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Taking the Salute

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# *My Life*



BY

ALHAJI SIR AHMADU BELLO

K.B.E., M.H.A.

SARDAUNA OF SOKOTO

*Premier of the Northern Region of Nigeria*



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## PREFACE

I HAVE not written this book through any wish to obtain further publicity, or because I like writing about myself, but because I have been persuaded to write the story of my life as it may throw some light on the development of my country during a time of change and progress in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

I have lived through practically the whole period of the British Colonial occupation of Northern Nigeria and the final achievement of self-government and independence.

I have been called upon to play a part in this fascinating development of an independent nation, and the account of what I have done in my life may be of assistance to students and others who are interested in the differing patterns of the newly independent nations of Africa.

I have never sought the political limelight or a leading position in my country. But I could not avoid the obligation of my birth and destiny. My great-great-grandfather built an Empire in the Western Sudan. It has fallen to my lot to play a not inconsiderable part in building a new nation. My ancestor was chosen to lead the Holy War which set up his Empire. I have been chosen by a free electorate to help build a modern State.

I am not unaware that I have often been a controversial figure. I have been accused of lack of nationalism and political awareness because I considered that independence must wait until a country has the resources to support and make a success of independence. I have been accused of conservatism because I believe in retaining all that is good in our old traditions and customs and refusing to copy all aspects of other alien civilisations. I have been accused of many other things, but the views



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of others have never made me deviate from the path which I am certain is the one which will benefit my people and country. I have always based my actions on my inward convictions, on my conscience and on the dictates of my religion.

Many people have assisted me in different ways in the preparation of this book. They cannot all be mentioned by name, but I am most grateful to them. I must, however, mention my old friend Sir Rex Niven, whose advice and help in the preparation of this book have been invaluable—I am indeed grateful to him.

This, then, is the story of my life. The attempt of a Northern Nigerian to do his duty by his people and the principles of his religion. As is written in the Holy Koran, Chapter XI, Verse 88, 'I only desire reform as far as I can. There is no power in me save through Allah. In Him do I trust and to Him do I turn.'

AHMADU BELLO

KADUNA

*9 August 1961*

