PAGE OF READING FOR THE FAMILY

Faeroes and Iceland

Icelandic Lady in Native Costume.

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

THE Royal Dutch Airline is studying proposed routes which will link the Netherlands with the Faeroe Islands and Iceland via Great Britain. According to reports from The Hague, the proposed route is intended to be a link in the chain which, not many years hence, will be extended westward to the United States along the northern route investigated by Colonel Lindbergh.

The Faeroes are a group of 21 small islands, sprinkled over a small area about 250 miles off the northern tip of Scotland. When the islands were first settled has caused a guessing contest, among historians. At Thorshavn, the capital, a city of about 2,000 inhabitants, the wooden buildings on strong foundations, topped by turf roots, take the traveler back a thousand years ago when Norsemen settled there. On some of the southernmost islands, however, live dark-haired, dark-eyed people.

Thorshavn, rambling about the shore of the island and up the hillsides beyond, is a busy port. There are a few narrow streets winding between houses, but off these are mere paths leading to the "suburbs." Ponies have not been displaced by automobiles, or even by wagons and carts, so that there is no demand for good roads on the islands, and there are none.

Men Wear Native Garb.

In the village streets and throughout the islands, men wear their native costumes. Buttons are numerous on their hip-length coats, but the garments are clasped only at the throat so that the shiny brass buttons and fancy embroidery work adorning their vests is visible. Knee-length breeches, long, brown hose, soft-skin shoes, adorned with buckles, tied to the ankles with white thongs, and a floppy cap complete the masculine costume.

Many women have forsaken their voluminous dresses, white aprons with gaudy stripes, and colorful shawls. European fashions have won them, and frequently even the native costumed women will be seen wearing high-heeled shoes.

Travelers are amazed at the lofty homes of many of the islanders, particularly on those islands which are rimmed by sheer cliffs, rising more than 600 feet from the sea. Some islands have home-made elevators, but many islanders scale the rocks as a "human fly" scales a modern building.

The cliffs appear insurmountable but they are sources of life to the Faeroe inhabitants. The ledges, from sea to summit, are the nesting places of myriad birds which forms an important part of the Faeroe diet. Native hunters, with ropes tied securely about their waists and long-handled nets in hand, descend the cliffs and return with several days' supply of food.

If all the Faeroes were merged, they would not cover an area half that of Rhode Island. They are treeless, brisk winds sweep them, and there are few harbors where ships are safe from the treacherous currents and high winds. Yet 23,000 inhabitants live a busy, happy existence on the islands. Isolation has made the inhabitants a versatile race. In the village shops are imported goods, particularly Danish goods, but there is a noticeable absence of home-made products, for the families usually make their own clothing and implements.

Acres of shore line are blanketed with white strips of drying codfish. The people are also builders, furniture makers, blacksmiths, sheep herders, tanners and hunters. The women are adept knitters, weavers, fish curers, and wool dyers.

Iceland Not a Frigid Land.

Iceland's name naturally suggests to the prospective visitor that he will find a frozen waste. And when his map shows this land to lie across the very threshold of the Arctic ocean, hard by the glacial coast of Greenland, and 800 miles farther north than bleak Labrador, he is almost prepared to come upon a land of polar bears and of fur-clad folk living in snow igloos.

Iceland is libeled both by nomenclature and maps. On many charts the most important physical fact in its life does not appear. Up from the south flows the warm Gulf stream to enfold the island and work the magic of whisking it, in effect, nearly a thousand miles toward the Equator; so that its climate is not that of the polar region, but of southern Canada or northern United States.

On Iceland's coasts are thriving towns with buildings of stone, gabled roofs and church steeples, busy streets and electric lights. In the streets are men and women garbed much as are the inhabitants of Copenhagen and Glasgow, Ottawa and Minneapolis. One's eyes tell him that here is the same civilization that Europe and America know.

And immaterial factors proclaim the truth still more unmistakably than do material things. Here, in this far northern land, a worthy national literature and stable national institutions were developed when much of Europe was floundering in the Dark ages. Here the lamp of a Nordic Renaissance burned and lighted its own region before the beacon of the Latin Renaissance was held aloft to light the way for the world. This northern light has never failed.

It is true that physically Iceland's best foot is forward. Its most pleasant aspect is its fringe of coast. Inland it is in nowise a pretty country, though the distinction may be made that it possesses much scenery of beauty—a weird, magnificent beauty coupled with desolation; for, though Iceland is not the icy waste that distant popular fancy would make it, it fared less fortunately at the hands of another of Nature's great forces, fire. The land is actively volcanic, and in the interior, on every hand, are the evidences of great fiery outbursts of the past. To tourists it presents none of those scenes which have made other lands popular; no forests, no rich meadows, no prosperous-appearing farms with beautiful gardens.

Proud of Their Island.

In spite of adverse conditions, in spite of earthquakes and volcanoes, and the absence of luxuries, the Icelanders cling to their land with fierce pride. They have a national life which is different from that of any other land in the world.

They feel strongly their one-time glory and value highly the culture and civilization that they built practically without outside help and in which the Iceland of today has its roots. Not only have they long ranked among the most literate people in the world, but they possess a broad knowledge and excellent taste in literature.

The people of Iceland have a great literature of their own in the old sagas, and many of their modern poets are especially gifted. Their folk songs are popular throughout the country and rank with the best of any nation.

Reykjavik, on Iceland's southwestern coast, is the capital and metropolis of the island. Like all other early settlements in Iceland, it was founded by Norwegians. Ingolf and Hjorleif, two Norwegian chiefs who refused to recognize Harald Haarfager, Norway's first king, settled on the southern shore of Iceland in 874. Shortly afterward, settlements of hardy Scandinavians sprang up rapidly as the splendid fishing grounds in the vicinity became known in Europe.

