



Scandinavians in Europe and in Canada.



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THE NAME.

Although the name Scandinavia is generally applied to the Peninsula occupied by the countries of Norway and Sweden, in a stricter use of the word, it should also include Denmark, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and the islands adjacent to any of them, in as much as likeness of language and historic memories link them together in the manner in which Serbia is linked to Russia and the whole people termed Slavonic.

PREHISTORIC TIMES.

Very little is known of Scandinavia and its people during the period before the advent of the Vikings, but it is thought, from discoveries that have been made, that man's first appearance in that region must have taken place about B.C. 5000. Denmark seems to have been inhabited, first of all, at a time when the Baltic Sea was a fresh-water lake. Sweden and Norway were first trodden by foot of mankind at some later period. These ancestors of the Scandinavian people lived by hunting and fishing, apparently they spent their days in wandering from place to place, and had no domesticated animals save the dog. Perhaps the original dwellers in the land were driven out by an

invasion of a more developed and superior class of people, as very few traces have been found of a transition period, such as in other countries marks the change from a lower to a higher culture. For centuries the inhabitants of "Skandia," as Pliny names it, dwelt in their northern land, almost unknown to the other citizens of the world. While Greece was elaborating its philosophy and its religion of the beautiful and the Roman legions were conquering the world, there dwelt men beyond their influence and power in the unexplored north, who, at a later period, were to come forth, and in a certain sense carry on the work which intellect and law had begun.

THE VIKING AGE.

The commonplace idea that a man's religion forms the greater part of his life is well illustrated in the life and work of the ancient Northmen. Their beliefs regarding the eternal world were influenced to a very large degree by the conditions existing among them, where the struggle for existence was unceasing and keen. The elements warred against them day by day; the wild inhospitable land had to be conquered. The Vikings were the result. It is well to remember that they were thrust forth into lives of adventure, discovery and bloodshed by their religion. Strength was idolized, war glorified as

the greatest thing in the world. To die in bed of sickness or old age was to court eternal disaster. To die in battle was to take one's place among the heroes who sat down to the feasts in Odin's Hall. For a time the various Earls and Kings made war on each other with becoming regularity, but knowledge of other lands and peoples spread amongst them, and the warriors sought for other worlds to conquer. The Danes and the Norwegians set out in their ships (of which the vessels used in the coasting trade at the present time are the direct descendants—in shape, if not in size), and for many years continued to visit with dreadful regularity England and the coasts of Europe. In the beginning, the way of the expeditions of the Vikings was to set forth singly, make a visit, secure booty, and return to their haunts. Afterwards, a number of ships went together, found winter quarters, and took care that the whole country paid tribute. Not content with stealing, at length they began to take possession of territory and appoint some of their number to rule. Hardly any part of Europe was exempt. In England a day of prayer was held each week to invoke the aid of Heaven against the Norsemen. Some of the French Kings bought liberty by paying great sums of money. The Norwegian and Danish Vikings took possession of Orkney, Shetland and the Hebrides, discovered Iceland, and established a king-

dom in Dublin, Ireland, which lasted for over 300 years. The Swedish Vikings turned their attention to the East, exerted a great influence upon Russia and visited Arabia and Egypt. A collection of Sagas (literally stories committed to writing) was made by two priests about 1395, in which is recorded the discovery of Vineland by Leif Erickson of Iceland in 1000. One part of this country was named Markland, and another part Helluland, which some antiquarians believe correspond with Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Whether the Norsemen discovered America or not, they made many voyages to parts unknown and did much to bring different parts of the world into communication with other parts.

One result of the Viking expeditions was to introduce Christianity to those Northern peoples. Individuals had preached to them in the home land, but the greatest impetus from the religion of Odin to the religion of Jesus took place when the seafaring rovers returned from countries which had been evangelized by the missionaries of the Cross.

ICELAND.

This island, lying in the North Atlantic Ocean has an area of 40,439 square miles. Its greatest length is 298 miles, and its greatest breadth, 194 miles. It is a land of fjords and valleys, picturesque enough,

and not deserving the name which it bears, so far as the lowlands are concerned. Still only one-quarter of the entire island is inhabited, the central tableland being unfit for life of any description. More than 5,000 square miles are covered with glaciers, of which there are over 120 altogether. Mount Heckla is the best known volcano, but the whole island is volcanic in its nature, and at present over 100 volcanoes burst into activity from time to time. The principal industries of the people are cattle breeding, sheep-breeding and fishing. Some garden vegetables and small fruits are produced, but all bread stuffs must be imported.

Development has only taken place since 1850. Until that time, no further communication was held with the outside world than the physical needs of the people made necessary. Now the Icelanders travel more and have greater outside interests.

