An Icelander's Letter

Interesting Items of the Far North—Some Notes to Andrew Jenson—Mention of Mormons in Montana.

RANSACK, Montana, August 9th, 1896.—It is really enjoying for me to read the account of the missionary work that is being done here in this stake. I believe that somewhat about seven years ago lots of people from Idaho and Utah went into Big Hole Basin in Beaverhead county, between twenty and thirty miles northwest from Ransack, and I think that some young Mormon people among them. Up here, it appears to me, that a good many of those who are Mormons and came here to work have to a certain extent made and done a good mission. In many cases, and in most cases, in fact, Mormons are sought for. In one instance a man had a Mormon who is somewhat lame on one leg, to herd sheep for him for some few years altogether, but he had left and gone home to Spanish Fork, Utah. While he was gone the man had some neighbor with his sheep and new herders very nearly every month. Speaking about this matter in once made this remark: "In the presence of a good many in Ransack, "I would not swap John's lame leg for all the herders in Montana."

Last year a big cattleman in this neighborhood, who had several men working for him, had to leave his ranch for some time. Before starting he one day began by asking one of his men whether he was a Mormon, and then one after another. All made some answer they had been Mormons; were not themselves, but their parents had been, etc. Finally he reached one. "Are you not a Mormon?" "Yes," said the man; "what is that to you? I am a Mormon and hope I shall be."

"Then I'll let you know what it is to me," said the boss. "I have to go off on some business for some time, and I want you to take charge of everything while I am gone, and you get sixty cents more a day till I come back again." I could relate several more instances like these, but this is enough.

I see by the News that Brother Andrew Jenson will probably soon be in Europe. On his trip he will probably go to Iceland, which is my native land. I have several good friends in that land whom I want to point out to him, on the west coast. I do not know who they are, for if he comes on Seidis Fjordur (Seidhis Fjorth) he will meet with many from the Westmanna Isles (Vestmannaeyjar) and they know most of the people who are in Spanish Fork. If he comes to Vestmannaeyjar (the Westmanna Isles) the pilots, Hannes Johnson, his wife and sister in Spanish Fork, and is an old playmate of mine and dear to me as a brother.

First and foremost of all on those islands is Dr. Thorsteinn Johnson. He is a highly educated man, of extraordinary intelligence, and broad and liberal views. He has been from the first a staunch and faithful friend to our people, and always in the front up for, demanded and protected their rights, and today he is the most respected man in that community and ranks among the foremost men in the whole land. He is a self-made man, a large and noble man's son. He has at least on one occasion contradicted a villification that appeared in one of the papers about our people. When I was a boy, parentless, homeless and crippled boy, he took me and gave me the instruction in the English tongue that enables me to write this sketch, and the pupil is never above his master. He speaks Danish as well as his native tongue, as also French and German. He has not had much opportunity to talk English, but he is an excellent English scholar.

On those islands, any one can point Brother Jenson out the place called Infurnd, where the first persons who announced the Gospel in Iceland were baptized. They can also show him a lodge of rock, or rather a bluff, on an island called Ellirey, where when Bloom years old I fell over down into a mass of big boulders over eighty feet below. It does indeed appear impossible that a man who falls into a mass of rocks—eighty feet tall—can live and be able to do most all kinds of work, yet that is the case with me, and I can easily prove it, not only by the people in those isles, but by people in Spanish Fork. Most people in the seaport towns of Iceland talk good Danish.

Among other curiosities that Brother Jenson ought to see if he goes to those isles, are Hundredsmanna Hellir (The Hundredsmen's Cave) where one hundred people hid themselves when pirates from Algeria came to the islands about the latter part of the seventeenth century, or also a shelf in a rock called Thorlaugargerdis Hleda, where several hundred saved themselves on the same occasion.

