

CHAPTER VII

NIGERIAN ENTERPRISE

BRITISH NIGERIA, embracing some 335,700 square miles of territory with a population of over 18,700,000 has been characterized by the *London Times*, as "the only British dependency in any part of the world, which approaches the Indian Empire in magnitude and variety."¹ It lies on the West Coast wholly within the tropics, and possesses an area equal to that of France and the United Kingdom combined, densely populated with intelligent and progressive peoples, and richly endowed by nature with a variety of soil, favorable climatic conditions and economic resources. Although this wonderful basin of the Niger and its tributaries was known to the people of ancient times and referred to by the historian Herodotus twenty-five hundred years ago, it has been one of the latest portions of Africa to be opened to the European world. Its history, however, is as fascinating as it is unique.

It has been shown above² how the upper waters of the Niger had been discovered and explored by Mungo Park, Major Denham, and Captain Clapperton, and how the brothers Lander — Richard and John — had paddled down this solitary but majestic stream from Boussa to its delta during 1830 and 1831, demonstrating at last that its out-

¹ The writer is here speaking of dependencies, not of colonies. He is also laboring under the impression prevalent for so many years that Nigeria was from 600,000 to 1,000,000 square miles in area. British East Africa and Uganda together, Rhodesia, and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, all exceed it in area, but cannot be compared with it in density of population and fertility of soil.

² Chapter I, Introduction.