

# 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 expanse 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 galleys 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 Hospitallers 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 Sulaiman 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 Hospitallers, 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 Filida, 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 Imnarja Races.

At the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, June 29, are the densely thronged Imnarja 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 Imnarja 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 Imnarria 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.

## STAR DUST

MOVIE AND RADIO  
By Virginia Vale

IT WILL be a long time before radio and motion picture executives forget the abdication of ex-King Edward VIII of England. The radio speech he made just before he left England was so moving that everybody is trying to arrange a regular program that will have one-tenth of its appeal.

On all sides they have been hearing of how strongly it affected its hearers. And the movie people would give practically anything for a story half as dramatic and thrilling as the one they followed so eagerly in the newspapers. Of course, they'd like to film a picture based on the real story, but that's forbidden.

Janet Gaynor is going to freelance, after being under contract to one company for so long.



Janet Gaynor

She is now making "A Star Is Born," on the Selznick lot, because she liked her part from the moment she read it. So she's going to go on selecting her own roles—with the consent of the companies that happen to be making the pictures—and she's crazy about the idea. Her worshiping public should be, too.

Bing Crosby's radio programs always have such a casual air that they sound as if they were being made up on the spur of the moment. As a matter of fact, they're written by the ace man of one of our biggest advertising agencies. Which all goes to show that it takes experts to make people sound natural.

Joan Crawford and Franchot Tone are the most recent recruits to the Broadway stage—that is, they are if they can find just the right play, (and it's rumored that they have) and if the studio will let them have leave of absence. It has been no secret that the ambitious Joan wanted to try the stage some day; she once danced on it, and now she wants to act. But she wanted to wait till she felt ready for it, and has always insisted that her husband must act with her.



Joan Crawford

"Speaking of 'Lloyds of London' brings up the fact that his work in that picture made a star of young Tyrone Power, son of the famous old actor of that name. Twentieth-Century Fox is giving the young man a stellar part in "Love Is News," with Loretta Young playing opposite him. He had a hard time getting started; being his father's son wasn't the help you'd think it might be. Now he's on his way!"

ODDS AND ENDS . . . Shirley Temple's father has abandoned the banking business and become an agent for actors . . . Now he'll have to spend his time trying to find somebody who'll be as successful on the screen as Shirley is . . . William Powell will appear without his moustache—at his request—in "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" . . . First time in 15 years that he's done it . . . If you listen to Jack Benny's radio programs you've heard Kenny Baker . . . You can see as well as hear him in "The King and the Chorus Girl," Carole Lombard's new picture, when it's finished; he'll do two songs.

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My Favorite Recipe  
By Mrs. Gifford Pinchot

Risotto a la Minanase  
Pu. into a saucepan 1 tablespoonful of good butter, 1 small onion, 1 green pepper chopped fine, and let it simmer five minutes, then add 1 quart of good bouillon, 1 cupful of rice, 6 large mushrooms, 1 cup choppec tomato and 1/4 pound ham; salt, paprika and Worcestershire sauce. Simmer 30 minutes, then add grated Swiss and Parmesan mixed. Put into hot serving dish and cover with tomato sauce.  
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City of Canaries  
Norwich, England, is a city of canaries. People there discuss the fine points of the birds just as Kentucky men discuss those of horses, and were one to walk through the streets with a new specimen, traffic would stop to see the sight. Some dealers in Norwich have as many as 5,000 canaries and export them all over the world.

WATCH YOUR BALANCE  
Medical Authorities recognize the value of a balanced Alkaline Reserve as an aid to cold prevention.  
LUDEN'S  
contribute to your Alkaline Reserve because they contain an ALKALINE FACTOR 5

Courage Essential  
Courage is on all hands considered as an essential of high character.—Froude.

Don't Irritate Gas Bloating  
If you want to really GET RID OF GAS and terrible bloating, don't expect to do it by just doctoring your stomach with harsh, irritating alkalies and "gas tablets." Most GAS is lodged in the stomach and upper intestine and is due to old poisonous matter in the contaminated bowels that are loaded with ill-causing bacteria.  
If your constipation is of long standing, enormous quantities of dangerous bacteria accumulate. Then your digestion is upset. GAS often presses heart and lungs, making life miserable. You can't eat or sleep. Your head aches. Your back aches. Your complexion is sallow and pimply. Your breath is foul. You are a sick, grouchy, wretched, unhappy person. YOUR SYSTEM IS POISONED.  
Thousands of sufferers have found in Adlerika the quick, scientific way to rid their systems of harmful bacteria. Adlerika rids you of gas and cleans out poisons out of BOTH upper and lower bowels. Give your bowels a REAL cleansing with Adlerika. Get rid of GAS. Adlerika does not grip—it is not habit forming. At all Leading Druggists.

THE CHEERFUL CHERUB  
All great musicians we are told Have suffered more than most folks do. And now I have to practice scales I realize that this is true.  
RITCAM

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