the town, while the carriers found comfortable quarters and abundant supplies within the walls.

We had now reached the extreme western limit of the plains of Bornu, and the path to Potiskum, the capital of Kerri Kerri, lay through the village of Durua, which nestled picturesquely at the foot of the hills, amidst a number of large and shady trees. We halted for an hour in this, the last of the Kanuri settlements, the farthest margin in this direction of the ancient kingdom of Bornu; and as we left the village fields behind us and climbed the low ascent to the plateau above, I thought again of the departed glory of the land and of that silent grass-grown city, once the throbbing heart of a mighty empire, now slowly sinking into dust on the western shores of Chad.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE BORDERS OF HAUSALAND

*"Take the world as it is!—there are good and bad in it,
And good and bad will be from now to the end."*

The Kerri Kerris—In the Golden Age—Cañon valleys—The margin of the plateau—The *sarikin* Daia—The kings of Jellum—Into Hausa country—A disappointed sariki—Hospitable natives—A Hausa welcome—Hausas and Fulani—The rocks of Shira—A midnight thief—Searching the village—The Ningi hills—A pagan stronghold—Ari, Ningi, and Bura—The magnificence of the *sarikin* Bura—A striking contrast.

THE Kerri Kerris are an industrious pagan tribe, the southernmost border of whose country was first visited by Lieutenant Boyd Alexander in 1904. Their capital, Potiskum, is a fair-sized town, set in the middle of the open northern plains, which are studded with numerous villages and hamlets, each wearing to the casual traveller an air of contentment and prosperity. As is the case, however, in all the pagan districts of Nigeria, there is no overlord with any power; and each of the larger towns is practically independent and at peace or war with its neighbours as circumstances may

On the Borders of Hausaland

dictate. Although Potiskum is generally recognised as the chief town of the tribe, the outlying villages owe nothing but a nominal allegiance to its *sariki*. Each town or village is jealous of its neighbour, and in consequence, while the Kerri Kerris may fight amongst themselves or with adjoining tribes, they cannot, for lack of combination, offer any resistance to the white man, and have therefore been obliged to accept the inevitable yoke with the best grace that they can muster. This is, indeed, everywhere a characteristic feature of the pagan as distinguished from the Mohammedan states of the Protectorate, and it is to the lack of this virtue of combination that is to be directly traced the ease of the British conquest and repression of the pagan hordes by a handful of officials. The rifle and the machine-gun have, of course, contributed much to the prestige of the white man; but even so, if only the pagans could unite amongst themselves, their poisoned arrows and throwing-spears would probably prove equal to, if not more than a match for, the bullets of the native soldiery.

The Kerri Kerris, moreover, like most other pagan tribes, still live in the Golden Age and follow

“The good old rule, the simple plan,
That he should take who has the power,
And he should keep who can.”

English law to them, therefore, is an infliction which they cannot understand. Just before my

On Horseback through Nigeria

visit to Potiskum, the headman of a neighbouring village had robbed and left for dead a Kanuri merchant who had been passing through the country. When apprehended and brought before the Resident, he explained that he was a poor man and thought it only right that he should relieve the other of his wealth to supply his own needs. He protested that he had done no wrong, and that he had only followed the custom of his people; and he could not understand why he should therefore be tied up and imprisoned. This difficulty, indeed, is met at every step in the attempt to introduce English law and order into these pagan states, and progress is necessarily very tedious and slow.

From Potiskum we took the road southward towards Fika, over the undulating sandy surface of the plateau. Villages and hamlets were numerous, the compounds being enclosed by walls of matting and shaded by large and leafy trees. The greater part of the plain appeared to be under cultivation, the fallow land being covered with tufty grass and thorny scrub. Here and there a few low hillocks of grit and ironstone rose from the surface of the plain, with mounds of blown sand banked up against their slopes. We camped at Farsawa, one of three small towns set close together on the open plain, and surrounded by dilapidated walls. Most of the trees throughout the farmland held amongst their branches long, narrow tubular beehives of basket work, and it was with some little difficulty that we at length

On the Borders of Hausaland

found a suitable camping-place uninhabited by these unwelcome attendants. It appeared also that the headman of Farsawa had gone to one of the adjoining towns to condole with the people on the death of their *sariki* during the previous night; and all afternoon and evening the sound of continuous drumming and singing came from the mourning village. The people themselves, however, brought out abundant supplies of food to sell to the carriers, and looked, on the whole, gratified by our visit.

Beyond Farsawa lay many small villages in the midst of the farms, separated from each other by narrow strips of open bush. We stopped to rest under a shady tree outside the gates of Boza, a compact little town set on the southern margin of the upper plains. To the right we could see a wide cañon valley, flat-bottomed, and bounded like a trench by precipitous sides, cut deeply into the level surface of the plateau; and at our feet was a steep and rocky descent, leading downward to a smaller tributary valley of a similar type. Our path now led along the bottom of this narrow trench and into the wider valley beyond, where our view was limited by the steep cliffs of white sandstone on either hand.

We halted in the bottom of the sandy valley, where the people of Lele had dug their wells. On the left the town itself was set aloft on the margin of the cliffs overlooking the valley below, and approached by a steep and precipitous path. On the right the cliffs were higher, four hundred feet

On Horseback through Nigeria

above the valley floor, and again a town was perched upon the summit, whose inhabitants could be seen squatting like monkeys on the very edge of the precipice and gazing curiously down upon the white man and his tent. The people here were much more timid than they had been round Potiskum, and when they brought down food for the carriers in the evening only a few of the older men ventured to approach and salute me, while the younger men, who were carrying the food, hastily deposited their calabashes in a row and made off at once to their rocky strongholds above.

The slopes of the valley gradually became higher and more precipitous, until as we approached Fika they turned off to the right and left to form the steep escarpment of the southern margin of the plateau, while the valley itself debouched upon the plains of the Gongola. The escarpment itself is fringed by a number of detached conical and tabular hills, one of which, the Fika hill, is a well-known local landmark. Fika itself is a large and populous town, said to contain seven thousand inhabitants and to be thus the largest town in Bornu. It is built at the base of the hills, fronting the open plains, and on the bank of a river which flows only during the rains. Within the walls the compounds are shaded by innumerable date-palms, whose spreading tops obscure the other trees. The rest-camp is built about a mile to the south of the town, and abundant supplies of provisions for myself and the carriers were speedily brought out by the townspeople.

On the Borders of Hausaland

At Fika I secured guides to lead me westward on the following day to the picturesque country on the margin of the plateau which had been visited by Lieutenant Boyd Alexander four years before. All morning the road led over a waterless and uninteresting plain, covered with thin and open bush, which obscured our view of the escarpment behind; and just as the carriers were beginning to feel oppressed by heat and thirst, we reached the farms of Dozi, from which we had a clear and uninterrupted view of the margin of the plateau with its fringe of flat-topped and conical hills. As we approached we could see that the escarpment was



stepped, a wide ledge projecting from the face of the cliff about half-way up the slope. Of the detached hills in front, some rose to the same height as the step on the face of the escarpment, while others rose to the same height as the plateau itself, and were themselves stepped in a similar fashion. In the latter case the appearance was that of a small conical and flat-topped hill rising from a lower and wider platform, itself raised about 250 feet above the plain. The cliffs were composed of white earthy sandstone, capped by a layer of dark ferruginous grit, while the surface of the step was formed by a thin bed of hard red ironstone. We could see several towns perched

On Horseback through Nigeria

aloft on the edge of the escarpment, and the flattened summits of many of the lower isolated hills in front were also occupied by villages of varying size. Dozi was one of these, a small town perched on the tabular summit of a white sandstone hill, and approached by a steep and precipitous path which led upward from the well on the plain below. Here we camped for the night on the open parklike farmland ; and the inhabitants, who at first gazed curiously down at the intruders, slowly gathered courage, and, at my request, ventured down to draw water for the carriers. The village being naturally fortified by its position, there was no containing wall on the margin of the cliff, which was lined only by a row of large conical granaries, fitted with caps of woven grass. The lower slopes of the hill were terraced for cultivation, and the well at its base was forty-two fathoms deep in the white earthy sandstone. Most of the neighbouring towns and villages brought contributions of food in the evening, with many expressions of loyalty and devotion to the white man.

The white cliffs in front of us reflected the rosy tints of the rising sun as we crossed the pleasant cultivated fields to the base of the escarpment beyond. Slowly we climbed up a winding path to the shelf or ledge which bisected the cliff, and then upward to the level surface of the plateau, where on the very margin was set the town of Kadi, walled in to the north, but bounded only by the precipice to the south. On the edge of the

On the Borders of Hausaland

cliff I turned to gaze for the last time on the wooded plains below, which spread southward towards the Gongola as far as the eye could reach, while eastward and westward from my feet stretched the buttressed edge of the plateau, decorated with bold flat-topped bluffs and headlands, which followed each other in close succession on either hand.

From Kadi the track led onward towards Daia over a thinly wooded plain, sloping gently towards the north, its surface varied at times by stretches of farmland and fallow in the neighbourhood of the villages. Presently we met a mounted messenger, who brought the salutations of the *sarikin* Daia; and as we reached the outskirts of the farms, the *sariki* himself came galloping ing up, followed by half a dozen slaves running panting at full speed behind him. The *sariki* was a short, thick-set, but active personage in the prime of life, who acknowledged the overlordship of Potiskum in a manner that suggested an allegiance even less than nominal. He was, however, most attentive and anxious to please, and had that morning erected a spacious *runfa* under a shady tree close to the walls of the town, in the hope that I would stay the night in his domains; and I had no sooner gratified him by taking possession of it than he brought out an ample supply of fowls, eggs, and milk for myself, guinea-corn for my horses, and meal and cooked food for the carriers. The people were evidently prosperous, happy, and contented, to

On Horseback through Nigeria

judge from the extent of the farms, the abundance of provisions, and the sounds of merry-making which came from the town in the evening. Here again, as before, the contrast was most marked between the nature of my reception by the people of the plateau and by those of the rocky cliffs and valleys of the southern margin, a difference in character which is probably to be explained as the result of the greater opportunities which the people of the northern towns have had of coming in contact with the adjoining kingdoms of Hausaland and Bornu.

On the following morning the *sarikin* Daia was early in attendance to conduct me to the outskirts of the farms on the way to Jellum. It was a clear cool morning, and the golden rays of the rising sun fell across our path as we marched over the rolling sandy plains and through the thin and leafless bush. We had now crossed the Bornu border and entered the Dumbum district of the emirate of Katagum, and as we approached Jellum we met a mounted messenger from the *sarikin* Dumbum, who had been sent forward to conduct me to the residence of his master in his vassal town. Presently we entered an open cultivated parklike plain, in which were set close together the six small towns of Jellum, each with the dilapidated remains of a bounding wall. In one of these was situated the *sarikin* Dumbum's compound, which I found swept and ready for my use. The six kings or headmen of the towns then came to greet me in two sets of three, each set

On the Borders of Hausaland

with one king of greater importance than the other two. All were well-bearded and simple-looking old men, who expressed themselves as very pleased to see me, and offered contributions of fowls, eggs, milk, corn, and meal. Quarters were speedily found for the carriers, and the hospitable natives supplied them with an abundance of food. As it happened, also, the village people had been brewing *pito*, or native beer, and this they generously gave or sold to the carriers, with the result that many of them were intoxicated before evening; and as darkness fell the kings returned with quantities of cooked food, which the carriers were barely able to consume.

In the morning we bade goodbye to the hospitable people of Jellum, and set out for Dumbum through stretches of farmland alternating with belts of thin and open bush. We stopped to rest by the wayside near a small village, the last of the Kerri Kerri settlements, whose inhabitants lined the wall and gazed curiously at the unaccustomed spectacle as we passed. Presently we met the *sarikin* Dumbum himself, with a dozen mounted followers, who all dismounted to salute me and then took their place at the head of the party and led the way to the rest-camp, which was situated on the open plain at a little distance from the walls of the town. The hut was large, with a low thatched roof and a door of coarsely hewn boards, bound together with iron hooks. The *sariki* had had everything necessary for my comfort placed in or around the

On Horseback through Nigeria

house, and before they left me to my leisure both he and his headmen repeatedly emphasised the fact that they were much gratified by my visit. In the course of the afternoon many caravans of pack-oxen, donkeys, and camels from northern Bornu passed my camp on their way to the west or stopped to water at the wells by the roadside near the rest-house. Here also there gathered in the evening many herds of cattle and sheep, which patiently waited their turn to drink of the water which their herdsmen slowly hoisted from the bottom of the well.

The attentive *sariki* was early on the spot to bid me farewell, and lead me for a short distance through the farms which surrounded the town. He then handed me over to the care of a mounted guide, whose instructions were to take me safely to the next large town of Yayu. A messenger, however, had evidently been sent ahead on the preceding day, for as we approached the wayside town of Yami, we met the *sariki*, an old but still active man, who saluted me most respectfully and led me to an excellent *runfa* which he had erected for my use, and close to which he had placed an abundant supply of water, wood, corn, and milk, and cooked food for the carriers, in the hope that I would stay all night at his town. He was therefore grievously disappointed when I informed him that I could only stop for breakfast, and that it was necessary for me to go on to Yayu that same day. I attempted, however, to lessen his sorrow by congratulating him on the excellent *runfa* he had built

On the Borders of Hausaland

and on the other preparations which he had made for my comfort, and by telling him that it was evident to any one that he knew exactly how a white man should be entertained. In reply, he repeated again and again that he and all his people were very pleased to see me and would have considered it a very great honour if I could have seen my way to accept their hospitality for a night. The courteous old man then conveyed me to the outskirts of his farms, bowed respectfully as he said goodbye, and offered my carriers a dignified "*Sai wota rana*" (" Goodbye ") as they passed.

Our path now led over an undulating sandy plain covered with thin and open bush, until we reached the parklike cultivated country in the neighbourhood of Yayu. As we entered the fields, we caught a glimpse of a mounted scout disappearing amongst the trees, and presently the *sarikin* Yayu came up at a gallop with a number of retainers running behind him on foot. The *sariki* dismounted at a little distance, ran forward to salute me, and then remounted and led the way into his town, which in the old days had been fortified by an outer and an inner wall, each consisting of a double rampart and a double ditch. A house had been prepared for me near the mosque within the inner wall and fitted with a shady extension of *zana* matting. Here the *sariki* received me with all due honour and offered light refreshments in the shape of *mandara* (sweet milk) for myself and *fura* (meal and milk) and *nono* (sour milk) for the carriers. He then asked to be excused in order that he

On Horseback through Nigeria

might find quarters for the carriers and collect provisions for his visitors, and presently returned to say that everything had been satisfactorily arranged and a mounted messenger sent ahead to Hardawa to intimate my arrival on the following day.

We were roused at the first streak of dawn by the resounding voices of the mallams as they called aloud "*Allahu akbar*" to the eastern sky. The *sariki* was early in the saddle and conducted me over the parklike plain to the farther bank of the Kogin Shidya, where he took leave of me and returned to his town. On the banks of the river, where it became swampy in the rains, were many fields of tobacco, cotton, corn, and calabashes, while beyond, the road led over an open undulating plain through alternations of cleared and cultivated farmland and thin and open bush. We were now traversing the eastern margin of the plains of Hausaland, whose gently rolling surface stretched north-westward towards the city of Kano without a single rock or boulder to diversify the scene. Only in this south-eastern corner of the province were there scattered hillocks and kopjes of granite rising from the sandy plain, with towns or villages sheltering at their base.

