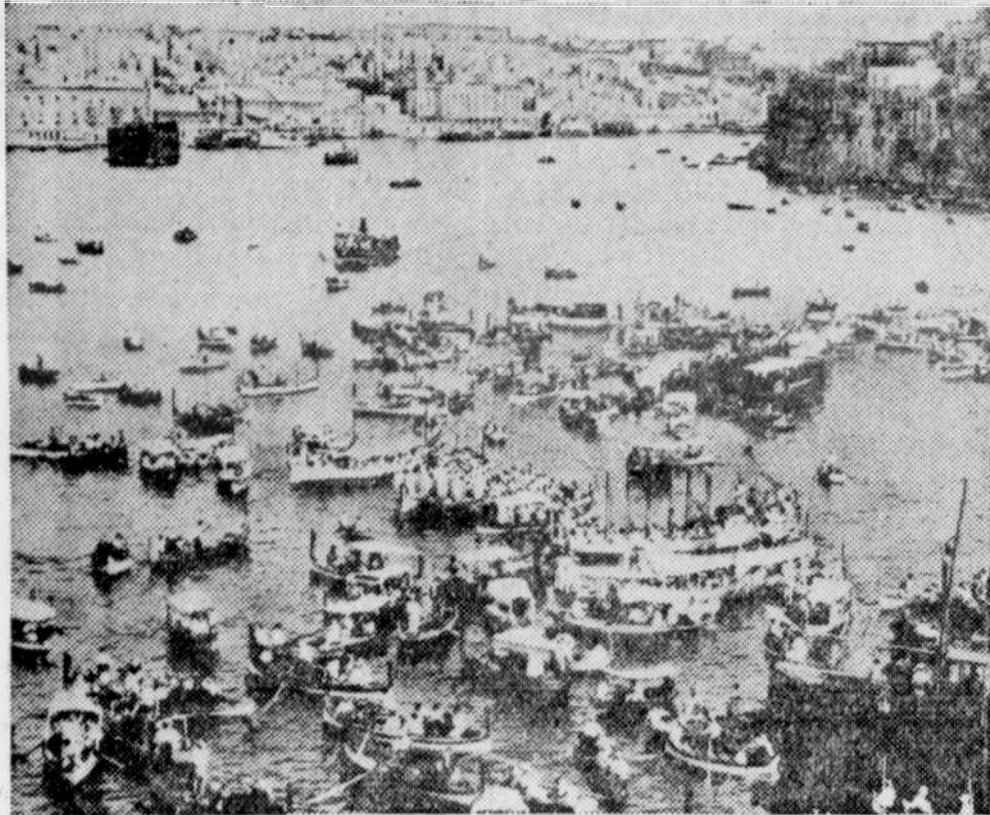


## BRITAIN'S MALTA



View of the Crowded Harbor of Malta.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

ONLY seventeen and a half miles long and nowhere more than nine miles wide, Malta, important island in Britain's lifeline to the East, is the principal island of one of the smallest archipelagos in the world. It survives from those remote days when continents were differently shaped and the Mediterranean was a series of lakes, divided by land bridges that connected Europe with Africa.

Of one of these bridges the Maltese archipelago is today the sole existing pier, the one fragment extant of a causeway along which prehistoric pachyderms and ruminants groped their puzzled way to the African warmth when driven from Europe by its increasing glaciation.

Some of these mighty beasts lingered too long on the Maltese pier, and the cave of Ghar Dalam, near the southern extremity of the island, is full of their bones, converted in the course of ages into perfectly preserved fossils.

Together with the other inhabited islands of the group, Gozo, population 23,796, and Comino, population 41, and including the naval, military, and air force establishments, Malta has some 258,400 souls—that is to say, more than 2,000 to the square mile. Thus it is one of the most densely settled geographical units.

### In Strategic Position.

Why has this rocky little excrescence from the bed of the Mediterranean played a major part in history? Why does it play a part in the life of the modern world at such variance with its topographical dimensions?

The answer lies, first, in its all-important strategic position between Sicily and North Africa, and, secondly, in its possession of some of the finest harbors in the world.