For a very long time previous to the discovery of Iceland by the Scandinavians in 850, it had been inhabited by a number of Irish Culdees. After its discovery, a stream of immigration set in, and over 4,000 farms were established by settlers from Norway and the Western Isles. Queen Ana, widow of the King of Dublin, brought over a number of her kinsmen and relations (part, like herself, being Christians). Some of the Vikings who had colonized the West returned to their kith

and kin. Thus was Iceland settled. Clans came into being, and wars between clans logically followed. In the year 1,000 Christianity was introduced from Norway. Little by little, the islands submitted to Norway, until, in 1271, its old laws were replaced by the new Norse Code. Later, Iceland was related to Denmark by Norway.

At the time of the Reformation, Iceland followed the example of Norway and Denmark by adopting the teachings of Luther. Unlike other countries which came under the influence of the Renaissance and Reformation, Iceland did not experience a social or political revolution. During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, Iceland's condition was truly pitiable. Disease, poverty and many other evils held sway. However, a change for the better came; educational institutions arose, the people demanded their rights, and after 30 years' agitation, Denmark conceded Home' Rule, with the result that to-day Iceland is fairly prosperous. In 1911 the population was 85,188. The Icelanders are Lutherans. They have a passion for reading and opportunities for education along all lines are plentiful.

ICELANDERS IN CANADA.

It is said that the first Icelanders to leave their native shores went to the United States to join the Mormon com-

munity, having been persuaded to do so by missionaries despatched to Iceland for that purpose. From 1872 onwards, almost 20,000 have come to America. Many are in the Northern States, but the majority are in Canada and west of the Great Lakes, principally in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. They have a tendency to gather in communities and preserve their language and some of their traditions. Being very conservative regarding these things, the older men and women have not been Canadianized to any great extent. It is somewhat different with the younger people. They seek education with all their might and the testimony of teachers who have them in their care is that their capacity and industry in acquiring knowledge, equal, if they do not surpass, those of others. Quite a large percentage of the graduates of the Colleges in Manitoba are Icelanders. Others are cultivating the soil, and doing it most successfully. Near Kandahar, Sask., which is almost entirely an Icelandic village, the largest and best farmers are descendants of those who inhabited Iceland. It must be noted, however, that others are disinclined to labour with their hands, and are content to pick up a living in any other way. Such are sluggish willing enough to read, intelligent, but without vigor.

Some of the customs of their native land are preserved more or less. Some of the older women still make the garments

which are used in Iceland, and retain their sheepskin slippers, but in dress they are generally like the average Canadian. Many foods are used which are peculiar to Iceland. The Sagas are unknown by the young, but the old men still go over the stories of olden times. It is an amusement among those who are gifted for one to begin a verse and another to finish it. It is not infrequent that the ending contains some allusion to the qualities or private affairs of the man who began.

The Icelanders are good churchgoers. Although they have not many pastors, they have built a Church in almost every settlement and contribute most liberally towards its upkeep. They are a moral people on the whole, with a due regard for fast days and festivals. As citizens they are beginning to take their place, and with their capacity for study, should, in the coming days, contribute something of real worth to Canadian national life.

DENMARK.

This is the smallest of the Scandinavian countries in size, but not in importance, and it has loomed very large before the eye of the public on many occasions in the recent history of Europe. Situated as it is, it could not fail to do so. The British Empire entertains very friendly feelings towards Denmark for many reasons, not the least being that Queen Alexandra had

her birthplace and early home there. Denmark proper occupies the northern half of the peninsula of Jutland (the southern half, Schleswig-Holstein, belonging to Prussia), and a group of islands in the Baltic Sea. It is mainly an agricultural country, as eighty per cent. of its area is productive. Small farms are the rule and nearly one-third of the total population of 2,800,000 is engaged in agricultural pursuits. All kinds of grain are grown and during the past twenty years dairying has become most important, large quantities of butter being exported to Great Britain, Germany and other countries every year. The manufacturing industries are practically limited to what can be made from the agricultural products—beer, brandy, sugar, leather, etc. It is a most progressive country in regard to the organization of industry. Co-operation is practised with great success. Nearly half the railroads and almost all the telegraph lines are State-owned.

The majority of the people are of pure Danish blood. Even in Schleswig-Holstein there is a very large Danish element. Compulsory education has existed since 1814, and there is no illiteracy. Indeed the average Dane has a very keen appreciation of all that is best in literature and art. Every youth above the age of twenty years is liable for military service for the period of sixteen years, and whether we believe in military training or not, we

have to confess in the case of the Danes that the results are beneficial physically and intellectually.

