

# FLYING OVER AFRICA



Workmen's Huts in the Belgian Congo

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

**F**LYING over the sands of the Sahara desert, the jungles of wildest Africa, and the lake country of East Africa, French aviators recently crossed the continent at its widest part in a seaplane. Taking the air near Marseille, the two French navy planes skirted the Spanish west coast of Africa, landing at Dakar, the westernmost city of the "Dark Continent."

They found Dakar, port of call of vessels plying between European, South African and South American ports, a thriving city of about 25,000 people, with well laid-out streets, schools, hospitals and workshops. Dakar owes its importance as a port to the nearness to South America. While Liverpool is more than 3,000 miles from New York, Dakar is only slightly more than half that distance from Pernambuco, Brazil, the easternmost port of South America.

The Berbers and Fulas represented in the city's population were met with at every stop in the Sudan and Nigeria after the flyers turned inland, for both races are scattered over the north and northwest portion of Africa. The Berbers are believed to have been at one time masters of the Mediterranean, and it is probable that the continent was named for the Afrigha tribe, a sub-tribe of the Berbers. Evidence has been uncovered dating back to the Stone age, of the existence of a race of people resembling the Berbers who inherited North Africa.

Unlike other African peoples, some of the Berbers might pass for Americans, if they donned American clothing. Their skin is light, their eyes blue, and many are blonds. Although the Berbers and Arabs have been closely associated for centuries, and are Mohammedans, the two races have remained distinct.

#### Fulas Are Strong.

The Fulas were originally herdsmen in the western and central Sudan, but they extended their domain to Nigeria. That they are a mixture of Berber and negro is the most generally accepted theory, yet their reddish brown or light chestnut colored skin, oval faces, even smooth hair, straight even noses and delicately shaped lips differentiate them from the negro type.

Taken as a whole the Fulas are intelligent people with great strength of character. They are famous for their horsemanship and as soldiers are mostly cavalrymen.

At Bamako, on the Niger river, one of the planes became disabled and was left for repairs. The other plane followed the Niger to Timbuktu, so-called "city of mystery" which lies nine miles from the river proper, on the edge of the Sahara. This was one of the most interesting stopping places on the flight.

Whether Timbuktu is entered from the south by the "water" route or the bridge paths from the north or west, the city seems nothing more than a labyrinth of narrow streets with mud walls thrown up on both sides without any sense of direction. Regardless of what street one takes, after a few right and left turns, he finds himself in the famous market place.

Timbuktu was founded as a trading center in the Eleventh century and has never lost that characteristic. Of the 8,000 inhabitants many are nomads who pass through with cattle or engage in the great salt trade from the central Sahara. The "home-folks" lead simple, fairly cheerful, but uneventful lives.

#### Up the Niger and Benue.

From Timbuktu, the planes followed the Niger to Lokoja, Nigeria, at the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers in British territory. Lokoja is the oldest white settlement in the interior of Nigeria and was once the seat of administration for the inland provinces. At the meeting place of two great rivers, it was, too, the door-

way to the north. Something of this function still survives, but the completion of a railway in recent years, running from Lagos on the coast to the relatively healthy uplands of northern Nigeria, and passing far west of Lokoja, has decreased the importance of the latter town.

From Lokoja the aviators flew up the Benue river and into French equatorial Africa, in the heart of which lay another stopping place, Archambault. There the flyers had passed from Mohammedan territory into a region of fetishism. A sect of this primitive people has some unusual features. Its members spurn clothes, wearing only a thin strip of cloth and a head belt. Ochre clay is daubed over their bodies, and they adorn themselves with glass-bead necklaces, metal bracelets, and ostrich-feather head-dresses. Each member always carries a small stool, and much of his time is spent seated on it in solemn dignity. Their secret communications are through prolonged guttural coughs.

Turning southward on leaving Fort Archambault, the flyers again left French territory at the Ubangi river and entered the Belgian Congo. This huge Belgian possession is more than 77 times the size of Belgium. On their way to Stanleyville, metropolis of the Congo, the aviators flew over vast forests. One, the so-called Pygmy forest, covers 25,000 square miles. Seldom is the ground in this whole area touched by the rays of the tropical sun, for the underbrush and the foliage of the giant trees are so thick that only here and there a pencil-like stream of light pierces the darkness beneath. The jungles seethe with vicious animals and insects, and the Pygmies, who seldom grow more than four feet in height, are the principal inhabitants of this wooded fastness.