The tongue of rock on which La Valette built his capital is in shape not unlike Manhattan island, with the Grand harbor, where the battle-ships are berthed, corresponding to the Hudson, and Marsamuscetto harbor, the anchorage of destroyers and smaller craft, to the East river.

But there is the difference that, both from the Grand harbor and Marsamuscetto, there branch several subsidiary creeks, providing secure and ideal anchorages, in the past for the galley of the knights and their predecessors, at the present day for the Mediterranean fleet of Great Britain.

All around Grand harbor rise, bold and still perfect, the Knights' magnificent fortifications, intended to insure that never again should Malta and the order have to endure at the hands of the Moslems, to whom the Hospitalers were an ever-present menace, another such siege as that of 1565.

Then, after a desperate struggle of nearly half a year, the Knights and the local population were just able, by superhuman efforts, to repel the flower of the army of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent.

If Malta's quarter of a million

population is large, measured by the area on which it has to live, it is small for a separate nation. For the Maltese are a nation unto themselves, with their own language, their own traditions, their own physical characteristics, and a history that is perhaps one of the longest to which any people can lay claim.

### Very Ancient Civilization.

In Malta and Gozo the art of building in remote Stone age days reached a development of skill and refinement unknown in other centers of the megalithic world. Thus Malta was already an ancient center of civilization when the "tempestuous wind called Euroclydon," that still whistles across it during the winter months under its modern name of gregale, the "Greek wind," drove St. Paul to its shores. Thereafter, the Roman chief of the island, Publius, became its first bishop.

During the many centuries of their recorded history the Maltese have had many rulers: the Phoenicians and their offspring, the Carthaginians, then Romans, Arabs, Normans, Aragonese and Castilians, then for two and a half centuries the International Order of St. John of Jerusalem (we also know them as the Hospitalers, and as the Knights of Rhodes and Knights of Malta) and finally, after a brief French occupation, the British.

Despite so cosmopolitan a history, the Maltese have clung tenaciously to their ancient Semitic tongue, which is recognized by experts to be of Phoenician structure, and, to all intents and purposes, the language of Dido and Hannibal.

Naturally, the old Maltese language has borrowed, in the course of ages, words from other languages, but it has always fitted them into its own Semitic framework. The Maltese who emigrated to Asia and to the north coast of Africa have no difficulty in making themselves understood by their Arabic-speaking neighbors, especially in Palestine and Morocco.

A paleontologist may wander about the cave of Ghar Dalam and study the remains of the elephants and hippopotamuses which left their bones there when the world was yet young. Advancing from these and from the Neanderthal man, of whom possible traces have been found in Malta, many thousands of years into the Stone age, he will find in Malta and Gozo a series of neolithic sanctuaries—Tarshin, the Hypogeum at Hal Saflieni, Hagiar Kim, M'naidra, Il Gigantia, to mention only the most important—unequaled elsewhere.

Other survivals of a different sort are the cart tracks which traverse many of the barren rocky surfaces of the island, the tram lines of prehistoric man. The width of the tracks of the two-wheeled carts which, with their gaily caparisoned little ponies or donkeys, are the traditional vehicle of the Maltese farmer today, correspond almost exactly with those of his ancient predecessor.

On the small, uninhabited islet of Filfla, now used only as a target for naval gun practice, survives a

lizard of dark green spotted with red, which occurs nowhere else except in this group.

The museum in Valletta has an admirable collection of the artistic products of the Stone and Bronze ages. Among them are the astonishing fat deities characteristic of Maltese neolithic sculpture.

If one wishes to see how the distant forbears of the present population cultivated their land, one has only to watch the Maltese farmer of today plowing his field; and a student will note the eyes of Osiris still painted on the bows of Malta's sturdy little schooners.

In Malta, during mid-Lent, are the carnival festivities common to other Mediterranean places, with features of more special interest. One of these is the Parata dance in the palace square, which takes its symbolism from the capture of a Maltese bride by a Moslem corsair.