The Government of Denmark is a limited monarchy. There are two Houses, but in the constitution there is no distinction made as to their respective powers. The "Landsting," which is the Upper House, is composed of 66 members, 12 of whom are nominated by the King for their lifetime, the others being elected. The "Folkesting" consists of 144 members, all elected by the people. With certain exceptions, every male above 30 years of age is entitled to vote. The Faroe Islands, which form an integral portion of the Kingdom of Denmark, are represented, but not Iceland, Greenland, or the West Indian Islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix, which are Danish possessions.

The record of the Courts of Justice in Denmark is remarkable and very seldom is a case appealed from one court to another. Probably this is due to the fact that no case is brought before a court until an attempt at settlement of the cause of dispute has been made, sometimes by Committees of Conciliation often by the Court in its extrajudicial capacity. Three-fifths of all the cases are settled in this way.

The system of out-door relief of the poor works well, and the health of the poorer classes in the community is cared for by Health Officers; qualified medical men who work under Government supervision.

Christianity was introduced into Denmark by Willibrord, about 700 A.D., but the country was not Christianized until English priests and monks came over in the reign of Canute (1019-1035) and organized the Danish Church. Corruption set in, the nobles and priests commenced to squabble and it did not end till the Reformation tenets finally obtained the upper hand in 1536. To Denmark, the Reformation brought new beginnings in every department of life. At the present day, while the Church is officially described as "Evangelical Reformed" it is Lutheran in every sense. Most of the other important denominations are represented in Denmark, but the number of their adherents is small.

In literature, much has been accomplished in Denmark, although very little has so far been translated, but the names of Martensen in Theology, Brandes in Literary Criticism, Hoffding in Philosophy, are familiar. In art again, who has not seen a reproduction of Thorwaldsen's Christ, and he is one artist only amongst many.

DANES IN CANADA.

Early in the nineteenth century there was a large immigration to North America, particularly to the United States. In 1892 over 10,000 departed from their native land in search of wealth and a state of life denied to them in their own thickly populated country. The number decreased towards

the end of the century but during the time which has since elapsed, they have again increased. In 1912, 14,746 emigrated, of whom 11,525 went to the United States. We find Danes scattered over the whole of Canada, occupying all kinds of positions, and, in the majority of cases, striving for a competence wherewith to return to their own land. The Dane is not very happy in strange countries, although he braces himself to endure, as becomes a true son of the Vikings. He works well, whether he is engaged in banking, farming or commercial pursuits. He is quick to adapt himself to new conditions, being conscious that only in this way can he achieve the desired end. The Danish language is used amongst the Danes when by themselves, but unlike some other Scandinavians, they do not make a fetish of their mother tongue. They are progressive, and willing to take the lead in the communities where they dwell, if the opportunity presents itself. Indeed, it is not difficult for them to do so, since their own land has taught them something about the very things which are most required in a country which is in the making, as our Dominion is.

In speaking to some Danes, one may discover that their knowledge of our standard authors is equal to, if not greater, than our own. Shakespeare, Dickens and Scott are used as text-books, in some of their schools. Thus they come to us fairly well imbued with the spirit of Britain.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that the mentality of the immigrants, especially those from Copenhagen and the cities, is not all that one might desire. Their acquaintance with some forms of continental life has affected them in an undesirable way. However, they are teachable, and in fairness it should be stated that in the majority of those who have become known to the writer, nothing objectionable could be seen. The Lord's Day Observance Act is reckoned by many Danes as a queer thing. In their own land they pleased themselves.

The Dane is of a warm sympathetic nature, though ceremonious to a degree. He is easily gripped by those who show a real interest in his welfare. Many of the younger generation give way to intemperate habits. There are few Danish Lutheran Churches in the Dominion and the immigrants, with their love of ritual, find it hard to get their religious needs satisfied. They appreciate good preaching. Some of the young people are inclined to be sceptical, but are always ready to listen to a new presentation of truth.

NORWAY.

The genuine Norwegians are a hospitable and hearty people. To shake hands with one of these children of the North is an uplifting experience, never to be forgotten, so cordial and so expressive of a truly loving personality. The poverty of their soil

has driven many to the seas, to make a living, and they have thus become as expert seafarers as there are in the world.

Everyone has heard of the beautiful "Land of the Midnight Sun," which every summer draws thousands of visitors from all parts of the globe to roam through its green valleys, sail on its bright seas, and climb over its snow-capped mountains.