We stopped to rest at a little wayside village surrounded by the remains of an extensive wall which marked its former greater area, and then we moved onward towards Hardawa through pretty parklike country with here and there an unburnt patch of tall and yellow aromatic grass or a clump

On the Borders of Hausaland

of yellow flowering shrubs giving off a pleasant perfume in the morning air. As we approached Hardawa we saw a number of mounted men waiting underneath the trees, who as soon as they observed us came forward at a gallop. They proved to be the *sarikin* Hardawa and his retainers, together with the *waziri* of Katagum, who happened to be at the time in Hardawa collecting the local taxes. All were gaily and extravagantly dressed in turbans, embroidered gowns and trousers, and long riding-boots of painted leather. Their swords dangled noisily from silken hangers as they approached, spurring their chargers to their utmost speed, their spears in their right hands raised high above their heads. Within a few yards of mine they pulled their horses sharply up on their haunches, and after saluting me in the most approved fashion, wheeled round and escorted me towards the town. Hardawa is a large and important place, surrounded by an outer and an inner wall with a considerable space between, occupied very largely by cotton farms. The market-place is situated between the outer and the inner gates, and many smiths were busily plying their art in the outer booths. Within the town itself many of the houses had flat and turreted roofs of clay, while most of the compounds were prettily shaded by date-palms. A number of houses had been swept and put in order for the use of myself and my carriers, two of them having been fitted with *zana* extensions to form an outer sitting-room during the heat of the day. Many people of greater or less import-

On Horseback through Nigeria

ance came to salute me in the afternoon, amongst them an old man who said he was one hundred and sixteen years of age, and all of them impressed upon me the fact that they were very pleased to have a white man visiting their town. Abundant supplies of cooked food were forthcoming for the carriers in the evening, and with drumming, singing, and dancing the town made merry in the moonlight until the night was well advanced.

In the morning our path led first through the open farmland around the town, and then over a rocky rise of white sandstone and conglomerate which ran off to the left as a low and buttressed escarpment fronting the open plain. The greater part of the country was under cultivation, and our way led through a continued succession of farmland and fallow, with here a patch of aromatic grass and here a low clump of prickly mimosa perfuming the air as we passed. As we neared Zagawa, a large town picturesquely shaded by many date-palms, we were again received in true Hausa style. The *sariki* had sent three mounted messengers along the road for a considerable distance to meet me and convey his salutations, and when we came in sight of the town the *sariki* himself came out on horseback, dismounted at a little distance, and knelt to perform his obeisance and bid me welcome to his town. He then rode ahead of me into the town with his attendants, dismounted again and stood to receive me at the door of the house where I was to breakfast. Much cooked food and milk was then brought forward

On the Borders of Hausaland

for my people and a most acceptable present of sweet potatoes and tomatoes offered to myself. When I was ready to go, the *sariki* again accompanied me to the limit of his farms and knelt again to bid me farewell and call down the blessings of the Prophet on my head.

My journey from Dumbum westward had hitherto been through a hospitable Hausa country, where my reception at each town I had visited had left nothing to be desired. The spectacular welcomes which I had been accorded, besides being a token of loyalty and good feeling, were a source of much pleasure to the people themselves. As a race, the Hausas dearly love display, and their chieftains gladly welcome every possible opportunity of exhibiting their horsemanship and their gaudy finery, while the common people none the less love to gaze at the rich apparel of their masters. Dressed in sombre khaki and helmet, I have often felt myself an insignificant figure in the midst of a group of turbaned Hausas, clad in flowing gowns and gaily embroidered trousers, booted and spurred, and equipped with sword or spear on richly caparisoned horses. And yet, though they may despise his dress, these showy warriors in all their mediæval finery have learned to know that the white man's word is law, and that in spite of his insignificance his wishes must be respected and his requests obeyed. The Hausas, indeed, bear little malice, and have cheerfully accepted the yoke of the white man in place of that of their former Fulani rulers. The latter, however, have

On Horseback through Nigeria

acquiesced with an ill grace in the new regime, and in many places grudgingly welcome and entertain the passing European.

From Zagawa the path led over the open cultivated plain, with many cotton-fields enclosed by hedges of millet-stalks, until we reached the town of Zubi, in the population of which the Fulani element appeared to be predominant. The *sariki*, who was seated at the door of his compound, rose deliberately to receive me and conduct me quietly to an empty hut which had been set apart for my use. He was attired only in his soiled every-day robes, and had apparently made no attempt to dress for the occasion. It seemed to be also with some difficulty that he was able to find men to put up, at my request, a *zana* extension in front of the doorway to ward off the burning rays of the afternoon sun. The contrast, indeed, was very striking between my reception here and the boisterous welcome of the Hausa towns to the east. Abundant supplies of cooked food and milk, however, were forthcoming in the evening, and whatever the attitude of the *sariki* might be, the people themselves when they returned from their farms had little hesitation in entertaining the carriers with the best they could provide.

Next morning we set out for Shira, that town which Barth described from hearsay as "a considerable place, fortified by Nature, its position among the rocks, which surround it on all sides, leaving only a narrow approach from north-west and south, otherwise there is no wall," and I was

On the Borders of Hausaland

curious to know how this description would tally with reality. The road led over the open cultivated plain, studded with many villages and hamlets, from which came the cheerful sounds of the cocks crowing and the women singing at their work within the compounds. The fallow-land which separated the cultivated fields was covered either with tall aromatic grass or with low scrub and undergrowth or with open mimosa-bush, perfuming the air around. We breakfasted outside the walls of Kurgo, a small Fulani town, whose *sariki* brought out the necessary wood and water to the roadside. Presently we came in sight of the rocks of Shira; and as we approached and followed the base of the outermost hills we found the path crossing a number of rapid undulations in red earthy sand, which seemed to be banked up in waves against the rocks. It was evident that these sandy mounds were the worn remains of ancient dunes which had been accumulated at a time when the desert held sway over these northern plains. Now, however, they had all but lost their shape, while the sandfields to the north had become smiling cultivated plains, decorated with scattered trees and occasional rocky knobs of granite protruding from their floor.

At length the path turned abruptly southward and led between two kopjes of huge rounded granite boulders and through a narrow pass which at one time had been barred by an earthen wall. Then we descended a gentle sandy slope to the narrow plain on which the town was set, surrounded, and

On Horseback through Nigeria

to all appearance completely shut in, by a circle of granite hills. The town was large and protected by a double rampart and ditch, and picturesquely shaded by numerous date-palms. I had been informed that the *sariki* was very feeble and upwards of one hundred years of age, and I did not therefore expect an official reception. His son, the *waziri*, however, a pleasant elderly man, who was acting in his place, mounted hastily when he was told that I was close at hand, and met me in the market-place, which lay just outside the northern wall of the town. He then conducted me to the house which had been prepared for me, and presently brought abundant supplies of fowls, eggs, ground-nuts, and guinea-corn, and in the evening cooked food for the carriers and fruit and fresh milk for myself.

Next morning we left Shira by the southern gate, and passing through a gap in the circle of hills, entered again the open undulating plain. Being excellent grazing-ground, the country was here inhabited mostly by Fulani, whose villages were set on sandy rising ground exposed to the full glare and heat of the sun. We stopped to rest at one of these villages, and then continued our journey over the open undulating plain until we reached a strip of high and open bush, through which there ran a river-bed with the water now confined to stagnant pools. On the farther bank the road ran parallel with the ruined wall of some large town, the ditch now filled with thorny undergrowth and the rampart sunk to a rounded mound. The city



THE MARKET-PLACE AT SHIRA.

On the Borders of Hausaland

had probably been taken and devastated in the days of the Fulani conquest, and now the once busy site was occupied only by the scattered huts of the settlers who had returned to farm the fields of their forefathers. Presently we reached Dingaia, a populous Fulani town, with a busy market, which had evidently outgrown the former wall. Here I camped for the night in the smoky entrance-hall of the *sariki's* compound, with the swallows nesting in the roof. It chanced to be market-day, and the carriers found ample provisions on sale, while the *sariki* supplied me with a calabash of excellent milk in the evening. The headmen of the town appeared to be all very devout Mohammedans, and entered the mosque every two hours to recite their prayers, the mosque itself being situated near my house, and consisting of a thatched hut, enclosed by high walls of matting and shaded by leafy trees.

I was awakened at the first streak of dawn by the *mallam's* call to prayers, and, the carriers having been roused, we left the sleeping town and took the path towards the rocks of Fagam, which soon became visible in the distance. The open cultivated plain was now diversified by many granite boulders, scattered singly or in heaps or occasionally aggregated together in low rocky kopjes. We passed the prosperous town of Galambi, surrounded by a double ditch and stockade, and followed the margin of the hills over a broken and, in places, rocky plain to the village of Gadama, a Fulani settlement, at which I pro-

On Horseback through Nigeria

posed to camp for the night. Here I found quarters in the *zauri* of the *sariki's* compound, a roomy hut with a *zana* extension towards the street. The villagers appeared to be somewhat sulky, and it was with some little difficulty that the *sariki* persuaded them to bring wood and water and provisions for myself and the carriers. It was clear moonlight when I retired to rest within the inner hut, with my more personal baggage arranged round the walls, and my tent, provision-boxes, &c., piled in the outer verandah. The night was hot and steamy, and I awoke before dawn to find that the moon had gone down and left the village in darkness. As soon as I had struck a light and emerged from my mosquito-net, I noticed that two of my boxes were missing—a canvas suitcase and a tin uniform-case, which had been in place near the door. I found also that my shirt and bath towel had disappeared from the chair beside my bed, while from the verandah there were missing my sun umbrella, my rifle, and six bottles of filtered water which I had had prepared for the next day's journey. It was evident that some one had entered my hut while I was asleep and helped himself to a selection of my goods ; and, as it happened, the two cases which had been taken were those in which I kept all the useful odds and ends which add so much to one's comfort in the bush. The suit-case I saw presently lying outside the door, but its contents had been rifled and a number of papers and letters extracted, while there was no sign of my large aneroid, which it had been my

On the Borders of Hausaland

custom to leave on top of the suit-case during the night. My first thought was that one of the carriers whom I had had occasion repeatedly to reprimand, had decamped during the night with what he could lay hands on, for the articles taken were such as to indicate a certain amount of familiarity either with my own or with some other white man's baggage. I therefore called up the interpreter and headmen and had all the carriers paraded in the darkness, but none of them was missing, nor were any of the stolen articles found in their possession. I next summoned the *sariki*, and, having explained to him that what had happened in his village was something quite unique in my experience of the Protectorate, ordered him to call out all his people into the square before me, and then to go round with my interpreter and search all the houses for any trace of the missing goods. This was done, the villagers collecting sulkily in a group before me, while all the exits were watched and the houses systematically searched as soon as daylight dawned. The search was almost completed, and apparently to no purpose, when one of my men came up to say that he had found my uniform-case on the roadside at a little distance from the village. Evidently, therefore, the thief or thieves had fled, and in their haste discarded the bulkiest of the goods which they had appropriated. I dismissed the villagers to their huts and went out to view the find. The box had been prized open with a stone, but its contents had been only partially rifled, the thief having evidently been

On Horseback through Nigeria

disturbed in his work. The books and papers which it had contained, were strewn on the sand around, while in the bottom of the box, safe and undisturbed, were the filter candles whose loss I had been deploring. The cupidity of the thief had apparently been attracted by my small medicine chest, my housewife, and several small inkpots and packets of ribbons and tapes and balls of string and a few gun cartridges which happened to be on top. He had stupidly, however, overlooked a number of rifle bullets which would have fitted the weapon he had taken and which were now no longer of any use to me. It was now evident that the thief had disappeared, and that there would be little chance of finding him in the short time at my disposal. Nevertheless, when I returned to the village I sent off messengers to all the bush villages which lay in the direction that the thief had taken, with instructions to the various *sarikis* to search their villages and keep an eye on every passing stranger. I remained at Gadama until the afternoon, in the hope of either the thief or the stolen goods or both being found, although I knew well that the hope was a forlorn one. It is, indeed, the easiest thing in the world for a native thief to disappear in the bush with his booty, and especially easy in a country where the people are more or less inclined to condone the offence when it is committed against a white man. I could do nothing, therefore, but make up my mind to my loss and to wish the thief joy of his aneroid and rifle, his medicine chest, and his half-dozen bottles

On the Borders of Hausaland

of water. The latter he had probably taken in the belief that here at last was his opportunity of tasting the white man's *pito*, and I could almost imagine the look of disgust which would mantle his countenance when he discovered that all his trouble and daring had been rewarded by nothing but water.

About midday the *makama* of Fagam, a tall, good-looking, quiet, and dignified man, with two mounted attendants, rode into Gadama. He informed me that the *sarikin* Fagam, the overlord of the district, having heard that I was journeying towards his town, had ridden out that morning to meet me, but meeting my messenger instead, who told him of my loss, he had returned to Fagam and sent him, the *makama*, forward to convey his salutations to me at Gadama. I thanked him, and after discussing with him the chances of the recovery of my goods, which he agreed were small, I asked him to remain in the village until I was ready to go and then accompany me himself to Fagam. This he did, and about three o'clock we set out on a two hours' march to Fagam, at first over a stony rise behind Gadama and then along the base of the rocks until we reached an open sandy plain, within a semicircle of hills, upon which the town was built. The *sariki*, an old man and somewhat feeble, met me at the gate and conducted me to my quarters within the town, which appeared to be closely built and thickly populated. He expressed much regret at the misfortune which had befallen me in his country, and offered to do

On Horseback through Nigeria

everything in his power to recover the stolen goods.

As it was almost dark before I reached Fagam I saw little of the town, and next morning I left early for Runga, in the country of the pagan Wurjawa, which lay to the west, across the border of Bauchi province. The *makama* accompanied me beyond the farms and rocks of Fagam and through a stretch of thin and open bush until we reached a small pagan settlement, from which we obtained a guide to Runga. The path led apparently over an immense undulating plain, but the bush obscured the view and rendered the journey both tedious and uninteresting. At length, however, we came upon the rocks and farms of Wurji, with many pagan settlements amongst the boulders; and presently we met the Government courier, who had been sent here by the Resident of Bauchi to await my arrival and conduct me through the Ningi and Bura country to the west, which had only recently been brought under control. The Wurjawa pagans, whose country we had now reached, were a timid and primitive race, whose huts were scattered in twos and threes amongst the rocks without any attempt at concentration into definite villages. At Runga, the name of a particular section of their country, a rest-camp had been formed, and here we halted for the night, while the courier, who was known to the pagans, did his best to get together a supply of provisions for the carriers' evening meal.

Next morning, after leaving the neighbourhood

On the Borders of Hausaland

of Wurji we entered an open plain, covered with hard and cracked clayey soil, which evidently became swampy in the rains. We found ourselves presently on the bank of a wide and sandy river-bed, in the middle of which at this season a narrow and shallow stream represented the broad sheet of water which in the rains would cover not only the river-bed but much of the country on either bank. Into this great river, with the help of many tributaries, had grown the Kogin Delimi, whose acquaintance we had already made at Naraguta, on the margin of the Bauchi plateau to the south, where its sands were being washed for tin. Its farther course lay northward over the plains of Katagum, where in the dry season its waters were lost in the sandy channel, while in the rains the flood ultimately joined the Yo and went to swell the waters of Lake Chad. We rested on the farther bank, and then moved on through thin and open bush over a path which gradually became rough and stony until the hills of Ningi and the rocks of Tiffi came in sight.