The chief wonder of these isles is the ize Sulnaskar, which takes its name from the abundance of the Solan geese that have made it their home. It is four square, and stands on into large as a table. It stands over three hundred feet above the sea, when it is highest, and under the center of it the sea is over ninety feet deep, and its size is about one fourth of an English mile each side, not far from square. I think Brother Erick Hansen and Ingvar B. Svendsen in Spanish Fork have climbed to the top of it.

If Brother Jenson should come to Reykjavik there are two intimate friends of mine, John Thorsteinsson, son of Dr. Thorsteinn Johnson and John Arason, both born the Westmanna Isles. I think also that two brothers from there, old friends of mine, Hannes and Axel Muller, are also in Reykjavik. Gudmundur Johnson, the editor of Isafold, the government organ, also knows me through Dr. T. Johnson and my correspondence to his paper. I write this to the News so as to be sure that it will reach Brother Jenson. Private letters I have no where to send to.

As undoubtedly he comes to Copenhagen, I would like for him to call at the office of the Icelandic Literary Society and ask for Mr. Valur Gudmundsson. He is a close relative of Brother Hjalmar Hansson in Spanish Fork. Mr. Valur Gudmundsson was the man appointed by the government of Denmark to accompany the seven Icelandic sons old Vellum Finnbjornsk to the World's Fair in Chicago, where he or some of the discovery of America by Leif Erickson is chronicled. He can tell Joe to Brother Jenson not only the Vellum but others over six hundred years old. One is in the Royal Library, and the other in the Arne Magnean one. They contain the complete laws of the Icelandic Republic and over seven about thirty years previous to Iceland losing her independence as a country, which was about a little after A. D. 1262. The World's Fair year I gave a brief description of those Vellums and their contents in the Deseret News.

I have now lying before me a volume printed verbatim at length after one of those last vellums, and it is one of great books. Professor Gustav Gerson Professor Konrad Maurer has written masterly essayes on it, in Eng. (Sprache der Wissenschaften und Kunste Gesellschaftsgruppen) and their publications it has never been translated into English but if circumstances allow, and I live out the five more years yet, I hope it will be.

Elder Jenson should, if he comes to Iceland, not fail to visit Thingvoll, one of the most famous places in the world.

JOHN THORSTEINSON.

DUSTY BY ACTUAL COUNT.

A Scientist Has Numbered the Dust Particles in the Very Purest Air.

It has always been believed that there could be no dust in the air of mountains, or upon mountain peaks thousands of feet above the sea level where the snows are eternal. But science has recently discovered that such is not the case. It has even gone farther that finding dust in these places. It has counted, with the utmost accuracy, the number of particles in a cubic centimeter.

Dust measurements were made from air over the open ocean and in mountain regions at altitudes from 6,000 feet to more than 13,000 feet. On the Rigberg, in Switzerland, which forms part of the Alpine chain, containing the Bernhoen and Wetterhorn, rising about 9,000 feet above the Zermatt valley on the east, and some 5,000 feet from that of Rimi on the west, the observations showed that at an elevation of 9,700 feet there were 950 dust particles in a cubic centimeter, which measures a little over one-third of an inch. At 8,400 feet elevation only 213 dust particles were found, and at 13,000 feet about the sea the number diminished to 147 per cubic centimeter.

Over the Indian ocean the average number of dust particles in a cubic centimeter was but from 500 for seven out of nine days, and on five days was but from 400. During a thick fog in the Atlantic the air was found to contain 2,120 dust particles per cubic centimeter, while in the clear region just beyond the fog there were only 256 dust particles in the same space.

Probably even few men of science would be able to tell how these particles could be counted, but a wonderful little instrument has been devised which makes the task not very difficult. The dust counter which Mr. Frinlander employs contains a chamber into which air can be introduced saturated with water vapor. Then it is slightly and quickly cooled. Owing to the fall of temperature, condensation of vapor takes place on the dust nuclei, which then fall on to a micrometer plate at the bottom of the chamber, where they are rendered easily visible for counting by the water layer which made them.—New York Journal.

GORGEOUS AND FAST.

