

A Student Abroad

A Talk broadcast from 3YA

By DR. D. E. HANSEN

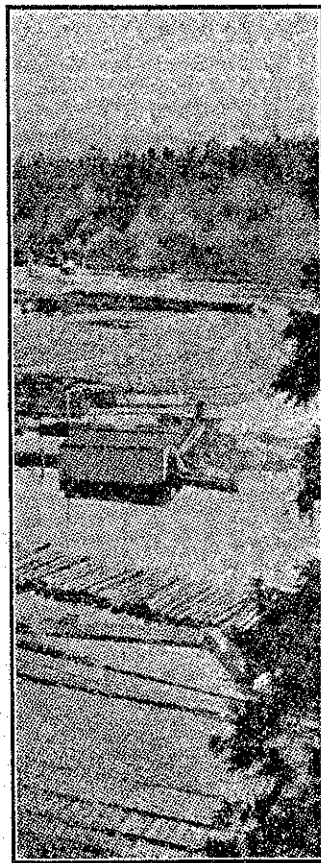
"To any of you who are likely to travel on the Continent in the near future, I would like to make several suggestions. If you are young enough, leave most of the tourist routes and big hotels alone. Where you can, tramp it with your ruck-sack on your back, stop at the delightful little inns, where you can always be sure of a clean bed and a decent meal, and see how the people live." This is the advice Dr. Hansen offers to those intending to visit the Continent. It is advice he has followed himself, as shown by the following account of his wanderings through Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

ONE of the most interesting holidays in my student days on the Continent was spent in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. I was fortunate in having the company of an American student, who had made similar jaunts to other parts of Europe and knew how to meet language difficulties, and, what was very important to both of us, to travel cheaply. Before leaving Berlin, we made a resolve never to pay more than 1/- for a bed or for a meal, and on the whole we succeeded, but our resolution led us on several occasions into some queer hostelries.

Travelling by train from Berlin to Warnemuende, we crossed in a train ferry to Gjedser, in the South of Denmark, and thence by rail to Copenhagen. The train ferry was in itself a novelty, and it was interesting to see the dispatch with which it berthed and loaded or unloaded its cargo, consisting usually of two or four trains. I discovered later that it was an important factor in conveying milk from the farms of Southern Sweden for consumption in Berlin, a distance of several hundred miles, and I saw several milk express trains at the crossing. The train ferry is also an important part of train services in Denmark, since that country consists of a number of islands and the ferry is an indispensable part of the railway system. By the way, it may interest some of you to know that the Baltic Sea is really green in colour, due partly to the tremendous amount of fresh water discharged into it by the rivers, partly to its shallowness, and also probably to the colour of the sky reflected in it.

On the Continent train travelling in different countries is most engrossing, since the buildings and the environment of the people differ so greatly from country to country. So the flying railway journey through that flat, trim country, with its many windmills and its quaint farmsteads, gave me a first impression that I shall never lose. I had heard from my own people of the democratic nature of the Danish people, but it came as a surprise to us, on arriving at the station in Copenhagen, to see the King and Queen step off the same train as ourselves. When we saw the carpet laid on the station platform to receive them, my friend John remarked to me, "Hansen, how did these people know we were coming?"

A week in Copenhagen soon passed, being spent in visiting picture galleries (not picture palaces), museums and old castles, and in walking about, mixing with the people. A most interesting place is Thorwaldsen Museum, which contains only works of moulding and sculpture by

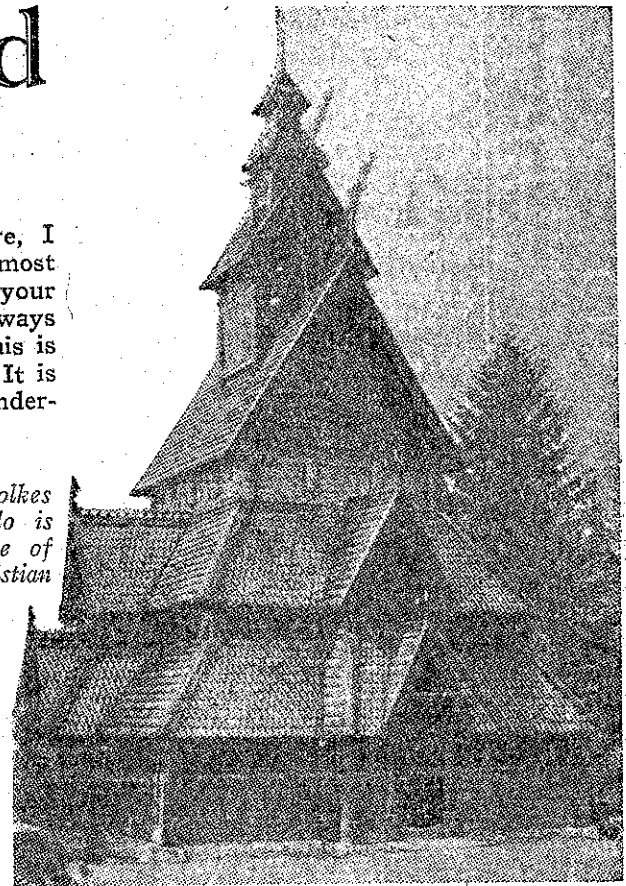


Lumbering is one of the chief industries of Sweden, and the swift rivers of the country are very useful for carrying logs down to the huge sawmills on the Gulf of Bothnia.

"In the Folkes Museum at Oslo is a replica of one of the early Christian churches of Norway —"

These churches are considered to be the most remarkable timber buildings in Europe. Though they were built centuries ago,

there are about twenty still in existence. The many roofs give them an Oriental appearance, which is enhanced by the dragon-like terminals to the gables.



the great artist. His pace of working must have been tremendous, as he died at the early age of 40 and left a great amount of work behind him. Many of his figures and groups of figures are large. Probably his most celebrated set is the twelve Apostles, which is to be seen in one of the old city churches. Another interesting place was an old castle with a circular carriage drive to the top of the tower. The driver would have needed to be expert. I can still feel the stones of Copenhagen under my feet, for the streets, and footpaths, too, were cobbled, and to tramp on them all day in ordinary walking boots was wearisome. The Danes still make a great deal of use of wooden clogs, especially in the country, and it is surprising how warm and comfortable they are.

Later I was able to spend a week in the country districts with some relations and to see something of farming methods. The weather to us is cold and windy, and the farmhouses are substantially built of brick, stone or concrete, and usually well whitewashed. They form one side of a hollow square, the cowbyres are on the opposite side with a paved yard between and connecting the two buildings is a third side which contains stores and also serves as a base for a large windmill, which is used to pump water, grind meal and work various farm machinery.

THE wind is a never-failing source of power in Denmark, and probably electric power will never be so much in demand there as in many other countries. I quite expect that windmills are as common a sight on the landscape as they were 20 years ago.

One farm of special interest to me was owned by a cousin of mine; he ran it as an ordinary farm in the spring, summer and autumn, and as an agricultural college for farm workers in the winter. Such institutions are part of the Danish system of raising the standard of education among the adult rural population, and the education given is cultural rather than agricultural. The effects have been so marked that the Danish methods have attracted attention from all parts of the world. The farming is naturally intensive, as the country is small and the rural population is large. Nothing is (Continued on page 23.)