

Nairobi

Less than 50 years ago there were waste and swampy lands such as this, the Maasai herded their cattle, their only wealth. But today in this once barren land, stands Nairobi, capital of Kenya. A great African metropolis of more than 120,000 people. Now a centre of ever-growing industry and nationwide commerce.

As each working day begins, long lines of motor cars driving from the outlying suburbs, bringing hundreds of businessmen to their various occupations. In the main streets, African police ably control the growing traffic. Lorries, cars, buses, vehicles of all kinds.

And from Mombasa, the great sea-gate of Kenya, 330 miles away on the Indian Ocean, the daily morning train arrives, bringing goods of all kinds and people of many races, to this great centre of commerce, Nairobi. The railway platform is a scene of constant activity. Business folk, merchants, officials, tourists and porters throng the station and the approaches outside.

As the day advances, there is a continuous movement of people along the busy pavements. Africans, Asians, Europeans. Great stores meet their every need. Food, clothing, furniture, goods from all over the world. Whilst in the African market, African traders arrive daily with their many and varied products.

Food, meat, vegetables in plenty. African fruit of the finest quality is abundant. It's the meeting place for Africans from all parts of the territory. To the older people, Nairobi's growth must seem near to magic with its daily contrasts of the new with the old. Such as the modern post office, with the aged letter writer still busy at his job.

And the great blocks of flats and huge hotels, standing where once the skin huts of Maasai herdsmen stood. And motorcars parked where once the cattle roamed. There are many fine public buildings too such as the town hall, the railway headquarters, banks and the public library. Everywhere there is progress. And there is time and place for sport as well as work. At the African stadium, Rugby football is a familiar spectacle.

But great as Nairobi is already, daily it grows greater. New buildings are rising on every side. Huge offices grow higher and higher. Fresh blocks of flats spread their frontage along the streets. Whilst in every direction Nairobi is extending. New roads grow swiftly, made firm by heavy traffic. New railways, the vital arteries of commerce, are stretching their amtracks far out into the land beyond. And new bridges span above the roads that the railways cross. And modern airports as at Eastleigh meet the needs of the great airships that fly to and from the distant lands beyond the seas, thousands of miles away.

And as each working day ends, and the rush and the bustle of industry slackens, the businessmen drive out again to their suburban homes. There is transport also by the large motorbuses that have taken the place of the old himali carts and rickshaws. The buses serve many people; workers, tradesmen, shoppers, all intent on reaching home. For after daily toil, comes leisure.

Nairobi's busy day ends. The tired workers rest. With the coming of night, Nairobi sleeps.

But another event has raised the prestige of Nairobi to further greatness. On March the 30th 1950, Nairobi became by royal charter, an African city. This proud honour was bestowed by his Royal highness, the duke of Gloucester, brother of his majesty King George IV. On the day of this memorable ceremony, crowds without parallel in Nairobi's history thronged the colourful streets to welcome their royal visitors.

The Duke of Gloucester presented the royal charter to the mayor of Nairobi. And from that moment, Nairobi town became Nairobi city. The next day a pageant paraded the streets with representations of prehistoric animals. Strange monsters of an Africa thousands of years ago. And there were many interesting scenes recalling events in Nairobi's history. It was a great occasion that will live in the memory of all.

Long may Nairobi city prosper.