

Eustace Palmer's "My Epic Journey: The Making of A Cosmopolitan" is a remarkable and most compelling account of the author's life and experiences, from the times he could recollect as a toddler, to his departure in his middle years for the United States of America. Blessed with long life and the resources to travel extensively, his memoirs could therefore go back eighty years and move from events and attitudes such as the end of the second world war and the electoral defeat of the British heroic leader Winston Churchill in 1945, to the start of the Sierra Leone civil war in 1991. Of course, the memoirs are about the individual, about the development of the gifted young boy who would eventually become a celebrated and phenomenally successful teacher, scholar and academic; but they are also national, societal, and even international. Starting with the young boy's exposure to a colonial educational system designed to promote the interests of the British colonizer rather than colonized nationals, the memoirs show the boy taking full advantage of it nevertheless and becoming a "perfect product of the system" and one of the most successful youths of the time in the whole of West Africa. The boy is also growing up in Freetown Krio society, and the memoirs inevitably give a detailed presentation of Krio social, cultural, and religious practices and attitudes. Moving to Britain to pursue higher education, the young man is well placed to study and appreciate the history, culture, educational system, and politics of the United Kingdom, and there are powerful vignettes presenting various aspects of the British social, political and educational structure. The memoirs move to Europe which the student visits several times to improve his knowledge of some European languages and gain understanding of the European character and significant historical European events such as the Renaissance. He visits the United States where he becomes acutely aware of the momentum of The Civil Rights Movement and the signing of various civil rights bills. The reader is held spellbound by the accounts of momentous world events such as the death of Pope John the twenty-third and the election of Pope Paul the sixth, the death and funeral of Sir Winston Churchill, the death and funeral of President Kennedy, and, later, the Wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. It is obvious that the young man is preparing himself for leadership and to become not only a model African, but also a model cosmopolitan. He is cognizant of his Krio/African heritage, but he is also preparing himself to become a global citizen who could respond adequately to world trends attitudes.

Returning to Sierra Leone after acquiring "the Golden Fleece," he places the experience, knowledge, and leadership qualities he has acquired to the service of his country, particularly as a scholar and educator in the field of academia, but he is also active in the educational and religious fields in general. The account of political, educational, and religious developments in this post-independence period is the most riveting of all. Sierra Leoneans in general, and Professor Palmer's former students and colleagues in particular,

will find this book enlightening and riveting, but so will other readers in Europe, the United States, and Africa.