The broken country which is designated by the name of the Ningi hills, consists of an extensive plateau-like mass of granite, elongated in an east and west direction, with a broken and hummocky but approximately level summit, and bounded by steep and precipitous slopes all round, the margin of the mass being much indented and incised by narrow valleys. From the base of the southern and eastern slopes, the thinly wooded plains of Bauchi stretch outward towards the valley of

On Horseback through Nigeria

the Delimi, while on the north and west the plains of Kano and of Zaria run close up to the foot of the hills. This rocky mass of the Ningi hills, therefore, forms an immense natural stronghold in the middle of the plains, a fortress which has been peopled from the earliest times by warlike indigenous tribes. The Hausa and Fulani hordes in turn spread over the surrounding plains, but the conquering armies were never able to scale the rocky heights and capture the pagan citadels on top. To the white man, however, with modern methods and modern weapons, this proved an easy task, and after the taking of Ningi itself, in 1904, the other towns and tribes wisely decided to bow to the inevitable and accept the overlordship of the foreigner.

In the intervals of conflict with the peoples of the plains, these tribesmen of the hills were accustomed to relieve the monotony of their existence by internal wars, and in course of time the rocky mass had become divided into three independent sections—an eastern portion under the leadership of the king of Ari, a central portion under the king of Ningi, and a western portion under the king of Bura. The three states of Ari, Ningi, and Bura were constantly struggling for supremacy, and for long the central state of Ningi was predominant. Just before the advent of the white man, however, a warrior king arose in Bura, who extended the boundary of his state eastward almost to the walls of Ningi and northward for a day's journey over the plains of Kano. At the

On the Borders of Hausaland

time of my visit, therefore, Ningi was not only suffering under the eclipse of its former greatness, but it alone had had the misfortune of coming into contact with the British arms, while the neighbouring states had been wise enough to come to terms and avoid a direct trial of strength.

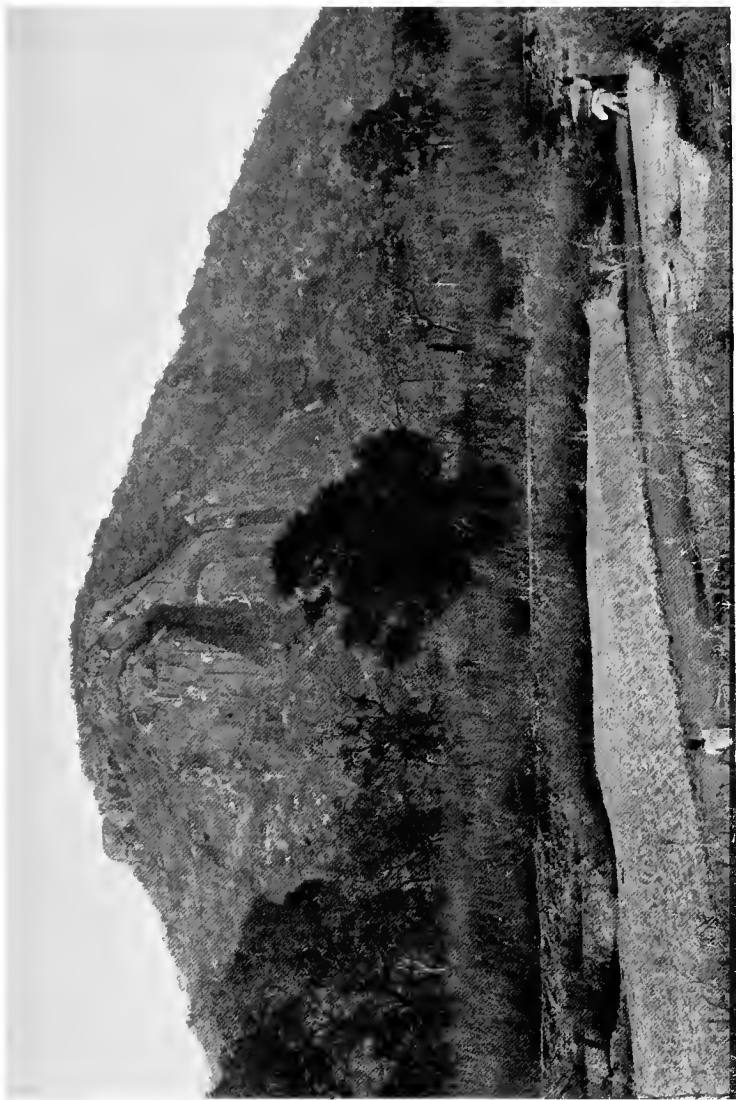
The town of Tiffi, at which we had now arrived, was the second town in the state of Ari, and built in a semicircular bay in the margin of the hills. Here I was received by the *sarikin* Ari and his headmen, who had travelled to Tiffi that morning on purpose to meet me. All were gaudily dressed in turbans and gowns, and wore an evident air of prosperity. They gave me, moreover, a very cordial reception, and did everything in their power to make me comfortable during the few hours that I rested in the *runfa* which they had erected for my use. In the afternoon we moved on to Ari along the base of the hills, the *sariki* riding on ahead to see that everything was ready for me in the rest-camp. Ari itself is a large and scattered town, uniquely fortified by Nature, built, like Tiffi, within a bay in the margin of the rocky mass behind, but protected in front by a barrier ridge of rock, through a narrow opening in which, easily blocked when necessary, the path leads to the town within. The rest-camp was delightfully situated outside the barrier underneath a number of large and shady trees, and the *sariki* spared no pains in the entertainment of his guests.

Next morning we set out for Ningi, the *sarikin* Ari accompanying me to the boundary of his terri-

On Horseback through Nigeria

tory, where a mountain stream crossed our path. The road ran close to the base of the hills and past the villages of Tuluka and Sabon Gari, and then up a long and narrow valley, which had been cut backward into the rocky mass behind. On the skyline above, at the upper end of the valley, could be seen a few huts, which marked the outskirts of the town of Ningi. As we approached, in full view of the people on the rocks above, I was somewhat surprised to see no sign of the *sarikin* Ningi, who ought to have ridden out to conduct me to his town. Presently, however, we met a small party of the townspeople on foot in worn and dirty gowns, who proved to be the *galadima* and some of the other chiefs who had walked out to welcome me. They explained that the *sarikin* Ningi had been summoned to Bauchi on urgent business by the Resident, and was therefore unable to receive me in person. They, however, had been deputed to do the honours, and at once turned and led the way to the rest-camp, which was situated about half-way up the valley. My men had considerable difficulty in finding water near the camp at this season, and I had therefore to ask the *galadima* to send down a plentiful supply from the town above, where there were a number of springs amongst the boulders. I intimated to the *galadima* also my intention of visiting Lumbu, on the northern margin of the mass, and asked him to have the necessary guides ready as I passed through the town at dawn.

I awoke at cock-crow, and, having called the



A TURTLE-BACK OF GRANITE.

On the Borders of Hausaland

carriers, set out in the first place for the town above. After passing the remains of the double walls which formerly barred the approach from the valley, and climbing the short but steep ascent at its head, we entered the town, and found that the greater number of the huts were situated over the brow of the hill in an irregular, saucer-shaped depression on the summit. The *sariki's* house was the only pretentious building in the town, and near it we found the *galadima* waiting with the guides. It was still early and the morning was chill and cold, and the inhabitants were only beginning to stir, and from what we could see of them they appeared to be poorly and even primitively clad. Our road led through the scattered groups of huts, out through the western gate, and over the broken summit of the granite plateau, cleared and cultivated in the neighbourhood of the town and covered with thin and open bush beyond. We rested amongst the farms of Sammo, and then we entered a tract of country which gradually became rougher and more stony until we reached a steep and rocky descent leading from the plateau above to the bottom of a narrow valley, cut back into the margin of the hills, at the entrance to which was set the half-deserted village of Lumbu. Here we camped for the night, the few inhabitants that were left doing their best to supply a scanty meal for the carriers.

We left Lumbu by the narrow gorge which the river had cut in the outer fringe of hills, and took the path which led westward to Beshe along the

On Horseback through Nigeria

broken plain at a little distance from the margin of the plateau. Soon we entered the Bura country, and presently we met a mounted messenger from Ari, who informed me that the *sarikin* Ari had descended to Beshe that morning and was now on his way through the bush to meet me and conduct me in person to his capital. In another hour we heard in the distance the sound of trumpets and drums, which heralded the approach of the *sariki*, and presently the royal cavalcade came in sight. I stopped my party in a little clearing in the bush and waited for the warrior king, whom I had seen dismounting and approaching on foot. He was a short, thick-set personage, in the prime of life, with well-cut features, a short beard, and a pleasant countenance. His head was encased in a large turban, covered with leathern charms and leopards' teeth, and from his shoulders there hung a green silk embroidered cloak, which he wore with considerable dignity, and which served also to cover the ample folds of a somewhat grimy gown beneath. As he approached he smiled pleasantly and shook his raised fists in greeting, as he gave me the Hausa welcome, "*Maraba! maraba! maraba!*" He then bowed to the ground in token of allegiance, and asked my interpreter to offer me the cordial welcome of himself and of his people. The *sariki* and his retainers then remounted and led the way to Beshe. The two mounted trumpeters went first, making the bush resound with their lusty blasts; then two mounted drummers, guiding their horses with their knees and beating vigorously on their

On the Borders of Hausaland

drums on either side ; then the *sariki*, resplendent in his green silk cloak, followed by four horse-boys in short kilted rigas and equipped with red blankets, neatly rolled and slung over the left shoulder. Then came the courtiers, in cloaks and gowns of many colours, attended by their favourite slaves on foot, while sometimes in front and sometimes behind rode the court jester or crier, dressed in a tight-fitting suit of red, shouting the praises of his lord and master and of his honoured guest until the trees re-echoed with his voice. It was a scene of barbaric splendour, a page from a mediæval romance, and behind came the incongruous khaki-clad Briton, with his twentieth-century equipment carried by porters for whom it was difficult to find a setting in either the old or the new regime.

We stopped to rest during the heat of the day at Beshe, a place of considerable size at the base of the hills, where an excellent rest-camp had been built, and in the afternoon we moved on in the same order to Bura, on the plains above. The active ponies of the country people scrambled dexterously up the steep and rocky rise, while my heavier animal panted behind. Bura we found to be a large and scattered town built on a sort of platform facing the southern plains and backed by a rocky ridge. The huts were small and poor, and even the *sariki's* compound was indistinguishable from the others. The majority of the people were very primitively clad, the men being dressed only in a kind of leathern apron and the women in leaves.

On Horseback through Nigeria

The contrast, indeed, was most marked between the unpretentious character of the town and of the common people, and the gaudy splendour of the chiefs and the magnificence of my welcome. The rest-camp, however, was large and roomy, and the *sariki* proved a most hospitable host, sending out abundant supplies of both necessaries and delicacies for myself and for the carriers.

We left Bura on the following morning to return to Ningi along the southern margin of the hills; and for the first hour the *sariki* and his chiefs accompanied me, with the same ceremony as before. We then parted, with many expressions of goodwill on either side and the oft-repeated request on the part of the *sariki* that I should return again soon and become his guest for a longer period. The road then led over very rough and stony country along the base of the hills until we reached Somma, where we camped for the night, continuing the journey on the following day over similar broken and uninteresting country, through Dua to Keffin Fulani, in the Ningi country. Here I camped beside a running stream, and next morning climbed the steep ascent to the upper plains of Ningi. From Ningi we retraced our steps by way of Ari and Tiffi to Runga, in the Wurjawa country, whence it was now my intention to cross into Kano province and visit the great cities of the plains of Hausaland.

CHAPTER IX

THE PLAINS OF HAUSALAND

*"The war drums throbb'd no longer
And the battle flags were fur'l'd."*

Entering Hausaland—The old king of Jemaari—An ancient desert surface—Katagum and Hadeija—On the way to Kano—Comfortable travelling—History of Kano and of the Fulani conquest—The British occupation—The capture of Kano—Kano in 1909—A rumour of insurrection—Departure for Kazaure—On the way to Katsina—Cordial welcomes—An unpleasant experience—Pagan Hausas—Through Fulani country—Recent history of Sokoto—The old city of Wurnu—The valley of the Sokoto River.

OUR path now led northward from the settlements of the Wurjawa to the town of Kila, on the frontier of Hausaland, and as we turned our backs on Bauchi and crossed for the last time the sandy bed of the river which drew its headwaters from the summit of the plateau, I thought of all the varied tribes and scenes which I had witnessed in the province—of the Hausas and Fulani of the plains, of the naked dwellers on the plateau, of the twin cones of Kereng, of the cliffs of Kanna and Gateri, of the Wase Rock on its southern margin,

On Horseback through Nigeria

of the Peak of Tangale and the broad smile of the *galadima* Ture, of the Gongola and the Bima hills, of the ruins of Burmi, and of the resplendent warrior chief of Bura, lording it over his savage hordes. To the north lay the plains of Hausaland, peopled with a virile race, studded with cities and towns and villages, teeming with busy life and picturesque in their Mohammedan civilisation ; and yet I knew that with common customs and common habits over the length and the breadth of the plains, much of the variety would have disappeared for the passing traveller, and much of the contrast would have gone from the picture when the primitive pagan and the follower of the Prophet were no longer to be found in close proximity, the one in his rocky stronghold and the other in his walled city on the plain below.

We had left the rocks of Wurji and crossed the sandy river-bed, and were making our way over the cracked and gaping surface of the flood plain of the river, when our attention was pleasantly arrested by a clear and placid lake which curved round the rocky base of a low granite kopje. Presently the rocks of Kila came in sight, towards which the path now led over an open sandy plain and through the scattered village of Sokwa ; and thence through a narrow pass between two rounded granite domes to the town of Kila, which was situated at the base of the northern slopes, fronting the open plain. From the summit of a ridge beside my camp I could see far away to the east, over the undulating wooded plains and the shallow

The Plains of Hausaland

valley of the river, the rocks of Fagam to the right and those of Shira to the left. Northward and westward, however, as far as the eye could see there was nothing but the boundless plain, without a single granite dome or kopje or even a heap of boulders to diversify the scene.

Early next morning we set out on our march to Katagum across the monotonous plains. Towns and villages being fairly numerous, we passed through an alternation of cleared and cultivated land, with stretches of thin and open bush. The people were of a mixed Hausa and Fulani stock, congregated at times in ancient Hausa towns, with dilapidated and weathered walls, at times in recent Fulani settlements open to the plain. Each day as we moved northward I sent a messenger ahead to intimate my coming, and at each town and village that we passed the *sariki* and his headmen were waiting to receive me on the outskirts of the farms. Wherever we camped, moreover, we found a *runfa* erected for my use and quarters arranged for the carriers. Supplies also appeared to be abundant and the people everywhere happy and contented. Water, however, at this season was somewhat scarce, and what there was of it was very earthy and frequently full of soda. On the second night after leaving Kila we camped at Jemaari, a large and well-walled town, and the former capital of a semi-independent kingdom. Its chief, who had been a great warrior and slave-raider in his day, had now grown old and corpulent; but, anxious to do honour to the white man, he mounted

On Horseback through Nigeria

hastily at my approach and rode out to meet me with a troop of gaily dressed attendants. The old warrior leaned heavily on the shoulders of his slaves as he dismounted to salute me; and again as he remounted he required the assistance of their stronger arms. Nothing, however, could have surpassed the cordiality of his welcome or the hospitality with which he entertained myself and the carriers with the best he could provide.

Northward from Jemaari, across the undulating plains, lay Itas, another well walled town, where we camped for the night outside the western gate. Beyond Itas there was much loose sand on the road; and in places it seemed to have been at some former time raised up into a series of low extended ridges, now covered with grass and trees, and separated by bare and level flats. The whole appearance of the country, indeed, was suggestive of an ancient desert surface, with sand-dunes fixed by a scanty vegetation. After a long and tedious march, we at length reached the hamlets of Murmur, a village familiar by name from its being the death-place of Dr. Oudney in 1824, whence we set out very early on the following morning, and accomplished the remainder of the journey to Katagum before the heat of the day became excessive.

