

cliffs of the South seas and they build their nests with their saliva. And I am sure you know what shark's fin is. They are rather expensive. So if you are invited by a Chinese to dinner, the first course of the meal will be either birds-nest soup or shark-fin soup. If, unfortunately, it is neither, I am sorry to say that you are being treated cheaply by your host.

—BY AGNAST '60

THE THIRD DAY

The woman standing before me was old and wrinkled. Her hair was snowy white which made a sharp contrast with the silk beret she was wearing. Her eyes were a bright blue and shone with a girl's eagerness. But nowhere have I seen a smile such as hers. The white haired woman became a mischievous girl when she smiled.

Older women in Iceland still wear the national costume in the streets. This particular person wore a costume of black silk embroidered on the front. She wore a shawl of the same color. But her greatest asset was that childish smile she loved to display.

"I see you are not from here. And you have not seen our Iceland yet. Tell me, how long have you been in Reykjavik?"

"Four days."

"Ja! Then you have only seen the city, the lake, the cathedral and the cod driers."

"That is all."

I will then tell you what to see. And this you must, because you cannot leave Iceland before. I will tell what it is and you will not regret my advice."

By now I was in a frenzy of excitement and she knew it. Her eyes were shining fires, and her smile never left her. She was having fun playing with me like a cat teasing a mouse.

"But what is it?"

"Come with me."

She took me to the main section of the city and walked up to a gentleman at a desk. She spoke Icelandic and kept tossing her head in my direction. I felt frustrated, not understanding.

"You go. Maybe you will not see me again, but—" she became almost melodramatic— "you will see something we are proud of, and you will not forget soon."

I stood there, not knowing what she had got me into, and I watched her walk off over the thick moss of the park.

I agreed to follow her advice and I never shall forget the spectacle offered me the next afternoon.

When I came to the bus at the Reykjavik depot, I heard an unearthly mixture of languages. Everybody seemed to be in earnest quarrel inasmuch as the whole group was talking a mile a minute and at the same time. Among the languages there was Icelandic, English, Danish, Swedish and a bit of German. In the Icelandic I was hearing one of the oldest and purest languages in the world. Icelandic dates back a thousand years to Leif Erikson. The only features of change is the addition of

a modern vocabulary to the old one. A schoolboy can read with no great difficulty the sagas of old, whereas no Frenchman can understand the Chanson de Roland, or no Englishman Beowulf without a translation.

The trip of about an hour and a half was made in a rickety old vehicle which would have been more at home as a museum piece alongside the Viking longships. Fortunately, for linguistic purposes, I was appointed to a seat beside a young English girl by the name of Erika. I had said a couple of words in Danish to her, and when she heard the frightfully painful performance, she took it for granted I was not a "Norseman". She was not exactly comely, but she had a way of talking that made one feel at ease. She turned out to be a photographer for an obscure London paper. She was travelling with the purpose of taking shots all over Iceland. She was just as excited as I was at what lay ahead since it was her first look at the great geyser, the one that gave its name to all others in the world.

The driver announced in Icelandic that we had arrived. But it was only because we stopped that I realized what was going on.

Before us was a great wasteland, bare of practically all vegetation save the ever-present moss—there is no wild grass in Iceland due to its structure and position. Instead a very light bluish-green moss two or three inches thick covers the rock. Here it had a sickening, burnt color and was dull under the sun. Neither Erika nor I could conceal our disappointment. Had we come to see a big open field?

We were ushered into a small restaurant where we met a man about fifty, now bent with rheumatism. His face had the texture of parchment but his eyes were young. As we walked in, he looked up, stroked the small beard he had worn for the last twenty five years, and sighed.

"English?" he asked. We answered affirmatively. He took us both under his wing and between bad English and Danish, he managed to elucidate the bewildering facts. He made us look through the window and pointed towards a yellow-brown mass partly concealed by men and women.

"Those people have picnic," he said. We nodded. "But soon they have to go. It not be safe." Again we nodded, not understanding. Now, for me not to grasp something immediately obvious was nothing strange, but for a newspaper woman such as Erika, this was, I thought, utterly hopeless.

"I see you not understand. I explain. You see, they sit now on top of geyser."

The impact of such a blunt and matter of fact statement gave rise to different reactions. The Germans, for whom all this was translated, gave a very dignified grunt and said, "Ach so?"; the Swedes and the Danes were much too blasé to care; Erika's eyes gleamed as she saw a scoop in the making; I stared blankly at the cone suddenly become some monstrous thing of dread.

"But geyser tired, he no—how you say—go up today."

