

POPULATION

RACE

The Icelanders belong to the Teutonic branch of the Aryan race, and to that particular division of this branch which comprises the Scandinavians (Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Faroese) whose nearest relations they are.

Iceland became inhabited last of all the European countries, the colonization, of which a very full record has been preserved, taking place towards the end of the ninth century and during the first quarter or so of the tenth. Most of the colonists were Norwegians, but a considerable number came from the British Isles (Scotland, Ireland, and the Hebrides). Many of the settlers coming from the British Isles were of Norwegian descent, the rest mainly of Celtic or semi-Celtic origin. But the Celtic element has been so completely absorbed by the Icelandic nationality as scarcely even to have left a trace upon the language, and immigration of foreign elements has been infinitesimal ever since the land became fully settled. Though the Icelanders are a mixed race with a sprinkling of Irish and Scotch blood in them, yet, they are predominantly a Nordic race. The variety of types is, indeed, great, but the most prominent characteristics of the nation are: a tall and slender stature, a comparatively long face, a backward-sloping forehead, and light eyes, while the colour of the hair is not so fair as that of the Norwegians.

LANGUAGE

The Icelandic language is the oldest modern language in Europe, and was spoken throughout the whole of Scandinavia about the time when Iceland was colonized. Certainly it has changed somewhat since that time, especially with regard to pronunciation, besides the no small additions which in the course of centuries have been made to its