An Amateur Skipper's Experience With an Erotelic Yuhaston Cutboat.

Boasting up the advantages of certain pleasures for the enjoyment of vacation and dilating on the pleasure and excitement of sailing small boats, an amateur skipper related an experience on the south shore of Long Island by saying: "I had been taking my first trip until the middle of the season, and when I arrived at—well, no matter where—I had difficulty in finding a cutboat, but after a day's hunt I found a 17 footer, the only boat on that part of the bay that had not been let for the rest of the season. She had a black body and a yellow deck, with blue trimmings, red seats and a lead colored floor. She was a little too gorgeous for my taste, but I had to take her or have nothing.

"The bayman that owned her said that he had been too busy to put her in condition before that time. 'She's a fine boat, sir, and fast, too,' he said. 'She's been winner in her class, and she can carry sail with the best of 'em.' I took her, but in the course of a week I couldn't get much speed out of her. She lugged her sail all right, and the best fun I had was in taking her out in rough weather and letting her slash through the wrest of the water.

"One day we had a race, and I entered the boat. I don't remember whether I was the last or the next to the last in the fleet, but I know I had no show whatever for a place. Afterward I thought I'd make some inquiries.

"'Do you know my boat, Cap?' I asked, trying to get into confidential relations with an old tarpaper who was trying to slate himself through the rest of his lifetime by the use of a stout piece of cherry.

"'Reckon I do,' he replied, and he tried to repeat a smile.

"'How did she get in?'

"'Boat you race, I reckon.'

"'How many races has she sailed in?'

"'One besides this.'

"'Did she win that?'

"'Yes, by a fluke. The other boat broke down.'"—New York Times.

Couldn't Do Done.

During a rehearsal at a country theater some years ago the stage manager, in looking over what would be required for the play, discovered that he would need six cigars each night for a part played by himself, which fee he communicated to the property man.

"What!" cried the economical property man. "Six a night! Why, that will be 3 dollars a week!"

"Yes!" gasped the stage manager, horrified at the prospect of having to smoke the inferior weed. "You don't mean to say you are going to give me penny cigars?"

"Well," stammered the property man, "upon my word, sir, I can't get them any cheaper."—London Answers.

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A BRETON LEGEND.

Long long ago, in the days of good King Arthur, Count Martin dwelt in the old chateau of La Roche Moron, near Lendermeun, in Brittany. With him lived his beautiful sister Kaled. Although charming to look and listen, this maiden had a somewhat unsunny disposition; for it was seldom that anyone could see she was a smile. The count urged Kaled to marry, but she could accept no suitor who would not dance with her for 12 hours, with no break. But she always denied modly till her partners sank fainting on the floor.

Thus pondered many suitors until the proud maiden became an object of general hatred and horror. Which her doings came to the ears of the count, he sternly forbade her to attend any more of the dances, in order to enforce her obedience he shut her up in a tower, where, and so, she was to remain until she should choose a husband from among such suitors as still persisted in offering her marriage.

Now, Kaled had a wizened little page, no bigger than a brownie and as black as a raven's wing. This creature, one day, stood to her one morning before down, and, with her finger at her lips, she said to him:

"Be swift and silent. My uncle still slumbers. Get thee down to the bailiffs and let them to the castle of Salaun, who is waiting for a wedding dance in the hollow. The guards will allow thee to pass. Take home, ride like the wind and tell Salaun to hasten and tell him to deliver her from this tower before the day dawns."

The infatuated young knight obeyed the summons immediately. In an hour a time he was entering the lady by secret his home after having got her to make down the rope ladder. As, from the window of the dungeon, the dwarf watched them ride away he chuckled to himself.

"Ha! ha!" And so they ran off to the great hall held today in the Martyrs' meadow. Ah, my dear Salaun, before another sun shall rise your doublehead will be killed!"