In the days of Barth and up to the time of the British occupation, Katagum was the capital of a province of the Fulani empire of Sokoto; but after the fall of Kano in 1903, the Emir of Katagum and the neighbouring Emir of Hadeija voluntarily offered their submission to the British, and a

The Plains of Hausaland

Resident and a small garrison were established at Katagum towards the close of the same year to administer the whole district. There proved to be, however, much latent dissatisfaction amongst the fanatic Fulani of the neighbourhood, and in time the chiefs of Hadeija developed such an insolent spirit that in 1906 it became necessary to despatch a punitive expedition against the town. After a sharp encounter their resistance was broken and Hadeija subdued, while the headmen of Katagum, who had failed at the critical moment to support their friends, maintained a strictly correct attitude and again professed lip-loyalty to British rule.

Katagum is a large, closely-built, and populous town surrounded by a high and well-kept wall and picturesquely shaded by many palms. It is built on a stretch of sandy rising ground in the midst of clayey shallows which become almost impassable swamps in the rains. The town itself, with its medley of thatched and flat-roofed buildings, wears a certain air of prosperity; but the country around is poor and sparingly inhabited, the people having suffered much from the extortion of their former Fulani rulers. The disaffection which long existed in the province had also an unsettling effect upon the population; but, since the final overthrow of Fulani ambition, the people have begun to return to the land, without the constant fear of the oppressive taxation of the fruits of their labour which formerly daunted and discouraged the most industrious of husbandmen.

From Katagum to Kano is an easy eight days'

On Horseback through Nigeria

march, and rest-houses have been established along the road at convenient intervals for travellers. The scenery on the way is particularly uninteresting, the country consisting merely of an immense undulating plain, bare and treeless, or parklike and cultivated in the neighbourhood of the villages, and elsewhere covered only with a thin scrubby bush. The road leads over an endless succession of loose sandy stretches, alternating with firm and smooth surfaces of sandy clay, or with shallow hollows of desiccated swamp, hard and dark and cracked like the firki of Bornu. In places the swampy hollows contain pools of standing water, sometimes of considerable size, while in the rains all of them become temporary lakes of greater or less extent. Near Koya a remarkable rounded ridge of loose yellow sand crosses the road, covered with grass and scattered trees, and evidently an immense solitary dune which, with the numerous lower undulations of loose sand following each other in succession across the country, bears witness to the former prevalence of desert conditions over these northern states. Near Ringim we crossed the broad and shallow valley of the Kogin Hadeija, with a narrow stream in the middle representing the wide river of the rains. Our stages in the march from Katagum were respectively Kwotolu, Keffin Hausa, Miga, Dare, Ringim, and Wangara, some of them small and poor and unimportant villages, others large and prosperous towns. At each place a clean and spacious rest-house was available for my use, with kitchen adjoining and huts for the boys, while



A VILLAGE MARKET.

The Plains of Hausaland

the *sariki* or his representative brought out wood and water and provisions immediately upon my arrival and made arrangements for the housing of the carriers within the town. I could not but contrast the ease and comfort with which I travelled through this western portion of the province of Kano with the trials and troubles which Barth experienced on his journey through the same region. At each camping-place a house, reserved for the use of Europeans only, was ready for my occupation ; the local *sariki* was eager to gratify my slightest wish without prospect of reward ; my meals were prepared by a skilful native cook, and served after European fashion by dexterous steward boys ; my baggage was transported by reliable carriers and headmen, while my dress and equipment were thoroughly European and my boxes contained many dainties and delicacies wherewith to vary the *kaza*, *kwoi*, *dankali*, and *mandara* (fowls, eggs, sweet potatoes, milk) of my native hosts. And yet only fifty years ago Barth had written :—" I was astonished as well as ashamed at the comfort which my African [Arab] friend displayed, ordering one of the attendants to bring into his presence a basket which seemed to be under the special protection of the latter, and drawing forth from it a variety of well-baked pastry, which he spread on a napkin before us, while another of the attendants was boiling the coffee. The barbarian and the civilised European seemed to have changed places ; and in order to contribute something to our repast I went

On Horseback through Nigeria

to the market and bought a couple of young onions ! Really it is incredible what a European traveller in these countries has to endure ; for while he must bear infinitely more fatigue, anxiety, and mental exertion than any native traveller, he is deprived of even the little comfort which the country affords—has no one to cook his supper, and to take care of him when he falls sick :—

““And, ah ! no wife or mother’s care
For him the milk or corn prepare.””

Times indeed have changed : and now a European would no more think of eating and drinking familiarly with an Arab trader than he would of dressing in Mohammedan robes, of sleeping like a native in a blanket on a plank, of buying his own provisions, or of eating the half-cooked food of the natives !

The change, however, is due directly to the change in the political situation. In the days of Barth, the European traveller had to go hat in hand to the native governor, sue for his favour by means of costly and valuable presents, and wait his pleasure for permission to travel hither and thither within his province or visit a neighbouring state. But now by right of conquest the white man’s word is law, his favour is sought by the former rulers of the land, and there is no one to gainsay his desire to travel wherever he lists throughout the length and breadth of Hausaland or of the pagan regions beyond.

We were now approaching the city of Kano,

The Plains of Hausaland

the great metropolis of Hausaland, to visiting which I had been looking forward with eager anticipation for many a weary day. And as we traversed the broad and sandy road which led westward from Wangara, I thought of the chequered history of the mighty city which was once the queen of Hausaland. I thought of the original inhabitants of the land, who in pagan fashion had dwelt on the summit and slopes of Mount Dala and cultivated the open plain around its base. I thought of the migration of the Hausa hordes from the northern deserts to the fertile southern plains, of the expulsion or extinction of the primitive people of Dala, of the founding of the seven Hausa states, of the acceptance of Moham-medanism by all but Gober, of the wars and counter-wars between the states themselves, and of the domination of Kano in the fifteenth century. Then came the decline of Kano, the rise of Katsina, the peaceful penetration of Hausaland by the Fulani herdsmen, and in the eighteenth century the ultimate supremacy of the pagan state of Gober, which led directly to the Fulani conquest.

“The history of the Fulani conquest of the Hausa states . . . is comparatively well known. The country was already permeated with Fulani influence. Cow Fulani fed their cattle in every province. The principal towns had their Fulani quarters; Fulani teachers had for six hundred years spread the doctrines of Mohammed; distinguished members of the Fulani race occupied high places as councillors, judges, high priests

On Horseback through Nigeria

and men-of-war. . . . It was not, however, till the opening years of the nineteenth century that the military and political conquest was completed. . . . At the end of the eighteenth century the still pagan state of Guber had established a military ascendancy over the more northerly Mohammedan states of Hausaland. It had conquered Zamfara and subdued Kano. Katsina alone had been able successfully to resist its power. Throughout this period the Fulani would seem to have greatly increased in numbers in Guber, and under their own chiefs and religious teachers they began to form a community of which the independent doctrines gave offence to the pagan authorities. In the year 1802, the King Bawa sent for their Imaum, Othman dan Fodio, and all the principal Fulani chiefs, and administered a severe public reprimand on account of the religious and political pretensions that they were beginning to put forward. This was but a spark to the tinder. Indignation spread through the Fulani community at the insult which had been offered to their chiefs. Othman dan Fodio inflamed the general sentiment by his preaching, in which he urged the Fulani to submit no longer to the yoke of a pagan people. The Fulani chiefs raised the standard of revolt; Othman was elected sheikh, and under his leadership a Holy War was declared. . . . Through the rest of Hausaland, where the towns were already half in Fulani hands, the conquest of the Fulani spread rapidly. Zanfara was conquered in the first year of the war; Zaria was either conquered, or allied itself with the conquerors,

The Plains of Hausaland

within a month of the submission of Zanfara. The conquest of Kano shortly followed; Katsina was taken in 1807; and in 1808 the victorious arms of the Fulani were carried into Bornu, where they were met and successfully resisted by the Sheikh el Kanemi." ¹ The son of Othman dan Fodio, the Sultan Bello, founded as his capital the new town of Sokoto and extended and consolidated the empire. He was an able and upright administrator, and under his rule even the conquered Hausas were happy and contented, while his armies were instructed to spread the true faith and convert the pagans to Islam. After his death, however, the ruling classes rapidly became corrupt, and "a domination which had been established in the name of religion and justice fell into tyranny, tempered only by the weakness or the moderation of personal rulers. . . . It was found more profitable to leave the pagans in a condition in which it was lawful to make slaves and to exact tribute, and Fulani wars degenerated into little more than slave-raiding expeditions." Even in the days of Barth "the behaviour of the ruling class was certainly haughty, and there was, no doubt, a great deal of injustice inflicted in small matters," while robbers infested the country along the main trade routes and attacked unprotected merchants and caravans. But after the middle of the century, the condition of affairs rapidly went from bad to worse. Justice was bought and sold, and an equitable decision of any case could only be arrived at by heavy bribery.

¹ "A Tropical Dependency," by Lady Lugard.

On Horseback through Nigeria

Extortion and excessive taxation became the order of the day. New taxes and new regulations were imposed at the will of each new ruler, and any resistance to the authority of the emirs or their favourite slaves was visited with the most inhuman punishments. Commerce and agriculture groaned under the heavy burden of excessive and ever-increasing taxation. Unrest and discontent simmered beneath the surface, and the spirit of revolt was held in check only by the iron hand of the autocratic Fulani.

Such was the internal condition of the states when, towards the close of the nineteenth century, at the time of the scramble for Africa amongst the European Powers, the decadent rulers of Hausaland had placed themselves nominally under the protection of, and in some cases had accepted a subsidy from, Great Britain, and had entered willingly by treaty into certain obligations which they undertook to observe. The practice of raiding the pagans for slaves had meanwhile become the common amusement of the Fulani emirs, who even caught and sold numbers of the peasantry of their own provinces with the object of replenishing their exchequers. On some of their slaving expeditions they came into contact with the British, who had already assumed the protection of the riverine pagans; and upon the declaration in 1900 of a protectorate over the whole of Northern Nigeria, the rulers of the northern states were called upon to observe the terms of their treaties, to desist from their practice of slave-raiding and throw open the

The Plains of Hausaland

main roads to peaceful traders. Insulting replies were for the most part sent to the British representations, while the *Sarikin Muslimin* of Sokoto expressly repudiated his treaty obligations and declared that a state of war existed between him and Great Britain. It became necessary, therefore, to despatch expeditions against each of the states in turn. Kontagora, Nupe, Bauchi, Yola, Nassarawa and Zaria were in turn subdued; and then early in 1903 an expeditionary force of one thousand native infantry and fifty Europeans was concentrated at Zaria for the advance upon Kano and Sokoto.

“ The first opposition was encountered at a walled town eight miles within the Kano frontier, where the inhabitants . . . said that they were obliged to resist, under a threat of death from the Emir of Kano to any one who should open the gates. A British shell blew in the gate, and the question of resistance was determined. The town was not looted or injured, and non-combatants were unharmed. A series of newly fortified towns, all instructed by the emir to fight, were expected to hold the approaches to Kano. After this first experience the garrisons abandoned them, and fled without fighting to Kano. The inhabitants remained quietly in the towns, and brought ample supplies to the British troops, which were paid for as in time of peace. . . . The force therefore reached Kano unopposed. The wall of the town, of which the circumference was eleven miles, was forty feet thick at the base, and from thirty to fifty feet high. It

On Horseback through Nigeria

was loopholed and strengthened in front by a double ditch. Its thirteen gates had been lately rebuilt . . . while the ditch was full of live thorns and very deep. The fortifications were such that, had there been any determined resistance on the part of the defenders, the town might have stood an almost interminable siege.

“ The event justified the British belief that in fighting the Fulani they had the wishes of the people of Hausaland on their side. The town made practically no defence. There was some fairly well directed firing from behind the walls, but, a small breach having been effected, an assault was ordered, and the defenders fled as soon as the heads of the storming party appeared in the gap. A considerable loss was inflicted upon the enemy outside the walls when the British force endeavoured to cut off their retreat. As they fled they suffered severely. The town itself, which occupied only a small part of the great area enclosed by the walls, was entered unopposed. The inhabitants exhibited no concern. . . . The troops paid for all they purchased. The slave-market closed itself. Otherwise the life of the town pursued its usual course. Within three days the great market showed its usual activity, and fully equipped caravans started for the south and arrived from the north and east as though the country were in perfect peace. . . . It was soon ascertained that the emir had not himself directed the defence and surrender of Kano. He had removed a month previously to Sokoto, and the defence of the town

The Plains of Hausaland

had been left to two trusted slaves. He now returned towards Kano with the whole body of his army, but there was a fatal division in his councils. . . . In presence of the difference of opinion between his chiefs . . . he placed the loyal portion of his army under the command of his vizier, and himself fled northwards in disguise towards the French frontier. On the following day his army was encountered by British troops marching out to meet it, about one hundred miles from Kano, and . . . the native forces were completely defeated.

“Immediately on the fall of Kano the surrounding towns had sent in to submit to the British and to express their wish for friendship, and it was significant that this had been done even while their Fulani chiefs . . . were absent in the army of the emir. . . . Conciliatory letters also were sent to the Sultans of Katsina and Sokoto. . . . Katsina immediately replied that he had no desire for war, and would willingly accept the British conditions.”¹

Thus ended in a fiasco the boasted resistance of Kano and central Hausaland. The autocratic power of the Fulani was at an end, and the Hausas rejoiced openly in the subordination of their former masters. It was, however, no part of British policy to banish the Fulani from power and substitute Hausa rulers in their place. On the contrary, it was the intention of the British to maintain the existing institutions, including Fulani rule, which

¹ “A Tropical Dependency,” by Lady Lugard.

On Horseback through Nigeria

had been at first based upon Koranic law, and had now been established for a hundred years. The administration of the country, however, originally founded upon the principles of justice and humanity, was to be reformed and restored to its ancient purity, and for this purpose a British Resident was established at Kano, to whom the Fulani chiefs were to be responsible for the upright government of their districts. The old taxes were retained, but their amount was definitely fixed at such a figure as would encourage and not stifle the efforts of the husbandman and the trader. The ear of the Resident was to be directly accessible to the meanest of the people, whose complaint could be tendered, and justice secured, without charge or fee, while the extortioner and the tyrant would be punished with a ruthless hand.

Such, then, were the political changes which had affected the great city of Kano since the days of Barth; changes, however, which had had but little influence upon the outer aspect of the metropolis. The Residency, barracks, and emergency fort are situated some three miles to the east of the city on the road to Katagum, and as we were ourselves approaching from Katagum, we reached the European quarters before the city itself came in sight. Here I camped amongst my own countrymen, while the carriers went on to Kano to find quarters for themselves for the night and spend their hard-won earnings in the market. Next morning I visited Kano myself. As I rode slowly along the broad and sandy road which led to the

The Plains of Hausaland

eastern gate, I met many groups of suitors hastening to the European courts: now a number of poorly-clad peasants dissatisfied with the ruling of their local *alkali*; now a posse of Hausa merchants, dusty and travel-stained, bemoaning the loss of a portion of their goods by night; now a group of tall and spare Fulani, their faces almost covered with their veils, summoned to report the exact numbers of their herds; and now a gaily-dressed governor on a prancing steed, surrounded by a group of mounted attendants, ready to do homage to his foreign masters, and disburse the taxes of his various towns. I passed through the Gerin Asbenawa, a prosperous and populous village into which had grown the little settlement where in Barth's day a company of slaves resided on the estate of a man from Asben. Presently, there came in sight above the city walls the flattened summits of Mounts Dala and Kogon-dutsi, the two landmarks of Kano. Outside the gate there sat a row of lepers, piteously calling for alms from every passer-by, and inside, at every corner, the halt or the blind were calling down the blessings of Allah on whoever should help them in their poverty. Within the city the scene had changed but little since the days of Barth. The narrow, winding, evil-smelling lanes still ran between the flat-roofed mud-walled houses, "built in a most uncomfortable style, with no other purpose than that of obtaining the greatest possible privacy for domestic life, without any attempt to provide for the influx of fresh air and light." In many cases the floor of the outer

On Horseback through Nigeria

hall was sunk below the level of the street, and "almost all the houses had also a very irregular upper story on a different level, and very badly aired." I threaded my way through the narrow streets and made straight for Dala, and, having climbed its rocky slopes, enjoyed, like Barth, the extensive view from the summit of the hill, and watched the caravans of camels as they passed its base on their way from the sandy north. I then crossed the open fields to Kogon-dutsi, and from its summit viewed the western plains; and again returned through a medley of clay houses, huts and sheds, stagnant pools, and heaps of refuse, along the margin of the pool Jakara, through the great market-place, with its rows of booths and shelters, a few only of which were occupied at this early hour, and out again through the eastern gate, pleased and gratified by my ramble through the ancient city. And as I paced again the broad and sandy road which led eastward to the bariki, I speculated upon the inevitable changes which must ensue within the next few years, when, on the completion of the Baro-Kano railway and the Lagos extension, Kano is placed within easy reach of the coast, when the ubiquitous tourist will be able to spend the week-end in the heart of Hausaland while his steamer is discharging at the wharfs of Lagos!