### The Imnaria Races.

At the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, June 29, are the densely thronged Imnaria races. These races for horses and donkeys are of unknown but undoubtedly great age. The course is a piece of straight, hard road leading uphill to the big square in front of Notabile, where from his great stone box the grand master in former days handed down, and now the governor of Malta hands down, the banners of victory to the winning competitors.

The name Imnaria is a corruption of luminaria, illumination, for it was the custom on that day to illuminate the churches of Notabile and adjacent Rabat in honor of the two saints. A more picturesque, if less trustworthy, tradition derives Imnaria from Hymen, the god of marriage, it being supposed that the young men of the island were wont in former times to choose their wives from among the maidens coming to watch the contest.

The banners still given as prizes are long and narrow pieces of brocade of different colors. The fortunate winners take them back to their village to be used as altar cloths of the parish churches for the ensuing year.

Visitors are always interested in the faldetta (more properly called ghonnella) of the Maltese women. This headdress does not owe its existence, as some allege, to the excessive gallantry of Bonaparte's troops, but is of much more ancient origin. It is a voluminous hood of rich silk, stiffened inside the top edge by a piece of cardboard about a yard long, black everywhere save in the villages of Zabbar and Zejtun, where it is blue. One end rests on the head while the other has to be held.

### Called Wool Cotton for Many Years in Britain

Very few of the millions of Lancashire folk who get their living from cotton are aware of how it came to get that name. Yet the word cotton had made itself at home in Britain long before we began to import the hairs of the gossypium shrub, or cotton plant. Wool was called cotton six centuries ago, says a writer in Pearson's Weekly.

In the Fourteenth century, a colony of Germans were brought over from the continent by Edward III, and were sent to the village of Manchester, amid country that was then wild and barren, to spin and weave woolen stuffs. Shirts in those days were woven of hair, and gowns were woolen. And for some 200 years, the woolen fabrics of Manchester were known to our ancestors as cotton.

The words cot, cottage, cot-house and coast, besides cotton, all mean things laid alongside each other, like the straw in thatch, the fibres on thread and the sea and land along the shore. Many other things besides cotton have obtained their names from the way in which they are worked.

About 250 years after the arrival of the German colony of "cotton" spinners of woolen stuffs, the hairs of the gossypium found their way into England from Turkey, and were wrought into Manchester goods. Although a vegetable had replaced an animal material, the old name of the manufacturing process stuck to the new fabric.

## Through A WOMAN'S EYES

by  
JEAN NEWTON

### A STRONG MAN SHOULD NOT BE EASILY INFLUENCED

"DEAR Jean Newton: "When in New York I saw a play in which a man of integrally fine character is led astray, during his wife's absence, by a bouncer of a friend who takes lightly things which the young man himself holds sacred. Entirely against his natural impulses, he is led into a flirtation which becomes a serious love affair. Throughout he at no time takes the initiative, his guilt extending only to letting himself be led into trouble. He is still too fine to carry on a liaison when his wife returns, and tries then to end the relationship. This results in the suicide of the girl and the man's life is smashed up. He pays a terrible price for his mistake. And, by implication, the blame is placed on the bouncer who led him into trouble. There is nothing to say for him, of course, but it seems to me that for an author to present a character as

fine and superior, and then to have him stoop to something low simply because of someone else's influence, is untrue psychology. I think the really fine person remains true to himself in spite of bad influences. What do you think, Jean Newton?"

I am inclined to agree that we are entitled to expect something more of a really fine person than that he should do nothing common only so long as he is not tempted. If the person with real character cannot withstand temptation, cannot stand up against the sort of influences that would tear him down, then he is not so very different as he should be from his weaker brother. A strong tree does not fall over before winds that would devastate a weaker one, and a strong man or woman is expected to stand up before temptation or unworthy influences. There is an old Sanskrit proverb which says: "If a man with eyes is led by someone else, it is clear that he does not see with his eyes."