When Kaled and her gallant cavalier arrived at the Martyrs' meadow, they excited general surprise and admiration. Some, however, shook their heads foreboding, as they heard that Salaun, now Kaled's affianced lover, was to be her partner. For they knew that the brave young knight must soon fall a victim to her spell.

The ball began. Some of the most skillful pieces to the band had been composed for the occasion, and they played gavottes, rondos, cotrantes and many other dances without intermission. But Kaled waited most slight opportunity to unclasp her hand. Thus she took Salaun's hand, and they began to dance together.

"Round again! One round! Ha! ha!" laughed the witch maiden as they spun along. "What, are you tired already? Do you give in so soon as this?"

"Never—while I am with you!" was the fervent reply. The fatal spell had begun to work.

Thus on they whirled, yet more swiftly than before, the dwarf scarcely stopping aside to watch them. After a time, however, Kaled observed that her partner was gradually becoming weaker, and that he would soon be unable to keep pace with her.

"Courage!" exclaimed she in a whispering tone. "We must dance, this night, with a very short time to midnight, and then I shall be yours."

Salaun, although almost exhausted, strained every nerve in order to make a final effort to continue the dance. Round the field they flew at lightning speed, but it was for the last time. The knight's knee shook, his breath came more quickly, then with difficulty he gasped out the words:

"Oh, Kaled, leave away! I can do no more! Kaled, my love, love I not was you you?"

But as he sank Ebbene upon the grass Kaled turned coldly aside. His fate was nothing to her. At that moment the clock in the neighboring tower struck 12. All the lights flickered and expired, darkness reigned supreme. And through the darkness, startling high above every other sound, rang the mocking laugh of the impish dwarf.

"What," exclaimed Kaled derisively, glancing quickly at the warmest pipers, who had at last ceased in their swift music, "exhausted already by such slight exertions! I wish the evil one would send me some musicians and dancers worthy of me. Of what use are these miserable pipy creatures?"

As she uttered the word, stamping her foot in her fury, a sweet, and light pleasure on the air. There was a sound like a clap of thunder and a stunge rifle in the room. Then suddenly, in the center of the field, appeared two phantom forms, at the sight of whom the pipers started, trembles would fain have fled. To their horror, however, they found flight impossible. They were rooted to the spot.

Gaunt and ghastly was attired in a red garment, covered with a black cloak. Beneath his arm he held a large bagpipe, coiled around which were five hideous writhing serpents. The other stranger, who was exceedingly tall, was dressed in a tightly fitting black suit and heavy red cloak, which he from time to time waved on his passing left of vulture's plumes.

The ghastly pipes began at once to play an insanely dance tune, as wild and maddening as that Mozart's Witches' Sabbath tune. His tall, grim companion seized Kaled by the waist, and the couple whirled off into the dance, the music being great over Dolce and more furious. In an instant the torches were out. A few others joined in the dance. Not for long, however. Kaled and her partner were soon the only dancers. Hellfire still stricken the pipes, faster yet grew the music, more and more wildly swung the fiend. Its long lac white mantle fell out her straight, was dwarfing her. The torches seem to flare her eyes, and in the last extremity of terror she struggled to release herself from the iron grip which held her so relentlessly.

"Wait, or you fall!" cried the eerie voice of her. "Do you give in so soon as this? Come! Round once more. Ha! ha!"

Then was Kaled tossed as the last treat of others. She had no breath left wherewith to answer. Her head hung back, her limbs were as cold, despairing hound, then fell to the ground to the floor of the chamber. All the lamps and torches vanished. Then was civil lightning blazed, a terrific crash of thunder, then fell black darkness, hiding everything. A tempest was heard arise, and rain fell in torrents.

When the storm had ceased and the morning sun shone out, those who found courage to visit the spot beheld the form of Kaled sent to have taken living dead upon the shattered turf.

Ever since that time the spot has been shunned by all, and with the fatal Sunday on the winter night the peasants tell the tale of Kaled, the witch dancer, and her fearful fate.—Round Magazine.

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