As the traveler enters the Reykjavik harbor, he sees little to suggest that the city has been the capital of Iceland since 1800 and for many years has been the Icelandic seat of learning. Everything appears to have a commercial aspect. The harbor is a parade ground for dingy, weather-beaten, commercial and fishing craft, the quays are lined with unattractive warehouses, and portions of the shore nearby are white with codfish that the Islanders put out each day to dry.

Once in the town, however, the picture changes. More than one-fourth of Iceland's 108,000 inhabitants live in the gaudily-painted wooden and corrugated iron houses that border wide streets. American automobiles (there are about 300 of them in the capital) are slowly taking the place of the little Iceland horses that not long ago had only wheelbarrows as their competitors in the transportation field.

The show place of the capital is the City Square. Here in the center of a grassy plot rises the statue of Thorwaldsen, the Icelandic sculptor, which was presented to the Icelanders by the city of Copenhagen in 1874. Overlooking the square is the huge stone Althing's house, where the Althing, which corresponds to our congress, meets every two years; and the Reykjavik cathedral, a stone structure with a wooden tower which was built in 1847. It is not much larger than the average-sized church in this country.

The buildings of the Iceland university, which was established in 1911, the museum, and the library are in the eastern portion of the capital city. The museum contains Icelandic antiquities and objects of industrial art. There are specimens of carved furniture, woven tapestries and ribbons, coins and specimens of printing. The library contains more than 80,000 volumes and manuscripts.

Bedtime Story

by Thornton W. Burgess

BUSTER BEAR IS STARTLED

STRAIGHT toward the little pile of leaves in the Green Forest under which Danny Meadow Mouse was hiding walked Buster Bear. His little eyes, for his eyes are little compared with his great size, were fixed right on that little pile of leaves. Danny was certain that they were fixed right on his own small gray person. Why else should Buster look straight at him and walk straight toward him?

As a matter of fact, Buster didn't see him at all. Of course not. Danny

With a Faint Little Squeak of Fright He Scurried Out From Under Those Leaves.

was hidden under those leaves. Buster couldn't have seen him had he known Danny was there and tried to see him. And he didn't know he was there. A fat Meadow Mouse was the last person in the world Buster expected to find over in this part of the Green Forest. His thoughts were not on Meadow Mice or any other Mice for that matter. They were wholly on beechnuts. He is very fond of beechnuts, is Buster Bear, and it was to look for beechnuts that he had come to that particular part of the Green Forest that particular night. You see it was the part of the Green Forest where the beech trees grow.

So Buster Bear wasn't thinking of anything but beechnuts as he walked toward that little pile of leaves and Danny Meadow Mouse. He was making a noise deep down in his throat. Danny thought he was growling and the sound would have frightened him still more only he was already as frightened as it was possible to be. Buster wasn't growling. He was talking to himself.

"There is a little pile of leaves I haven't raked over yet," he was saying. "There ought to be some nice sweet nuts among those leaves. Can't think of anything better than nice sweet beechnuts. Wish they were bigger. I certainly do wish they were bigger. It takes a lot of work to find enough to fill the stomach of such a big fellow as I am. It would be a lot easier if it were not for these pesky leaves. Seems as if nuts just dearly love to hide under leaves. Wish they grew the way berries grow. It would be a lot easier to get enough if they did. Now we'll see how many I'll find under those leaves."

By this time he was near enough to reach out a great paw with its dreadful claws. Danny saw that great paw starting toward him. With a faint little squeak of fright he scurried out from under those leaves, and because he was headed toward Buster Bear and was too frightened to know where he was going he ran straight at Buster. It was all so sudden and unexpected that for an instant it startled Buster.

©, T. W. Burgess.—WNU Service.

LIGHT ON GRECIAN CIVILIZATION

Old Cemetery of 1,500 B. C. Revealed.

New discoveries in Athens besides being of scientific value start thoughts that show the comparative unimportance of the recent revolution in Greece, says Pathfinder Magazine. A cemetery dating back to 1500 B. C. and containing unmerous undisturbed and perfectly preserved skeletons was uncovered 50 feet below the ancient Athenian senate adjoining the Acropolis. Two thousand years before the burial of these bodies which had been interred for 2,500 years. Greek civilization emerged from the Stone age. By the time these particular old Greeks lived civilization in Greece had struggled upward against countless reverses to a high stage. The ruling class of the time lived in well-made, sanitary buildings, with bath chambers, windows, and sliding doors. They rode horse-drawn chariots on paved streets, and were entertained by bull-fights, boxing, and armed combat. Art had risen to a high level and close commercial intercourse was carried on with Egypt. And about three centuries after these now skeletonized men and women had ceased to live came the war with Troy. Then came the Dorian invasion at the beginning of the Iron age—more wars—ups and downs in civilization—conquest by Rome, and the following collapse. Thus the recent revolt was hardly an incident in Greek history.

Old Map Agencies

The oldest and largest governmental agencies for making maps come under this heading: Respectively, the coast and geodetic survey, established in 1807, and the geological survey, now more than 56 years at the business of plotting various phases of the earth's surface.

Hair on One Side

Only a few years ago there were still men in southern Norway who let the hair on one side of their heads grow long, a custom from feudal days. The long lock was left as a courtesy to enemies, who could grasp it in a hand-to-hand fight.

Many Lands Send Sugar

It is usual to think of the foreign source of sugar used in the United States as being limited to Cuba, Porto Rico, the Virgin islands and the Philippinese, yet fairly large quantities come from other sources.