It is not a very large country, having an area of only 124,495 square miles. About 70 per cent. is barren, 21 per cent. forest land, and the small agricultural area which remains employs forty per cent of the entire population of 2,225,000. Norway is not rich in minerals. The fisheries are of great economic importance, but the timber industry, with the allied manufactures, is the most important. In proportion to their population the Norwegians are the first nation in the world so far as regards mercantile Marine Industry. Actually, only Great Britain, Germany and the United States possess greater tonnage. The main roads through Norway were not brought into existence till the end of the nineteenth century. The railways are very poor. The Great Lakes are used for inland navigation. Against this, it should be noted that the telegraph and telephone lines are most extensive, bringing every little hamlet in touch with the centres.

Until the 7th of June, 1905, Norway was united to Sweden, when the union, which had lasted for 91 years was dissolved. The

King is vested with full power. He appoints the Council of State, the high officials in the Church army navy etc. and may declare a defensive war and has full control of the army and navy. He has a power of veto over bills passed by Parliament (storting) but, if three successive Parliaments approve the measure, it becomes law in spite of his veto. All males over twenty-five years of age are entitled to vote, and by a measure passed in June, 1907, women who pay taxes, or whose husbands pay taxes, were granted the franchise.

Owing to causes, which it is not necessary to particularize, drunkenness was one of the national characteristics of the people, and resulted, as elsewhere, in much poverty and misery. But in the sixties of last century a temperance movement was organized to cope with the problem. A very strict licensing law was introduced in 1871, and since then many additional measures have been put in force. All retail trade in spirits is controlled by companies, and the sale of beer and wine is also controlled, though to a lesser degree. In some towns, total prohibition is in force. All profits are applied directly to concerns which, in some way, serve the public.

Some of the ancient customs are still retained, such as the lighting of the midsummer fires. At weddings in certain districts traditional ceremonies still find a place.

The Norwegian is a nationalist. His country is very precious to him but he is not afraid to launch into new ways of thinking and acting, of which we find very good illustrations in Ibsen and Bjornson. If he has one fault more than another, it is a tendency to take life too seriously, banish humor and mirth, and allow himself to be engrossed with problems. The State Church is Lutheran. About 3 per cent. of the population are dissenters. Jesuits are not allowed to live in or preach in the country. Almost the whole system of primary education is under the control of the Church, which has always taken a leading part in educational work.

NORWEGIANS IN CANADA.

The call to western lands has sounded in the ears of many Norwegians during the past forty or fifty years. At the present time, it is estimated that over 350,000 are residents of other countries than their own. About 19,000 have come to Canada during the past 14 years. Not many Norwegians emigrated direct to Canada. A large majority went to the United States first of all, and those who are residing in the Western Provinces particularly, have been Americanized before coming to us. This is not altogether gain, even as regards the second generation. Too many changes in the political and social atmosphere have a very unsettling effect upon characters which ab-

sorb into themselves all that they meet. Interest in many countries is apt to produce a cosmopolitan spirit, unsettled and unsatisfied. No doubt the same may be said of many other immigrants to Canada, but in the case of the Norwegians it is especially prominent.

As farmers, they are successful. When one drives through the Western Provinces, here and there one comes across a farm where the neatness and the struggle after perfection are easily marked. Many of such places are owned by Norwegians. Good business people, perfectly honest, they make good settlers.

In social life, they seem exclusive at times. Perhaps this is due to a certain shyness, as once they become acquainted with others they prove themselves to be friends in deed and in truth.

Quite a few are addicted to intoxicants (when the craving is intense they can manufacture a special brand of their own). Notwithstanding this, they are ready to vote for the most pronounced measures of temperance reform.

Their Church, the Lutheran, has taken care of their spiritual interests so far as possible. There is a Mission Superintendent with headquarters in Winnipeg, and the majority of the ministers have come from the Old Land. They attend church fairly well, but the voluntary system of support does not meet with their approval. In one district where they have no Lutheran

Church, they asked the Board of Managers of another Church to levy upon them, for the amount required.

Apart from the use of intoxicating liquor, their morals are of a high standard. The children are taught to be obedient, reverential and industrious. Laziness is to them very close to the unforgiveable sin. They are, in a large degree, idealists, indued with the ability to visualize things unseen. The present writer remembers the singer in a song, rendered in Norwegian, entitled "Over the Western Mountains." Although the words were unknown to him, a yearning for something manifested itself throughout, and the faces of the Norwegians present expressed their sympathy with the sentiment expressed. If this were developed enough in the life of our country, righteousness would get a real uplift, politically and otherwise.

SWEDEN.

While Norway is a rugged mountain land, Sweden is a great plain, and the only mountains are those which exist near the boundary of the country. Half of the country is yet covered with great forests, only 8.7 per cent. being available for agricultural purposes at the present time. Notwithstanding this, out of the population of 5,136,441, only 22 per cent. live in the towns and cities—much nearer a true proportion than in the majority of other countries.