Although the great mass of the people within the walls of Kano are happy and contented under the present regime, the Fulani chiefs have not yet been able to forget their former glory and autocratic



ON THE WAY TO KANO.

The Plains of Hausaland

power, and while they remain outwardly subservient, periodically a rumour arises that at last they have gathered courage to raise the standard of revolt. For this, amongst other reasons, a sufficient military force is always stationed at Kano for the protection of the European officials; and as it happened, on the day that I visited Kano a rumour came through from Zaria that the Fulani in Kano were secretly arming, and that night intended to attack the Residency, slaughter all the white men, and establish again the old regime. Though this was but a rumour, and probably unfounded, still, as the Fulani were a somewhat uncertain element in the population, pickets were posted at night round the European lines, and instructions issued for concentration in the emergency fort if there should actually be any alarm. As expected, however, the night passed quietly; and in the morning, as soon as the carriers arrived from the city, I again took the road through the Gerin Asbenawa, but on approaching the gate of Kano, turned off to the right and skirted the city wall for a considerable distance, until I joined the broad and well-beaten track which led northward to Katsina, by way of Kasuan Kuka, a little to the east of Barth's route in 1851. The country was bare and treeless in the immediate neighbourhood of the city, but by the time that Dala had disappeared from view we had entered the open cultivated park-like plains, which, with occasional stretches of thin and scrubby bush between the farms, stretch northward almost to Katsina. There had now been

On Horseback through Nigeria

occasional showers of rain, and the short green grass was beginning to sprout from the tufty roots. Many herds of cattle were grazing peacefully over the plains, and villages and hamlets gradually became more numerous as we left the metropolis farther and farther behind, the distance being now too great for the husbandmen to return to Kano each evening from their farms.

We camped at Jelli for the night, a Fulani town where the *sariki* and his people seemed none too enthusiastic in their welcome. Indeed, as I journeyed towards Katsina, there was nothing more noticeable than the increasing cordiality of my welcome as the distance from Kano increased. The headmen of the villages in the immediate neighbourhood of Kano would seem to be somewhat tainted with the latent spirit of disaffection and envy which characterises the Fulani chiefs of Kano, while, at a distance from that centre of intrigue, the *sarikis* and their people are happy and contented under the present regime, or at least appear so to the casual traveller. Our road from Jelli led northward, over the open plains covered with thick red sandy soil, until we reached the neighbourhood of the villages around the Kasuan Kuka, a noted provincial market, and a halting-place for caravans from the north. Here we were met by the *sarikin* Kunchi, the overlord of the district, a tall, pleasant, and energetic-looking Fulah, who expressed himself as very pleased to see me, and, when I stopped for an hour at Dumkwai, brought me the best that the village could provide. When

The Plains of Hausaland

I was ready to go, he and his mounted followers rode ahead, and led the way to Kunchi across several sandy watercourses occupying shallow hollows in the surface of the plain. Kunchi we found to be a somewhat dilapidated town, which, however, showed signs of improvement under its present ruler. Provisions, anyhow, appeared to be abundant, to judge from the ample supplies which the *sariki* provided for myself and the carriers in the course of the day.

From Kunchi I took the road which led north-eastward to Kazaure, the capital of a semi-independent state, the neighbourhood of which according to Barth's information, was "rocky, with the intervening country thickly covered with wood." This sounded interesting, especially as we had experienced no rocky ground since we left the Ningi hills on the southern margin of Hausaland; and soon we found that Barth had been informed correctly. About half-way to Kazaure rocky knobs of quartzite began to appear above the sandy surface of the plain, and presently we entered a tract of broken hilly country, through which the path led to the town itself, which was situated amongst a number of bare and rocky hillocks of blue quartzite, streaked and veined with white. The hollows between were filled with red earthy sand, supporting numerous large and shady trees, but otherwise well cleared for cultivation. The *sariki* had ridden out to meet me with a numerous company of mounted attendants, and after expressing his pleasure at my visit, conducted me to the *bariki*,

On Horseback through Nigeria

which was set on a sandy knoll outside the gate. The town itself was surrounded by a well-kept rampart, and the inhabited portion of the space within was closely built, populous, and apparently prosperous.

Next morning we left the hospitable town of Kazaure, accompanied again by the *sariki* and his headmen to the limit of the farms. For a time, as on the previous day, the path led through a stretch of broken rocky country before it re-entered the open plains to the west, decorated only by some low granite hummocks and heaps of boulders. We camped at Rauni, where a number of low, flat-topped hills of gritty ironstone rose above the surface of the plain. Again at Tummas on the morrow some low hummocks and kopjes of granite projected above the general level, but beyond, as far as Katsina, the gently undulating plains stretched northward without a single granite dome or kopje to diversify the surface. According to Barth, numerous chains of hills, sending down rapid streams, decorate the surface of the province of Katsina, but these I found only in the west on the borders of Sokoto, while the water parting of which Barth speaks, "between the basin of the Tsad and that of the Kwara (Niger)," runs indefinitely along the crestline of an immense elevated plain which falls off gently and imperceptibly to the east and to the west.

My progress from Rauni to Katsina was marked by the same pomp and splendour which attended my march from Dumbum to Shira in the eastern

The Plains of Hausaland

portion of Kano province. From every town as I approached, there rode out to meet me a gaily coloured troop of horsemen, consisting of the *sariki* and his chief retainers, who honoured me with a combined salute in proper Hausa fashion, galloping forward to within a few yards and then pulling their horses up sharply on their haunches in line, at the same time raising their right hands high above their heads. Then after a few words of greeting they wheeled round and galloped in front of me to the gate of the town, where they dismounted to bid me welcome once again and lead me to my quarters within the walls. Such was my reception all along the route, at Ungawa, Karahazi, Doru, and Jeni; and not only was my welcome cordial and spontaneous, but the inhabitants overwhelmed us with the most lavish hospitality, forcing upon myself and upon the carriers all kinds of native delicacies, in addition to the common necessities of existence. I could not help contrasting the honour and the prestige which in these regions the white man now commands, with the unobtrusive and unpretentious manner in which fifty years ago Barth himself was compelled to travel, exposed to constant insult and extortion, the common prey of every rapacious governor through whose province he passed.

On the third day from Rauni I reached the Residency at Katsina, which, with the barracks and the emergency fort is set on rising ground to the east of the town. In the afternoon I rode towards Katsina itself, the city which for a time after the

On Horseback through Nigeria

decline of Kano had been the queen of Hausaland, and followed the northern wall until I reached and entered by the western gate. The configuration of the city appears now to differ much from what it was in the days of Barth, while the south-eastern portion seems now to be most thickly populated. The main streets are wide and clean, and the houses are practically all flat-roofed two-storied clay buildings which give quite an Oriental appearance to the city. The streets, however, were calm and quiet, except where the sound of a *makaranchi* (school) was borne outward through the open door. I thought of the time when the city had worn a different aspect, when "Katsina filled, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of our era, the position of the leading city in this part of Negroland. It was important not only in commerce and politics but also in learning and in literature. It seems to have been regarded as a sort of university town. The Hausa language attained here, it is said, to its greatest richness of form and refinement of pronunciation, while at the same time the manners of Katsina were distinguished by superior politeness over those of the other towns of Hausaland." 1

The casual traveller, however, who spends but a night in every town, has little opportunity of entering into the inner life of the people. To him the petty jealousies and ambitions, inseparable from social life in the heart of Africa as in the village homes of England, are quite unknown. His impressions are drawn from superficial contact only,

1 "A Tropical Dependency," by Lady Lugard.

The Plains of Hausaland

and from accidents and events which affect his personal comfort and convenience by the way. My chief recollection of Katsina therefore is a subjective one, based upon an unpleasant experience on the morning of my departure. The resthouse, which is situated near the Residency, is a square clay building with a high thatched roof, and it happened that during the night a heavy shower of rain soaked the thatch and dislodged myriads of earwigs which had taken refuge there from the heat of the sun. I awoke to find my net covered with the creeping things, while earwigs were in my boots, amongst my clothes, on my chair and in my bath, amongst my provisions and in every hole and corner that they could find ; and no sooner had I opened my net than they took possession of my bed and tucked themselves away underneath the quilt, the pillows, the sheets, and the mattresses. I shook them out of my clothes and dressed as well as I could, and then had everything carried outside and a preliminary cleaning begun. Again in the afternoon when I camped at Kurefi, I had all my clothes and bedding and other baggage shaken and spread out in the sunshine, but even so it was days before I got rid of the insects, and long after, when I had returned to England, I found several stray samples of Katsina earwigs in the corners of my boxes.

From the rising ground on which the Residency was set to the east of the town, we could see the flat cultivated plains stretching northward towards the frontier of the Protectorate, but as we left the

On Horseback through Nigeria

southern gate, we found, as in the days of Barth, that there was little cultivation on the southern side of the town, most of the country immediately round the walls being covered with brushwood. After the rain in the night the air felt fresh and clean, and a pleasant odour rose from the sandy soil. The surface was here more rapidly undulating, and it was with some little difficulty that we crossed the narrow watercourses in the hollows, temporarily swollen by the rain. Presently we passed some hamlets where the people were rejoicing at the change, and busily sowing their corn over the moistened fields. Beyond Sani the country changed its aspect from a more or less level plain to a hummocky undulating granitic surface. Kurefi, where we camped, was set picturesquely amongst a number of low rounded granite domes and heaps of boulders. Barth had visited this town on his way to Sokoto, when he and the *galadima* made a detour to the south to avoid the army of the Goberawa, but I could find little or no trace of the elaborate fortifications which at that time protected the town.

It was my intention in taking the road by Kurefi to travel south westward from Katsina to Kotor-koshi and there join the main road leading from Kano to Sokoto. My path led therefore from Kurefi to Taskia, a village whose overlord was the *sariki* of Ummadau, a considerable town which lay a few miles to the north. All the way from Kurefi we passed through a hummocky granitic country, which extended on either hand as far as

The Plains of Hausaland

we could see. Near Tummo the country presented an exceptionally rough and broken aspect, the road passing through an assemblage of low granite hills, domes, tors, kopjes, perched blocks and heaps of boulders without any particularly high and prominent peaks. The whole surface, moreover, appeared to have been partially smothered in blown sand, which filled up the spaces between the rocks, and was banked up against the slopes of the higher hills. In consequence the road, instead of being rocky and stony, was for the most part soft and sandy except where it led over bare and smooth and rounded surfaces of granite exposed along the track. As we approached Taskia, we were met by a troop of horsemen, who proved to be the *sarikin* Ummadau and his retainers, who, on hearing that I was passing that way, had ridden over from Ummadau to bid me welcome to his country. He speedily had a *runfa* built for me underneath a shady tree, and provided ample supplies of provisions for myself and the carriers. He remained, moreover, in the village all night, and next morning accompanied me for a considerable distance on my way to Duru.

The same rocky granite country continued next day as far as Runka, but as we approached the village the aspect of the country gradually became smoother, the low rounded granite domes and turtlebacks becoming more or less detached, with the sandy drift heaped high against their sides. Beyond Runka we entered an open sandy plain whose undulating surface, covered with thin and

On Horseback through Nigeria

open bush, stretched southward and eastward as far as we could see towards the frontier of Katsina. At Duru, where we camped for the night, a number of granite hills rose abruptly from the plain, while the country round presented a pleasant park-like aspect, with large and shady trees scattered here and there over the cultivated fields. The inhabitants were pagan Hausas, poorly and even primitively clad, many of whom in their shyness took refuge amongst the rocks upon our approach. Presently, however, they gained courage, and became quite friendly, and supplied the carriers with all that they required in the way of provisions for the night.

We had now reached the frontier town of the province of Katsina, beyond which there lay a broad belt of wooded plain, practically uninhabited, separating Katsina from Sokoto, and through this tract of country our road now lay to Kotorkoshi, the scene of Sultan Aliyu's inglorious victory over a few poverty-stricken pagans in the days of Barth. About halfway, the little settlement of Woneka had been recently founded in a clearing in the bush on the banks of a river, and here I arranged to camp for the night. Along the path our view was limited by the forest, but neither east nor west of Woneka were there any prominent granite hills or kopjes rising from the plain. Only at Kotorkoshi itself did we find another group of rounded granite domes and turtle-backs like those of Duru rising abruptly above the general level, with the village and the restcamp at their base, sur-

The Plains of Hausaland

rounded by park-like cultivated fields. Beyond Kotorkoshi again the same wooded plains stretched westward to the Gulbin Gandi, one of the headwaters of the Sokoto river, without a single granite dome or kopje to relieve the monotony of the scenery. The whole surface of the country, moreover, is deeply covered with sandy wash, which covers up all the minor irregularities of the surface of the plain, and which, if cleared and cultivated, would be found most fertile virgin soil, capable of supporting a very large population.

We rested at Kotorkoshi, and then moved on to Gusau, a place of considerable size, situated on the banks of the Gulbin Gandi, and possessing a mixed Hausa and Fulani population. The cultivated plains around were gently undulating, and the river had cut a valley, comparatively wide and deep, in the surface alluvium. From Gusau northward to Sokoto the road followed the valley of the river, whose banks were lined with numerous walled towns and villages, large and small. Rest-houses, moreover, have been erected along the way at convenient intervals for travellers, and in these I camped at Karakai, Maradu, Rimi, Yantsokua, and Rara. In places the banks of the river were high and rocky, in others low and swampy and level with the plain. Between Karakai and Maradu the road led through a belt of hilly ground of mingled slate and granite, in which the river Garsa had cut a deep and narrow channel. Beyond Maradu the open sandy and swampy plains stretched northward towards Sokoto, diversified only by some small

On Horseback through Nigeria

flat-topped sandstone hills in the neighbourhood of Dankaiwa and Dampo. It was not, however, until we had passed Rara and Mallamawa that the valley began to assume the characteristic appearance of the great watercourses of the north and west, and to be bounded on either side by more or less continuous escarpments of sandstone, leading upward to the plains above.