Even the Swede and the Dane manifested their disappointment and a long incoherent argument ensued in which I took no part. I know enough German to have realized that the woman swore vehemently, a fact that

made me smile. She was of enormous Wagnerian proportions and looked like a stray Brunnhilda; and goddesses, even big ones, do not swear.

The Iclander put up his hand.

"I explain. Geyser can be forced to go up. "(Sighs of relief) "But it take long." (Groans.)

"How is it done?" I asked.

"Soap." We all looked silly. The tone of the man suggested so much stupidity on our part.

"Come, I show."

We piled out of the restaurant all eager to arrive before the others. Erika made a dash towards the cone, camera in hand, while I remained near the man, taking notes. Unwillingly, I had become a reporter.

Once explained, the process of awakening the geyser was really quite simple.

When we arrived at the cone, the people sitting there stood up to greet us and commented as our unofficial guide expounded the mysteries of the geyser.

"Look, you see Olav, he put in big quantities of soap in cone."

We watched eagerly as great amounts of pulverised soap was hurled into the boiling water. Bag after bag disappeared into the now foaming water. Five bags later our guide spoke again.

"That melt and it make film. The film, it choke water and keep vapor in. Then vapor make pressure, and

A cry came from the crowd. The picnickers gathered their belongings in haste and scrambled to safety. The once still waters were now boiling furiously. Slowly the water started to rise and flow over the sides of the crater. Steam clouded all visibility so I did not know what had happened until a somewhat humiliated Erika stepped out through the dense cloud and announced pathetically that her shoes were wet and hot. It turned out that she had been taking pictures of the soap dumping, the film forming, and the inside of the crater at water level. Blinded by the steam, she had not run fast enough, with rather blistering consequences to her curiosity.

There was a sudden rumble like that of an earthquake and a water column rose from the crater. It fell back and all was still again. The moment was tense. Nobody moved. Then with ear shattering sounds the waters rose again, this time to their maximum height of sixty feet.

There was no danger now and I stepped closer. Everything was blurred in a dense cloud of steam.

Over the roar our guide informed us that it would last twenty minutes at least and that the temperature of the water was between 250 degrees and 300 degrees. Maybe his patriotic pride made him exaggerate, I never really found out.

Erika's camera never stopped clicking.

As the eruption started to die out the column of water spread into a large fan like structure. Slowly, by spurts, the giant collapsed and fell. A loud gurgling sound came from the crater and when all was clear, the cone was empty and it was dry as a bone.

I could see the inner galleries and made a quick sketch of them. Erika looked in but forgot to take pictures.

We walked back slowly with mixed feelings of fear and excitement, all of awe. We walked over a seeming deadland covered with moss and rocks.

It was then that I saw it—or rather heard it—the loud, choked, sound of suddenly released vapor. Over to my right a large section of land, limited by towering rocks, was covered with mud boiling in unison. The sight was fascinating and I stooped for a closer look.

"Do not touch! You want to burn your finger?"

I, said, "No", and kept on walking. The experience had been too much.

Nobody spoke. The strange silence of Iceland overcame us. Walking over the moss and occasional blade of grass, I thought of what one Iclander said to me:

"Iceland is a country that has remained in the third day of creation. It is as if God had forgotten to finish it."

Iceland is ever changing, ever striking in its primitive wild beauty—a land still covered with glaciers and volcanos, and laced with streams of boiling water. It is a barren land swept by surface winds, steaming with the interior fires of the unfinished creation. And the geyser, its chief attraction, is but one sign of the continuing process of geological evolution.

—RICHARD PATTEE '60

WORLD UNIVERSITY SERVICE OF CANADA

World University Service finds its origin in European Student Relief, E.S.R., which was established in 1920 in Austria to meet urgent material needs among University students, caused by the First World War.

The organization saw and was appalled by the desperate plight of European students and brought their sad story to countries which had remained untouched by the ravages of the war. By the end of that first year, the E.S.R. had realized large donations and grants from 19 countries in various parts of the world to help them in their all-important effort.

In this organization people of many different races and nations, religious people and agnostics alike were inspired to work shoulder to shoulder and in so doing learned that there was something to be said for the other man's point of view.

Aid was provided without any discrimination on grounds of race, creed, or nationality. Assistance to students and universities in need was not given out as thoughtless charity; it was administered along sound economic lines. Money was never given directly, but was used as capital to begin self-help enterprises.

By 1925 the most urgent needs in Europe were being adequately taken care of. But the desire to maintain contact and exchange ideas and experience with other countries prompted the European Student Relief Organization to expand itself into a completely independent international organization with headquarters at Geneva, Switzerland. This new organization became known as International Student Service in 1926 (I.S.S.)