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## Bedtime Story by Thornton W. Burgess

### WHERE THE RATS WERE.

IF BILLY MINK didn't know where the rats who had left the big barn had gone to, the farmer who owned the big barn and the henhouse and the woodpile knew. Yes, indeed, the farmer and his family knew just where those rats were. They were in the farmhouse!

You see, the wise gray old leader of the rats knew the safest place for them was in that farmhouse. In the first place it was big and that meant that there was plenty of room with ever and ever so many hiding places. There was food there, plenty of it, to be stolen. They could be very comfortable in that farmhouse. More than this, they would be safe from Billy Mink.

That gray old leader knew that Billy Mink would hesitate a long time about actually entering the house because of his fear of man. He didn't believe that Billy would dream of looking for them in that house, especially if he couldn't track them over there. This Billy couldn't do, as the wise old leader very well knew, because it had been snowing when the rats left the big barn and the falling snow had covered their tracks and destroyed the scent.

So, while Billy Mink was looking under the woodpile and in the hen-

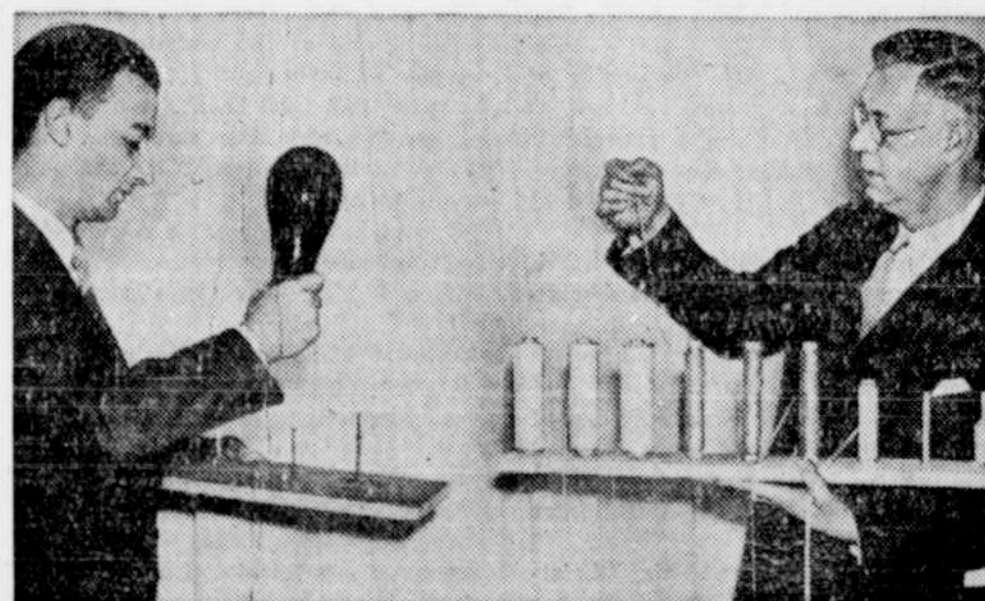
house for those rats, they were making themselves very much at home in the farmhouse. They could climb about between the walls and go where they pleased. The first thing to do was to make homes for the babies. It didn't take some of those rats long to find the way to the attic. Now the attic was filled with trunks and boxes and papers and all sorts of odds and ends. It was just such a place as rats love. Right away the old mother rat began to tear up papers and make rags of clothing that hung in the attic. Rags and paper make the finest kind of nest for a rat. These nests they hid in dark places behind boxes and trunks.

And while they were busy with this, the father rats set out to search for food. It didn't take them long to find the pantry and gnaw holes through the wall into it. And they were not quiet about their work, either. The farmer and the farmer's wife knew what was going on. They could hear the scamper of little feet across the attic floor and faint squeaks between the walls. They could hear the gnawing.

"Gracious!" exclaimed the farmer. "I should think all the rats in the barn had moved over here." He little guessed how exactly he had hit on the truth.

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### Glass at the Patent Centennial



C. J. Phillips (left) and Dr. J. C. Hostetter are shown with an exhibit of glass articles, threads and tubes at the celebration in the Mayflower hotel, Washington, in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the present American patent system.