At every town or village along our route where we camped or stopped to rest, we found the people ready and willing to supply our wants. It was evident, however, in this part of the province where the people were predominantly Fulani, that the white man was looked upon as a more or less necessary evil. His wishes were respected, and his word was law, but there was an obvious lack of the hearty and spontaneous welcome which we had received in Katsina and eastern Kano. The Fulani of Sokoto indeed, like those of Kano, are still brooding over their loss of supremacy, and many discontented spirits wander about through the towns and villages seeking secretly to stir up the people to active hostility against their European masters. Only once, however, since the British occupation, have they actually persuaded any section of the people to take the offensive, and that was in 1906, when the Resident of Sokoto was treacherously murdered in a small village a few hours south of Sokoto itself. Even then, however, the movement failed to find anything but local support and approval, and now that the provincial guard has been strengthened and a stricter watch

The Plains of Hausaland

is kept over these wandering *mallams*, there is less likelihood than ever of a concerted and successful rising being organised by the envious Fulani.

It was on the sixth day after leaving Gusau that we came in sight of the walls of Sokoto, the city which from the days of Sultan Bello had been the capital of the great Fulani empire and the more or less constant residence of the *Sarikin Muslimin*, the Sultan of Sokoto, the overlord of Hausaland and Adamawa, second only in holiness and in power to the great Sultan of the North. At the time of the British occupation of Nigeria in 1900, Sokoto was still the recognised religious and political head of Hausaland, and although the empire was very loosely knit together, the Sultan of Sokoto still retained the right of nominating the holders of the various Fulani emirates. When, however, in 1902 he was approached in a friendly manner by the British and asked to nominate successors to the deposed emirs of Kontagora and Nupe, he sent a hostile reply couched in the following terms: "I do not consent that any one from you should ever dwell with us. I will never agree with you; I will have nothing ever to do with you. Between us and you there are no dealings, except as between Mussulmans and unbelievers—war as God Almighty has enjoined upon us." This reply necessitated the despatch of the expedition, which, as already related, left Zaria in January, 1903, captured Kano, defeated the emir's forces, received the submission of Katsina, and then moved north-westward towards Sokoto itself.

On Horseback through Nigeria

“ It was the season of the harmattan wind ; the heat in the middle of the day was terrific, . . . and the dry wind blew like the breath of a furnace, parching the throats of the men. The water of the country during the greater part of the march was impregnated with salts of soda and potash, and increased, instead of allaying, thirst. At night the temperature suddenly fell, and the cold became so sharp that the native troops suffered severely from pneumonia and lung diseases. . . . A letter was received from the Emir of Gando, making his submission. . . . Sokoto alone remained obdurate, and the column, somewhat depleted by the hardships of the march, but reinforced by the troops from Argungu, marched upon the town. On the 15th of March a battle took place, in which the Sokoto troops were defeated and put to flight. . . . The High Commissioner arrived at Sokoto on the 19th of March in time to see, as he came over some rising ground, a dark crowd streaming towards the British camp, composed . . . of the principal notables of the town coming to make their formal submission to the British. He received in person the submission of the Waziri and principal chiefs of Sokoto. The emir, like the Emir of Kano, had fled.”¹ Some little time after, however, he and many of his rebel adherents paid the last penalty at the capture of Burmi, and meanwhile a new emir, favourable to the British cause, was installed as *Sarikin Muslimin* and Sultan of Sokoto.

The Residency, with the barracks and the emer-

¹ “A Tropical Dependency.”

The Plains of Hausaland

gency fort, is situated to the south of the town, near a spring of excellent water on the open surface of the plain. Halfway between the European quarters and the southern wall of the town is a clean and tidy village, while the outer suburb of the city still exists, as described by Barth, between the two southern gates. The town itself, which in the days of Barth had been deserted by the court for political reasons in favour of Wurnu, wears now an air of greater prosperity. It occupies a position of considerable natural strength, being built at the confluence of the Gulbin Rima and the Gulbin Gandi, and bounded not only by the river valleys to the east and north, but also by steep cliffs of sandstone, which separate the valleys from the upper plains. Only on the south and west do the gates lead directly out upon the open sandy plains, which are cleared and cultivated for long acres round the walls. The market-place is still situated at the "north-east corner, on the brink of the rugged slope which descends into the valley." Within the town the huts are mostly thatched, and there are fewer clay-built houses than in Kano or Katsina. The palace and the mosque have been rebuilt, and the shrine of the great Othman is still visited by pious Fulani pilgrims, who look upon it as a local Mecca.

Next morning I rode over to Wurnu, the residence of the court in the days of Barth and for many years after, during the decline of the Fulani empire. The town lies about eighteen miles to the north-east of Sokoto and the road led first

On Horseback through Nigeria

across the valley of the Gulbin Gandi and then over the broken surface of the higher plains beyond, with the irregularities in part obscured by thick accumulations of blown sand. We stopped to rest at Gidan Bango and then descended to the margin of the *faddama* of the Gulbin Rima, and followed the base of the cliffs which bounded the wide and shallow valley until we came in sight of the walls of Wurnu, built upon a sloping platform of rock which projected outward from the line of the escarpment into the valley of the river. At a little distance from the town, we were met by the *sariki* and a number of mounted attendants who, after saluting, conducted me to my quarters within the walls. The town still wore an aspect similar to that which it presented in the days of Barth. There were the wells before the gates, the high and battlemented walls, the closely built and somewhat evil-smelling town and the market-place on the margin of the platform where it faces the river. Nothing had changed except the political aspect of the country: and whereas in the days of Barth and up to the date of the British occupation, the country all around had been very unsafe and exposed to continual raiding by the Goberawa whom the effeminate Fulani dared not meet in open battle, now within a few short years the Pax Britannica has settled on the land, the walls and ditches are of little use, the people are happy and contented, and the husbandmen may till the ground at long distances from the town without the least fear of molestation by their former enemies.

The Plains of Hausaland

Next morning we returned to Sokoto, and in the afternoon while the carriers were resting, I rode northward through the town, down the steep slope where the market-place is set, and out through the northern gate over the wide alluvial plain or *faddama* at the confluence of the rivers. The Gulbin Gandi or Gulbin Raba, up whose valley we had travelled from Gusau to Sokoto, and the Gulbin Rima, which when in flood washes the slopes of the Wurnu hills, unite at Sokoto to form the Gulbin Kebbi which then flows south-westward to join the Niger. The remarkable feature about all these rivers of Northern Sokoto is the extraordinary contrast which exists between the great breadth of their valleys and the tiny streams which now occupy their channels. The valleys, moreover, have a peculiar structure in themselves, and appear as broad, flat-bottomed, trench-like excavations in the surface of the sandy plains, bounded on either side by steep rocky walls which are more or less continuous along the whole length of the valley. Through the *faddama*, or flat alluvial plain which forms the floor of the valley, there winds in the dry season a tiny stream which loses itself at intervals in stretches of swamp. In the rainy season there is a greater volume of water, and a considerable portion of the *faddama* is covered with a shallow flood. Only in very exceptional seasons, however, does the flood occupy the whole breadth of the valley and even when this happens, its flow is so sluggish that it is quite incapable of any active erosion. It would appear indeed that these

On Horseback through Nigeria

broad, flat-bottomed, trench-like valleys have been excavated by much larger rivers at some former period, when under a different climatic regime the rainfall was much greater in the Sudan than it is at present. The *faddamas* of these rivers are naturally very fertile and capable of intense cultivation, rejuvenated annually as they are by the summer floods, and it is only at rare intervals that the flood rises so high as to ruin, rather than encourage, the efforts of the patient husbandmen.

CHAPTER X

THE GULBIN KEBBI AND THE MIDDLE NIGER

*“ Beside the river’s wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.”*

The story of Argungu—Hearty welcome by the *sariki*—Birnin Kebbi—A narrow path—Southward to Yelwa—A decaying city—Approach of the rainy season—The Niger at Bussa—The scene of Park’s disaster—The river gorge at Jebba—The Juju Rock—The history of Kontagora—Its capture by the British—The Kaduna at Zungeru—The *jirigin kassa*—Farewell to Mount Patti.

I HAD now visited the three most famous cities of Hausaland, Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto ; and as the rainy season was now rapidly approaching and had indeed already begun in the south, I decided to turn my steps southward towards Lokoja and the Niger. The direct route lay southward from Sokoto by way of Anka, Banaga, and Kotonkoro to Zungeru, but as this road was comparatively dull and uninteresting, I decided to follow the valley of the Gulbin Kebbi until it joined the Niger

On Horseback through Nigeria

and then strike southward along the left bank of the river, at least as far as Bussa, a place renowned in the history of African exploration. It was my purpose also in taking this route to visit the town of Argungu, to avoid which Barth, on his way to Timbuktu, was compelled to make a detour to the southward by way of Gando, before he again touched the valley of the Sokoto River at Birnin Kebbi. In his day and up to the time of the British occupation, Argungu was the seat of a succession of warlike rebel chiefs, who first raised the standard of revolt against Fulani domination in the province of Kebbi, successfully resisted all attempts at subjugation, and from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century, during the decline of the Fulani empire, constantly harassed and alarmed the weak rulers of Sokoto and Gando. Argungu itself had remained a pagan town, the inhabitants disdaining even the religion of the conquerors; and the present chief, before the coming of the British, had been a vigorous and energetic warrior, who had attracted to his camp and to his city, all the discontented spirits within the western portion of the empire of Sokoto. At the time of the British conquest in 1903, the *Sarikin* Argungu became our ally and offered the aid of his native warriors in the subjugation of their hereditary enemies. There is little doubt that when he did so, the rebel chief had sanguine expectations of being installed as Sultan of Sokoto, but in this he suffered grievous disappointment. He and his city, however, have been confirmed in their independence of Fulani

The Gulbin Kebbi

rule and now pay their tribute directly to the Resident at Sokoto.

It is a three days' journey from Sokoto to Argungu, the stages being respectively Tozo and Kantami. On the first day, as far as Wamako, the road leads over an undulating sandy plain, with here and there in the distance a detached conical or flat-topped sandstone hill. Beyond Wamako the path in the dry season enters the *faddama* and runs direct to Tozo, twice crossing on the way, the winding channel of the Gulbin Kebbi. At times the path draws near the projecting buttresses of the escarpment which bounds the valley on the left, while far in the distance across the *faddama* can be seen the rocky slopes which form the northern margin. In places along the base of the cliff there are thick accumulations of blown sand which project outward as low rolling mounds at right angles to the line of the escarpment, or partially fill up the smaller lateral valleys, forming smooth inclined surfaces leading upward to the plains above. Between Tozo and Kantami the river valley takes a semi-circular sweep to the north, while the road ascends the escarpment to the upper plains and crosses a tract of broken hilly country covered with thin and open bush before it enters the sandy plains around Kantami and Bubuchi, whence it again strikes across the harder surface of the river plain until Argungu is in sight.

As the road approached the rising ground on the margin of the *faddama*, where at a little distance

On Horseback through Nigeria

Argungu itself was situated, I saw a number of horsemen resting underneath the trees, who, as soon as our little party was observed, came forward at a gallop to salute me. They proved to be the *Sarikin* Argungu and his chiefs, with a number of mounted drummers and trumpeters and other retainers on horseback and on foot. All were dressed in gaily coloured robes, and the whole appearance of the party reminded me much of the gaudy magnificence of the *Sarikin* Bura and his pagan attendants. The bright colours and elaborate costumes, moreover, offered a pleasing contrast to the more sombre and ascetic garb of the Fulani of Sokoto, where even the *Sarikin Muslimin* himself is accustomed to appear in robes which have long since lost their pristine freshness. The heartiness of my welcome, moreover, contrasted strongly with the sullen and sulky looks with which I had been generally received by the Fulani of the Gandi Valley. The old warrior king received me with many expressions of goodwill, and repeatedly shook my hand in token of everlasting friendship with the white man, and then led the way in state to the *bariki* which was situated amongst some rocky knolls to the south of the town. Argungu itself is closely built and densely populated and surrounded by a well-built wall, as befitted a city of refuge in the days of Fulani rule. Many herds of cattle, sheep, and horses were grazing in the *faddama* beyond, large tracts of which were also fenced off for cultivation; and the whole city, no less than the *sariki* and his

The Gulbin Kebbi

chiefs, wore a general air of prosperity and success.

From Argungu we took the road to Birnin Kebbi, which led now along the margin of the *faddama* and now over the open sandy plains behind. We camped for the night at Ambrusa, which has been rebuilt since the days of Barth, and then moved over a broad and sandy path, much frequented by caravans of traders, until the "picturesque spur or promontory" of Birnin Kebbi came in sight. This large and important town was visited by Barth in 1854 on his way from Sokoto to Timbuktu, and is now the official headquarters of the sub-province of Gando, with a Resident and half a company of native infantry under the command of a British officer. The European lines occupy the site of the original town of Kebbi, the capital of the Kebawa, which was destroyed by the Fulani in 1805, and of which only traces of the walls now remain. The present town retains a very similar aspect to that which it possessed in the days of Barth, with the exception that it is no longer open to the reproach of being almost bare of trees. "The walls are almost a mile distant from those of the old one, lying close to the steep slope which, with a descent of about 250 feet, goes down here into the large green valley or *faddama*."

We were early on the march next morning and, skirting the town to the right, made straight for the projecting "mountain spur which is called Duko," up which the path led to the open sandy plains above. By the feet of generations of

On Horseback through Nigeria

travellers, however, the track has been worn deep in the soft earthy sandstone of the cliffs, until now it runs in a V-shaped trench through which my horse was able to scramble, only with the greatest difficulty. Even in the days of Barth, this path "was cut into the sandstone like a gutter, and was too narrow for his heavily laden camels to pass through," so that he was obliged to descend and follow the lower road which ran along the base of the cliffs on the margin of the *faddama*. From the summit of the promontory, I had an excellent view over the great flat-bottomed valley of the Gulbin Kebbi to the distant line of flat-topped and conical hills which formed its northern margin. The level grassy plain or *faddama* was here about three miles in breadth, and through the middle of it ran the channel of the river which at this season, I was told, was represented only by a string of pools. Many herds of cattle were grazing in the distance, and all round the base of the cliffs on which I stood were cultivated fields in which the husbandmen were already making preparations for the coming rain.

Our path now led southward over undulating sandy plains and past the towns of Kola and Diggi, both of which were visited by Barth before he struck westward across the *faddama* to Zogirma. In the neighbourhood of Kola the surface of the plains was decorated by many detached conical and flat-topped hills and short tabular ranges which rose from 100 feet to 150 feet above the general level. We camped at Keffin Hausawa, a small

The Gulbin Kebbi

Hausa settlement in the midst of cultivated park-like country, and on the following day moved on to Raha, a large and populous town, situated at the confluence of the Gulbin Kebbi and the Jega River, and surrounded by open grassy plains passing imperceptibly into the *faddamas* of the rivers. The *Sarikin* Raha, who is the heir to the emirate of Gando, rode out to meet me with a number of attendants and conducted me to the rest-house within the walls and provided ample supplies of provisions for myself and the carriers.

Immediately beyond Raha we crossed the Jega River, which here flowed in a deep and narrow channel with an extensive flood plain on either hand, over which the path then led to Sengelu, which is set on the margin of the wide *faddama*. Beyond Sengelu we passed many villages set on the edge of the low escarpment overlooking the broad valley of the Gulbin Kebbi, to the margin of which we again descended as we approached the populous town of Giro. Here I found the rest-house full of insects, and at night the whole *faddama* in front of me was occupied by hordes of mosquitoes and flying ants, for the abundance of which the region of the confluence of the Kebbi and the Niger has long been noted. In the morning we ascended the low cliff behind Giro and travelled southward to Kende, beyond which we crossed the border of Kontagora province and entered the extensive undulating sandy plains which here fringe the river Niger on either bank. As we approached Beshe

On Horseback through Nigeria

we met the *sariki* and his headman who had come out to the limit of their farms to bid me welcome.