Much enterprise has been shown in the development of the natural resources of the country, and the Government has encouraged research along almost every line of commercial activity. The principal exports are iron and steel, iron ore, timber, wood pulp, matches, paper and butter. One drawback is the lack of coal, 90 per cent. of which has to be imported.

Education is largely controlled by the Church. Indeed the connection is so close that one State Department serves for both. The higher education of the people is attended to most carefully. In rural districts, a course for men is held in the winter, and a course for women during the summer. In the towns, workmen's institutes are in existence where technical instruction is imparted free of cost. One thing should be noted, as a relic of a day that is fast disappearing, viz., that there are no public high schools for girls, excepting the higher seminary for the training of teachers. If a girl who has no ambition for teaching wishes an education, she must attend a private school.

The Government is very like that of Great Britain, although the King has greater power of initiation and veto. Manhood suffrage was granted in 1907.

The State Church is Lutheran; indeed, Sweden is the most entirely Lutheran country in the world. Only one per cent. of the people do not profess the State religion. Much interest is shown in Foreign Missions.

The Swede is different from the Norwegian in many ways. He takes life less seriously, and is more boisterous. In winter time ice games are in favor. In summer the numerous inland lakes and sheltered canals are much frequented by those for whom yachting and aquatic sports have an attraction.

Many Swedes have attained world wide fame. Emmanuel Swedenborg was a mining engineer, much honored and much trusted in his own land and in others. He founded the "Church of the New Jerusalem," which is now established in a greater or less degree in every civilized country in the world. While one is compelled to disagree with many of his teachings, his spirituality and originality make him great. Alfred Bernhard Nobel discovered dynamite, and other explosives, but his greatest service to humanity was rendered, when, at his death in 1896, he bequeathed his fortune to trustees for the purpose of awarding prizes, five each year, to the producers of the best work in Chemistry, Medical Science, Physiology or Idealistic Literature, and also to the person or Society that renders the greatest service to the cause of International Brotherhood in the suppression or reduction of standing armies or to the establishment or furtherance of Peace Congresses. Each prize is worth over \$10,000.

THE SWEDES IN CANADA.

During the period which elapsed between 1850 and 1900, over 1,000,000 Swedes emigrated, many went to the United States, where they have prospered. Since the year 1900, about 27,000 have come to Canada. Within recent years, the tendency to leave their native land has not been so much manifested. Probably an agitation by the Swedish Municipal Councils is bearing fruit.

The Swedes within our borders, east and west, are making good citizens. With some defects in character (and no nationality is free from these) and some peculiarities, they form a valuable element of the population. As a people, they are of robust constitution, industrious and frugal, cleanly and neat in their persons and homes; as a general thing, intellectual and mystical. Beggars and illiterates, they hate.

The Swede, man or woman, is ready to work at anything. They do not choose their sphere of labor before coming to this country, and wait around until they can get their chosen work. Be it on the farm, in the workshop, in the lumber camp, the men are ready to do their utmost and the women do not lag behind. They have come to the Dominion to stay, and from all quarters the reports speak of their success.

Their spiritual needs are attended to by the Lutheran Church, but as is the case

with Danes and Norwegians, the number of ministers and churches is inadequate.

The Swedes in Canada have broken entirely with the customs and observances of their own land, indeed the whole Swedish nature is essentially modern. They are thus not prevented by anything from becoming true Canadians.

CONCLUSION.

In all there are about 125,000 Scandinavians in this country. But, though so considerable in number it may, from what has been said, be clearly seen that they do not present such a problem as the less developed peoples who have lately come among us. Here are new Canadians with a history and a civilization as good as our own, intelligent, fairly adaptable to a new environment, the majority being ambitious and capable. If we except the language question, which is gradually solving itself, the great difficulties which arise are those attendant on the change from countries partly aristocratic and autocratic to a land where democracy holds sway. Through their intercourse with older Canadians in the communities in which they dwell and the education given them in our schools, we may hope that these difficulties will in due time be overcome.

As we have seen, they have for the most part, been connected with some branch of the Lutheran Church. Now if that Church

could care for them in Canada, we might simply bid her Godspeed. But how difficult it must be for a body which has no great community of people to provide the necessary material in men and money! For example, a minister of an Icelandic Lutheran Church preaches at nine stations in a territory which demands the services of three ordained Presbyterian ministers and three students. Should we not, then, for our country's sake and for Christ's sake, help them to secure for themselves the ordinances of the Christian Church and to instruct their children in the principles of the Christian Gospel?