#### The Belgian Congo.

About 10,000 of the 9,000,000 people in the Belgian Congo are white. Most of them live at the numerous stations established throughout the colony by the Belgian government. The natives are black and include many different types according to their geographic location.

The resources of the colony have hardly been scratched. Gold, tin, copper, lead, rubber, palm nuts, palm oil, and iron are important exports. Ironstone hills in the southeastern regions have an estimated deposit of millions of tons of high-grade ore. The rubber supply seems inexhaustible.

At Stanleyville the aviators found a busy little town, built on both sides of the Congo river. On the east bank is the headquarters of the vice governor and many up-to-date residences, while the left bank is occupied by railway terminals and workshops. Palm trees lining the avenues in the residential section remind one of a southern Florida boulevard. All this modernization has come about since the eighties when Stanleyville was little more than a native village.

Flying in a southeasterly direction, the plane reached the African Great Lakes, passed over its second stretch of British territory, and came to the Indian ocean at Killimane, a small town about midway along the coast of Mozambique, Portuguese territory. The city of Mozambique, the next stop, is situated on a small island about three miles off the coast. It was once the headquarters of the Portuguese East African government and the center of the East African slave trade. The slave markets have disappeared, yet Mozambique has changed little during the last few hundred years.

Majunga, largest port on the west coast of Madagascar, required a long hop across the Mozambique channel. From this point the aviators flew to Antananarivo, capital of the third largest of the world's islands (outside the Arctic regions), thus ending the first half of their trip.

## LIFE'S LITTLE JESTS



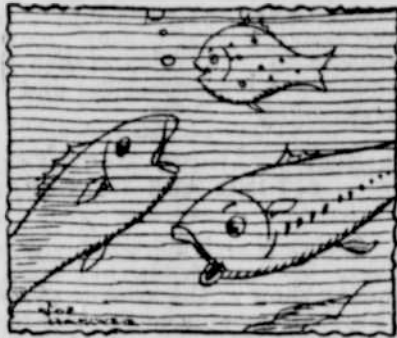
### IN HIS PLACE

Young Preacher (to Profiteering Landlord)—I think it is very unjust that you should raise the rent of my poor parishioners over 100 per cent.

Irate Landlord—If I want to hear you preach, sir, I'll attend your regular services where you should do your preaching.

Young Preacher—You may have that privilege next Sunday. I'm going to preach at the penitentiary.

### EXPLAINED



First Fish—How did he get a sunstroke?

Second Fish—Why he got bumped into by a sunfish.

### Would I?

I often wonder if, when florists aim My purse to touch,  
A rose by any other name  
Would cost as much.

### His Wish Probable

They had met at a dance, and from the first moment he knew she was the one girl for him. He thought he might just tell her.

"I could face death dancing with you," he breathed.  
"You probably will if my husband sees you," she answered sweetly.—  
Stray Stories.

### Recompense

Jones—Sorry, old man, that my hen got loose and scratched up your garden.

Smith—That's all right; my dog ate your hen.  
Jones—Fine! I just ran over your dog and killed him.

### Proof Enough

"How do you know that's a telephone girl that Jiggs is waiting on?"  
"Because he said 'Hello' and she didn't answer."—Progressive Grocer.

### Too Bad

Alice—Don't worry, dear. You have a host of friends.  
Mac—Yes, but so few of my friends are hosts.

### Safety First

Insurance Agent—What! You're going to drop your insurance?  
Jones—Yes, I've quit walking and bought a car.

### SMELLED A RAT



"Why did that woman look so much like a cat when her husband came in?"  
"I think she smelled a rat."

### Aviator's Wife's Joy

The aviator's wife is strange  
In one way, no doubt,  
Her heart rejoices when she sees  
Her husband down and out.

### We Suspected It

Husband—My dear, a great physician says women require more sleep than men.  
Wife (suspiciously)—Oh?  
"Yes, my dear; so—er—perhaps you'd better not wait up for me tonight."

### A Keen Observer

Moore—When does a woman really begin to get old?  
Watson—When she moves her mirror into a darker corner of her room.

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