On inquiry I found that the more frequented road from Beshe to Yelwa ran southward by way of Fufundaji and Duguraha, through the sandy and swampy plains close to the bank of the river. I chose, however, the more inland path which led through Shunga and Zoaji over open park-like undulating country, decorated with a few knobs and hummocks of granite beyond Zoaji. On the third day we entered Yelwa, a busy and populous town on the left bank of the Niger, the headquarters of the northern division of Kontagora province, and for a time also a military station in the early days of the British occupation. The rest-house is set on rising ground to the north of the town, and from its verandah I had for the first time a clear and uninterrupted view of the river Niger. The change in the ground rock of the country, from the sandstones of Sokoto to the granites of Yelwa, was accompanied by a change in the whole character of the river valley. In place of the extensive sandy and swampy plains which fringe the river on either bank, both above and below its confluence with the Gulbin Kebbi, its channel from Yelwa southward is bounded by rocky slopes on either hand which limit its waters to a narrow bed. Between Yelwa and Jebba, moreover, the Niger flows in a narrow rocky gorge, much obstructed by falls and rapids. At Yelwa, however, the rocky banks shelf gently towards the river and the waters are deep and

The Gulbin Kebbi

calm and placid, unconscious of their troubled course ahead.

In the afternoon I rode over to Birnin Yauri, the former capital of the Fulani province of Yauri, which included all the towns on the river bank from Beshe to Ngashki, the islands in the Niger and all the country to the east for a distance of a day's journey or more towards the land of the Dakakerre pagans. Birnin Yauri itself, of which Yelwa was formerly the port, is situated about half an hour's journey inland from the river, and its western wall is built along the edge of a low escarpment which separates the higher eastern plains from the valley of the Niger. From the city itself, however, its ancient glory has departed and only scattered groups of compounds within the extensive but dilapidated walls are left to tell the tale of its former greatness. With the decline of Yauri, Yelwa has increased in importance and extent until it is now the largest town and the best market on the banks of the Niger between Jebba and Ilo.

The rainy season was now fast approaching, and almost every night during our journey across the plains of Sokoto we had seen the lightning flashing in the southern sky. There had, however, been very little rain in the north, although the days were often sultry and oppressive. As we moved southward, however, the sound of the thunder gradually became louder and clearer, and sometimes in the distance we could see the black rain-clouds forming and disappearing on the horizon. Around Yelwa the grass was longer and the bush

On Horseback through Nigeria

was greener than it had been farther north, and the young stems of guinea-corn and millet were already showing above the ground. Some rain fell in the night, and the morning broke dull and cloudy and cool. A fresh and pleasant odour rose from the sandy soil, as we made our way through the farms of Yelwa, and southward along the thinly wooded bank of the river. Presently, however, we entered a stretch of broken country, with here and there low rocky kopjes and hillocks of quartzite and granite. We camped at Lokofe, a small village on the southern bank of the river Malenda which here, at its confluence with the Niger, flowed in a deep and narrow rocky channel. A *runfa* was erected for my use, but as the day remained dull and threatening, I took the precaution of having my tent erected alongside, and my bed arranged in it for the night, so that if it should rain I might at least be protected from the storm. As it happened, it was fortunate that I did so, for in the early hours of the morning a tornado broke over the neighbourhood, and the frail *runfa* of matting and everything within was soaked with rain.

The air was fresh and cool as we left Lokofe and struck south-eastward to Ngashki over the open plains of Ubakka. Near Ngashki we crossed the site of the former town of Abara, which had been built among a number of granite hills and captured and sacked by the Fulani. Only the dilapidated walls and a few scattered huts of recent settlers now indicated the great extent of the former

The Gulbin Kebbi

city. Ngashki itself was a clean and prosperous-looking town with an excellent rest-camp and an obliging *sariki*, who brought out abundant provisions for the carriers in the evening. On the following morning we continued our march westward over the open grassy plains to Warra, a populous village situated on the left bank of the Niger. The river here is calm and placid and unbroken by any of the rocks and rapids which obstruct the channel above and below. It being therefore a favourable spot for crossing the river, the inhabitants do considerable business in ferrying traders and cattle across the stream. As Bussa, the scene of Mungo Park's disaster, was only two hours distant on the other bank, I crossed the river and followed the broad road which has been cleared along the native track until we reached the *bariki*, which is set on rising ground to the north of the town. From the rest-house I could hear the roar of the rapids beyond the native town, and in the evening I walked down to view the spot where the first white man who ever reached the Niger, met his fate amongst the rocks. The river here was obstructed by many projecting knobs and boulders of granite, and the waters whirled and eddied through numerous narrow channels between high walls of rock. The very crag on which Park's frail canoe was wrecked was pointed out by my native guide ; and as I gazed at the rapid rushing stream and the many obstacles which barred the way, I recognised the inevitable result of any attempt to shoot those rapids without the knowledge or assistance of the local natives.

On Horseback through Nigeria

The inhabitants of Bussa now indignantly deny that their forefathers shot arrows at the unfortunate white man entangled in the rapids, and with them the story of Park has now passed into a legend of a tall white man, taller than any who ever visits the Niger now, who, misunderstanding the cries and gesticulations of the natives on the river bank who wished to warn him of his danger, was dashed to pieces amongst the rocks beyond.

I now decided to send the greater number of my carriers eastward to Kontagora, there to await my arrival, while I myself made a rapid journey southward to Jebba. As the road on the right bank, however, was bad and ill-defined, I crossed the river again at Bussa, just above the rapids, while the horses were sent round by Warra and Libata to meet me on the left bank. A broad and well-cleared road has been cut from Bussa eastward to Kontagora, leading at first over a succession of rocky ridges and stony hollows and gradually rising to the open park-like plains of Auna. At Auna the roads to Kontagora and Jebba diverged, and I with a few lightly loaded carriers took the southern path over undulating thinly-wooded plains, decorated here and there with scattered flat-topped sandstone hills. The aspect of the country remained the same until we reached Biaggi, beyond which we passed through hummocky granitic country, and traversed the western slope of the Kailema hills, whence the path led down by a long and slow descent to the left bank of the Niger at Jebba.

From Auna to Biaggi we had travelled along the

The Gulbin Kebbi

margin of the plains of Kontagora at an average distance of half a day's journey from the Niger, and between our path and the river itself there intervened a tract of broken rocky country which extended all the way from Bussa to Jebba. "At Jebba the hills close in on either side, and the Niger issues by a double channel from a picturesque gorge which extends northward as a deeply cut and rocky valley as far as Bussa, a distance of seventy-five miles. For eight hundred yards above Jebba the gorge is narrow and bounded by vertical walls of quartzite. The Juju Rock and the other islands which interrupt the channel mount steeply from the river, the rapid current pours over sunken rocks which rise abruptly from the river-bed, and mighty whirlpools bear witness to the depth of the water. Beyond Jebba the quartzite gives place to granite, the vertical walls become rounded wooded slopes, the river broadens its rocky bed and flows in a narrow valley between two belts of broken hilly ground which lead up to the plains of Kontagora and Borgu, 500 feet above the level of the river."

There are three villages at Jebba, the largest being situated on a rocky island in mid-stream, and the other two smaller settlements on either bank of the river at the base of the hills. For a time, in the early days of the British occupation, Jebba was the capital of the Protectorate, and bungalows stood on the summits and slopes of the hills on the island and on either bank. The station, however,

¹ "Geology and Geography of Northern Nigeria."

On Horseback through Nigeria

was found to be particularly unhealthy for Europeans, and ultimately it was deserted in favour of Zungeru on the Kaduna. Of recent years, however, it has again sprung into importance, on account of its having been selected as the spot at which the Lagos Railway Extension will cross the Niger. At the time of my visit, the railhead from Ilorin was within a short distance of the river, and Jebba had been selected as the headquarters of the engineering staff, while clay houses and bungalows were being rapidly erected on the site of the former cantonment and the hills again re-echoed with the sounds of life and industry.

I camped in the Residency hut on the summit of the island. The day was dull and sultry, and a hot oppressive odour rose from the water below. In the afternoon I secured a canoe and two strong men as polers, and set out upstream to visit the Juju Rock, a conical hill of quartzite, which rises abruptly from the river about half a mile above Jebba. Progress was slow in the rapid stream which whirled and eddied round projecting rocks and sunken boulders, and as the canoemen strained at their poles to keep their frail craft in the channel, my guides beguiled the tedious journey with tales of the jealous spirits of the Rock which guards the entrance to the river gorge. According to them, no man has ever with impunity climbed the summit of the Rock and gazed with curious eyes at the haunts of the Juju. Once when the white men lived at Jebba, a daring officer, mocking at the spirits of the Rock, scrambled up the stony

The Gulbin Kebbi

slopes to the very summit of the hill, but what he saw there he never would relate, and soon he sickened, pined, and died, a victim to the speedy vengeance of the outraged spirits. We landed on a projecting spur, whence a stony path led upward to a narrow cave in the side of the Rock. The floor was littered with broken pots and calabashes in which votive offerings to the spirits had been exposed, while the knobs and points of rock around were hung with amulets and charms, the gifts of earnest worshippers of the dreaded Juju. Much to the satisfaction of my native friends, I made no attempt to climb the rocks above, and soon we were once more afloat on the waters of the Niger, with the rushing stream carrying us quickly down to the landing-place at Jebba.

There was heavy rain at night, and in the morning I crossed again from the island to the left bank of the river, and took the road northward to Kontagora. For the first two days, until we reached Bokani, the road followed the railway clearing in the bush, while the path led gently upward from the valley of the river to the plains of Kontagora. Northward from Bokani to Gidan Fatima, the surface of the plains was carved into a succession of plateau-like tracts and shallow flat-bottomed steep-sided valleys, similar in miniature to those of Northern Sokoto. Beyond Gidan Fatima the plains were more continuous, and broken only here and there, as in the neighbourhood of Sonko, by deep and narrow canyon-like valleys. As we approached Kontagora on the sixth day, we passed

On Horseback through Nigeria

several isolated sandstone hills in the neighbourhood of Madara, while the city itself was set in the middle of an open undulating sandy plain, from which rose at long intervals a few scattered hummocks of granite and gneiss.

The town of Kontagora was so named after a remark of its Fulani founder, who, as he led his victorious army southward in the days of the Fulani conquest, came to the banks of the pleasant stream which now flows past the northern wall, and gave the order to halt for the night in the words "Kwanta gora" ("Lay down your water-bottles"). A city soon grew up on this favoured spot, and, situated as it was in the heart of a pagan country, it became in the later years of Fulani domination one of the principal slaving centres in the south. At the time of the British occupation of Nigeria, "the Emir of Kontagora was one of the worst examples of Fulani chiefs who raided the peasantry of their own provinces for slaves . . . and his downfall was received by the population of the province with great joy." An expedition was organised against the combined armies of Kontagora and Nupe in 1901; the town of Kontagora was captured, and the emir fled to the north. It was this emir who "at a later period was captured by the British, and when remonstrated with . . . and urged to abjure slave-raiding and accept British protection, replied with graphic force: 'Can you stop a cat from mousing? When I die I shall be found with a slave in my mouth.'" A new emir was installed in place of the former savage ruler,



TYING UP THE LOADS.

The Gulbin Kebbi

and a British Resident with a small garrison appointed to supervise the affairs of the province.

At Kontagora I found the carriers, whom I had sent forward from Auna, awaiting my arrival, and reinforced by them, my little caravan set out on the following morning upon the last trek to Zungeru, five days away on the banks of the Kaduna. For the first three days, as far as Moriga on the Kara River, the road led over the thinly wooded and thinly populated plains of Kontagora, decorated only by some flat-topped sandstone hills at Tadeli, and a group of granite kopjes at Beri. Beyond Moriga, by a forced march, we crossed the belt of hilly ground which separates the eastern plains of Zaria from those of Kontagora, and on the fifth day a short and easy journey from Garun Gabbas along the wagon road from Zaria, past the transport lines and over the Kaduna bridge, brought us straight to the door of the rest-house within the cantonment itself.

Zungeru is picturesquely situated on rising ground on the left bank of the Kaduna in the extreme west of Zaria province. The Dago, a small tributary of the Kaduna, runs through the middle of the cantonment, and a small native town and market has grown up close to the European quarters. The Government house and the hospital occupy the highest points, and between them lie the civil and military lines with the respective offices and bungalows. "The Kaduna at Zungeru flows in the dry season in a narrow picturesque gorge between white walls of quartzite, which in

On Horseback through Nigeria

the rains are buried under a rushing foaming torrent. Both above and below, its channel is much obstructed by rocks and rapids, as it winds through the belt of hills which separate the rocky plains of western Zaria from the lower plains of Nupe." The rapids extend downstream as far as Wushishi, which is the highest navigable point when the river is in flood. A steam tramway runs from Zungeru through the bush along the bank of the river for a distance of twenty-one miles past Wushishi to Barijuko, up to which barges and canoes are able to ascend even when the river is low.

At Zungeru I paid off my carriers, with a special gift and word of praise to those few who had accompanied me through all my wanderings. I sold my horses and discharged my horse-boys, giving each a written character or "book," as it is called, setting forth his virtues and his faults. Then on the following morning with cook, steward-boys, and interpreter, I travelled by the steam tramway or *jirigin kassa* ("canoe of the land") to Barijuko, where I found a barge or steel canoe waiting to convey me to Mureji at the confluence of the Kaduna and the Niger. These barges are of similar construction to the canoes of the type of the R.M.S. (*S*)*tork*, with the exception that instead of being propelled by steam they are equipped with ten polers, who work more or less harmoniously under the charge of a headman. The banks of the Kaduna below Mureji are decorated with occa-

¹ "Geology and Geography of Northern Nigeria."

The Gulbin Kebbi

sional flat-topped sandstone hills, but towns and villages are rare upon the margin of the river. On the third day we reached Mureji whence a steam canoe conveyed me to Lokoja, past the pinnacle peaks of Egbom, round the bend of the river at Egga, past the busy port of Baro with the beach strewn with rails and girders, and southward as far as Koton Karifi through the gorge of the Niger, where "in places for considerable distances the flat-topped hills still rise up with precipitous slopes on either side in all their ancient grandeur." At Lokoja we made fast alongside the *Kapelli*, which was due to sail on the following morning for Burutu and Forcados.

My tour was over : my work was done. And although my health had been good throughout, and the sights and scenes which I had witnessed both interesting and instructive, it was with barely a sigh of regret that on the morrow I watched the flat-topped Patti fading slowly in the distance. The black man's land can never be the white man's home ; and although choice or necessity may lead a roving spirit even to the shores of Chad, or to the margin of the northern desert, there is nothing in all the land which gladdens the heart so much, as the sight of the shipping at Forcados and the smell of the salt sea breezes, as we bump across the bar into the open sea beyond.

APPENDIX

THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA

WHAT, then, is to be the future of this great land whose scenery is so varied, whose inhabitants are so diverse, and whose history has been so romantic? From the very earliest times the fertile northern plains have been the scene of war and counter war, as successive invaders strove for the possession of this prize of the Sudan. From time immemorial also the southern hills and forests have been the hunting-ground of the northern tribes, the inexhaustible source from which the great markets of the north were stocked with their supplies of slaves. The natural fertility of the soil everywhere assured an abundance of food ; and in the early days inter-tribal encounters added the necessary zest and colour to the everyday life of the untutored inhabitants alike of the plains and of the hills. In the latter days of the Fulani empire, however, a mercenary spirit was introduced into these inter-tribal relations ; and in order to acquire the luxuries of the north from the hands of the Arab slavers, the Mohammedan rulers captured and sold, not only

Appendix

the savage pagans of the hills, but even the un-offending peasantry of their own domains.

All this has changed, however, since the Pax Britannica settled upon the land. Within a few short years slave raiding has been suppressed, inter-tribal wars have been discouraged, the pagans have been confirmed in the possession of their hills, and the turbulent spirits of the northern Fulani curbed and confined. The formerly distressed pagans are grateful for the security of their lives and their homes, and the overburdened peasantry of the plains for their relief from excessive taxation and extortion. The ruling classes of former days are, for the moment, overcome by the rapidity of the change, and profess a lip loyalty to the new regime. From one end of the Protectorate to the other, the casual traveller is impressed by the peaceful pastoral life of the inhabitants whose only enemies now are famine and disease.

And yet this apparent tranquillity can hardly be otherwise than temporary and superficial. A reasoned civilisation cannot be impressed within ten short years upon unlettered mediæval minds. The tranquillity is that of the iron hand: the civilisation is based upon the prestige of the white man and his guns. The primitive passions still are there; and were Britain to retire from the middle Niger, anarchy and disorder would at once run riot throughout the land. The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria is unique in that, in it, Great Britain is not there to ward off from a defenceless people the attacks of foreign invaders. On the contrary, the

On Horseback through Nigeria

whole object of the British occupation has been the protection of the people from themselves, the protection of the simple pagan from the ruthless Mohammedan, and of the Hausa peasantry from their Fulani oppressors. The law and order which have been imposed alike upon Mohammedan and pagan, upon Hausa and Fulani, are, however, entirely foreign to the instincts and traditions of the people themselves; and while at present their attitude is that of passive curiosity, the sameness and monotony of their existence must in time weigh heavily upon their active spirits. Unlettered ease is hard to endure; and it is harder still for a rude and simple warrior to change the whole tenour of his life and devote himself solely to agriculture, cattle-breeding, or petty trading. His food and clothing may be secure, but all the variety has gone from his life. Adventure and sport, so essential to the mediæval mind, are now to him unknown, and even his love of gaudy display can be satisfied only at long and irregular intervals. While, therefore, at present the population appears happy and contented, there is little doubt that at the back of the black man's mind there is a longing for the irresponsibility and picturesqueness of the good old times when might was right throughout the land; and the risk of a local or general insurrection, of a fanatical or emotional character, is a possibility for which for many generations their European masters must be prepared.

Northern Nigeria, moreover, is a state complete in itself with regard to internal trade. Although

Appendix

its inhabitants vary much in degree of civilisation, the country appears to produce within itself all the necessaries and luxuries of native existence. The products of the southern forests are naturally different from those of the open northern plains; and thousands of petty traders are engaged in the interchange of food stuffs and articles of native manufacture. The markets of the larger cities are stocked with merchandise of every description; but with the exception of cheap English or German cotton goods, European salt, and kola-nuts from the coast, almost everything has been produced or manufactured within the country itself. The quantity of imported luxuries is very small and consists chiefly of beads and hardware, silk goods, lump sugar, soap, cigarettes, and matches. The total imports in 1909 did not exceed in value the sum of £350,000, a remarkably small figure when the vast extent of the Protectorate and the great population of the country (8,000,000) are taken into consideration. With the progress of development, the amount of imported goods may be expected to increase, but it must never be forgotten that the natives in their present state of civilisation have few wants which cannot be satisfied as cheaply and as satisfactorily by the products of their own country.

For the same reason the export trade is likewise small and unimportant, its total value in 1909 barely exceeding £400,000. There is little or no demand outside the Protectorate for goods of native manufacture; and in a country where every want

On Horseback through Nigeria

is already satisfied, the progress of civilisation alone can, by raising new wants and new desires, rouse within the people themselves sufficient enthusiasm for the collection of those vegetable or mineral products of their country which are required in the modern world. Shea nuts and palm kernels may be collected in abundance over the greater part of the Protectorate. Rubber is plentiful in the southern forests and ground nuts grow luxuriously on the northern plains. Every town and village has its cotton-fields, and the natives spin the lint and weave substantial fabrics for themselves, while they readily dispose of their scanty surplus at remunerative prices in the local markets. Almost everywhere throughout the Protectorate the soil is favourable for the growth of cotton, and the length of staple could readily be improved. The natives, however, grow little more than enough for their own requirements, and the prices which European buyers can afford to give for cotton-lint are insufficient to remunerate the natives for their toil, and even lower than they can obtain in their own local markets.

The establishment of a great cotton industry in Northern Nigeria is therefore a very difficult problem. It has been suggested that English capitalists should equip large cotton plantations in convenient localities throughout the country; but apart from the cost of white supervision, the price of unskilled native labour within the Protectorate is so very high, being fixed at present at 9d. per day, that the initial outlay and cost of

Appendix

maintenance of such plantations on a sufficiently extensive scale would be practically prohibitive. Until the price of unskilled labour has been reduced at least by half, it is impossible for the agricultural resources of the Protectorate to be developed by others than the natives themselves. To meet this difficulty it has been suggested that the local government should collect the annual tribute of the towns and villages in cotton lint ; but, with callous natives, such a policy could only be successful under compulsion, and compulsion would speedily breed unrest. It would seem, indeed, that the only feasible method of encouraging the natives to extend and develop their cotton plantations is for the Government to distribute selected seed and subsidise the local industry to such an extent as to make the growth of larger quantities of cotton at once sufficiently remunerative to the native peasantry. This course, however, although undoubtedly the simplest, has not yet been favourably entertained by the Imperial Treasury.

The question of the development of the tin-fields lies on a different footing. The high prices which have ruled in the home markets during the last decade for tinstone of good quality have rendered it possible for private companies to pay all the costs of white supervision, of unskilled native labour, and of local transport, and yet to leave a satisfactory margin of profit. The actual demonstration of this possibility by the Niger Company, and the discovery of new and extensive stanniferous areas in Bauchi province have attracted to that district

On Horseback through Nigeria

within the last two years large numbers of prospectors and mining engineers. Many claims have been staked out, and some of the alluvial deposits have been found to be so rich that they may be profitably worked even under great difficulties of labour and water supply. Owing to the excellent quality of the ore, the prospects of developing the tin industry are very promising, and a large increase of local revenue may be expected from this source within the next few years. The tinstone is widely distributed both in alluvial deposits and in lodes over the northern margin of the Bauchi plateau between Badiko, Naraguta and Polchi, and extensive accumulations are also known to occur amongst the Ningi hills to the north.

The development of the tinfields has in the past been greatly handicapped by the difficulties of transport. All the ore won from the alluvial deposits had to be carried by porters for fourteen days in 60-lb. sacks before it reached the river, and the cost of such primitive land transport formed a very heavy item in the total expenditure. This difficulty, however, has no longer to be faced, as the Government have sanctioned the construction of a narrow gauge line from Zaria into the heart of the tin area. The future of the tin industry is therefore assured: but it must never be forgotten that the development of the tinfields can have relatively little influence upon the progressive evolution of the country as a whole. The immediate effect, indeed, apart from the temporary enrichment of the workers, is rather the reverse

Appendix

of beneficial, as the native tin-smelting industry, which was formerly carried on at Liruei-Kano, is now, owing to the difficulty of finding ore, likely to be abandoned. The natives are strictly excluded by the mining companies from those localities from which they formerly drew their supplies of ore, and in consequence several communities, at one time rich and prosperous, are now in danger of being reduced to poverty. It seems probable also that within a period of twenty or twenty-five years all the profitable alluvials will be exhausted; and serious attention will then, if not before, require to be devoted to the development of the agricultural resources of the Protectorate.

The Baro-Kano Railway and the northern extension of the Lagos Railway to Jebba and Zungeru, are the most important public works which have yet been undertaken within the Protectorate. The first train entered Kano in March, 1911, and it is confidently anticipated that the direct communication thus established between the markets of Hausaland and the river Niger and the port of Lagos, will result in the speedy development of the northern states. For reasons already enumerated, however, any very great increase in the import and export trade of the Protectorate cannot be expected, until with the progress of civilisation a younger generation, dissatisfied with the simple ways of its fathers, finds it advantageous to its own comfort and prosperity to devote itself to the task of developing the latent possibilities of the country. It is hoped that this day may be

On Horseback through Nigeria

hastened by the dissemination of European learning amongst the ruling classes, and a beginning in this direction has already been made by the establishment at Kano of both elementary and technical schools for *mallamai* and the sons of chiefs.

INDEX

INDEX

- ABO**, 25
Akiri, 122
Alexander, Lieutenant Boyd, 210, 215
Angass, 102
Ankwe, 107
Argungu, 274, 280, 282
Ari, 236, 237, 240
Arofu, 111, 116 ; lead-mines of, 117 ; precautions at, 118
Assab, 73
Awe, 119
Awok, 155, 156
- BAJOGA**, 150
Bantaji, Rock of, 108
Barbur, plains of, 170
Baro-Kano railway, 45, 85, 304
Barth, H., 179, 180, 181, 183, 184, 194, 195, 249, 253, 263, 264, 268, 270, 275, 284
Bashar, 128
Bauchi, 92 ; scenery round, 90 ; central plains of, 140
Bauchi plateau, *see* Plateau, Bauchi
Beggars, professional, 57
Benue, 42, 44 ; canoes on, 113, 115
Bima hills, 169, 170
Birnin Kebbi, 283
- Bornu**, 169 *et seq.* ; plains of, 178 ; kingdom of, 179, 209 ; fall of, 179 ; British occupation of, 180
Bre, 191, 192, 201
Buduma, 195
Bukuru, 75, 80, 84
Bura, 236 ; reception at, 240, 241
Burmi, 59, 148, 170, 274
Burutu, 18
Bush camp, 61
Bush fire, at Igbo, 32, 33 ; at Chibuk, 177
Bussa, 289
- CANOES**, types of, 111, 195
Carriers, class of, 37 ; embarkation of, 41 ; at Loko, 45 ; with tinstone, 50, 56, 58 ; on the march, 63, 65, 66, 123, 150 ; pagan carriers, 88 ; at Ibi, 111 ; on night march, 137 ; at Nafada, 147 ; at Zembu, 152
Chad, *see* Lake Chad
Chibuk, 175
Chongwom, 161
Christmas Day, 65, 68
Christmas Eve, 64
Cooks, native, 20
Cotton, 302

Index

- DAIA, 217
Dala, Mt., 251, 259
Darroro, 69, 70
Deba Habe, 151, 153, 165, 169
Deu, 141
Dingaia, 229
Dozi, 215, 216
Dukshi, 172
Dumbum, 219
Dusua, 171
- EMPIRE, S.W., 18; accommodation on, 19
- FAGAM, 229, 245
Fika, 212, 214
Firki, 182
Forcados, 16, 17, 297; River, 16, 22
Fulani, of Bauchi, 94; of Gongola Valley, 150; of Hausaland, 225, 238, 245, 247, 261, 272; bush-Fulani, 139
- GADAMA, 229, 233
Ganna Ganna, 25
Gateri, 35
Giro, 285
Golo, 142
Gombe, 145
Gongila, 148
Gongola River, faddama of, 142; valley of, 143, 145, 170
Guinea worm, 160
Gujba, 204, 206, 208
Gulani, 170, 171
Gulbin Kebbi, 277
Gurkawa, 106
- HADEIJA, 247
Hardawa, 223
- Harmattan, 29, 32, 71
Hausaland, borders of, 210 *et seq.*; plains of, 222, 243; Fulani conquest of, 252; British occupation of, 254, 273
Horses, liable to disease, 46; in canoes, 110, 111
- IBI, 109, 110
Idah, 30
Igbo, hills of, 32
Iron industry, 127, 138, 141, 186
Itobe, 32
- JAGINDE, 65, 67; market-day at, 67
Jebba, 290, 291
Jeb-Jeb, 132
Jellum, 218
Jemaari, 245
Juju Rock, 292
- KADUNA RIVER, 296
Kagoro hills, 69, 71; tribesmen of, 69
Kaltunga, 167
Kanna, 126
Kano, 251, 255, 259
Kantana, 127
Katagum, 245, 246, 247
Katsina, 265
Kazaure, 263
Keffi, 54, 58, 59
Kereng, 95, 98; king of, 98; volcanic cone of, 99
Kerri Kerri, 146, 209; cañon valleys of, 213; escarpment of, 214, 215, 216
Kibyen people, 73, 74, 76, 77; villages of, 73
Kila, 244
Kirifi, 141
Kogin Delimi, 81, 235

Index

- Kontagora, 294
 Kudu Valley, 129
 Kukawa, 179, 181, 187-91, 201, 202, 209
 Kurefi, 268
 Kwakwassa, 64
 Kwankyam, 125
- LAKE CHAD, 178, 181, 183; description of, 192-200, 209
 Lead-mines, of Arofu, 117; of Kudu Valley, 131
 Lecture, native, 39, 40
 Lele, 213
 Letter, characteristic native, 121
 Ligri, 133
 Loko, 44; arrival at, 45
 Lokoja, 33, 34, 35, 297
- MAIDUGARI, 176, 181
 Maifoni, 179, 180, 205
 Marghi, 173, 174, 177
 Mohammédans, 30, 90, 211, 229
 Mongonu, 185, 203
 Monkeys, origin of, 91
 Munchi, 117
 Murrur, 246
- NAFADA, 146
 Naraguta, 70, 81, 84
 Nassarawa, 53, 54; sariki of, 54
 Ngell, 80, 84; reception at, 85
 Nigeria, future of, 298
 Niger River, 25, 285; delta of, 16, 22, 24; navigation of, 26, 33; description of, 26, 29, 31, 286, 289
 Ningi, 236, 237, 238
- ONITSHA, 26; convicts at, 27
- PAGANS, of Ita, 48; of Gidan Dutsi, 52; of Bauchi plateau, 72, 76; of Sura, 98; of Angass, 102; of Gurkawa, 106; of Kanna, 126; of Ligri, 133; of Gateri, 135; of Gongola Valley, 151; of Tangale, 154, 165; of Southern Bornu, 173; of Kerri Kerri, 211; of Ningi, 236
 Panda, 154
 Panguru, 138
 Panyam, plains of, 97; king of, 97, 101; truculent people of, 100
 Patti, Mt., 36, 41, 297
 Plateau, Bauchi, 60, 69; new road over, 70; inhabitants of, 70, 72, 76; ascent of, 72; treeless aspect of, 75, 76; cold nights on, 78; striking scenery on, 79; descent from, 81, 82; first acquaintance with, 85; development of tinfields on, 83, 188
 Polchi, 82, 89
 Potiskum, 210
 Pyem, 95, 96, 101
- RABEH, 179, 180, 189, 206
- SALT, at Awe, 119; manufacture of, 120; at Akiri, 123; at Jeb-Jeb, 132; of vegetable origin, 186; saltbush, 200
Sarikin Muslimin, 149, 273
 Shira, 226, 245
 Siwak tree, 200
 Sokoto, 253, 273, 274
 (*S*)*lor*k, *R.M.S.*, 41; navigation of, 42
 Superstition, power of, 129, 131
- TANGALE PEAK, 136, 153, 159, 168
 Tangalto, 163, 165
 Tiffi, 237

Index

- Tinfields, discovery of, 83 ; locality of, 88 ; development of, 303
Trade, import and export, 301
Traders, native, 38, 48, 50, 62
Tunga, 116, 118
Ture, 155, 157, 168 ; sariki of, 155, 158 ; galadima of, 158, 162, 164
VOLCANIC hills, 105, 106, 108, 119, 159, 172
WASE, 104, 123 ; Rock of, 104, 105, 108, 123, 127
Wurnu, 275, 276
YAMI, 220
Yauri, 287
Yayu, 221
Yelwa (in Muri), 107, 123 ; (in Kontagora), 286, 287
ZAGAWA, 224
Zago, 144
Zungeru, 292, 295

Cornell University Library
DT 515.F18

On horseback through Nigeria;



3 1924 028 648 784

oIn

