

**FRIDTJOF NANSEN:
A BOOK FOR THE
YOUNG**

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Fridtjof Nansen: A Book for the Young by Jacob B. Bull

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JACOB B. BULL

**FRIDTJOF NANSEN:
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A BOOK FOR THE YOUNG

BY

JACOB B. BULL

TRANSLATED

BY THE

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ONE OF THE TRANSLATORS OF DR. NANSEN'S "FARTHEST NORTH"

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. NANSEN'S BOYHOOD—EDUCATION AND CHARACTER	1
II. YOUTHFUL ADVENTURES	14
III. MOUNTAIN-CLIMBING IN WINTER	29
IV. PREPARING FOR THE GREENLAND EXPEDITION	35
V. SLIDGING ACROSS GREENLAND	51
VI. NANSEN'S MARRIAGE—A STRANGE WEDDING-TRIP	73
VII. THE FRAM—SETTING OUT FOR THE POLE	82
VIII. THE ICE PRESSURE—HUNTING THE WHITE BEAR	94
IX. FARTHEST NORTH	109
X. NANSEN MEETING DR. JACKSON IN FRANZ JOSEPH LAND	123



ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
MAP OF NANSEN'S POLAR ROUTE	<i>Frontispiece</i>
STORE FRØEN, NANSEN'S BIRTHPLACE	3
NANSEN AT NINETEEN	21
OTTO SVERDRUP	43
CAMP ON THE DRIFT ICE	47
EAST GREENLAND ESQUIMAUX	58
SLEDGING ACROSS GREENLAND	64
ON THE WAY TO GODTHAAB	68
CREW OF THE FRAM	85
THE FRAM IN AN ICE PRESSURE	95
NANSEN AND JOHANSEN LEAVING THE FRAM	110
MEETING OF NANSEN AND JACKSON	125

FRIDTJOF NANSEN.

CHAPTER I.

NANSEN'S BIRTHPLACE AND CHILDHOOD HOME.—BURGOMASTER NANSEN, HIS ANCESTOR.—HIS BOYHOOD AND EDUCATION.—EARLY LOVE OF SPORT AND INDEPENDENT RESEARCH.

IN West Aker, a short distance from Christiania, there is an old manor-house called Store Frøen. It is surrounded by a large courtyard, in the middle of which is a dovecot. The house itself, as well as the out-houses, is built in the old-fashioned style. The garden, with its green and white painted fence, is filled with fruit-trees, both old and young, whose pink and snow-white blossoms myriads of humblebees delight to visit in springtime, while in autumn their boughs are so laden with fruit that they are bent down under a weight they can scarcely support.

Close by the garden runs the Frogner River. Here and there in its course are deep pools, while in other places it runs swiftly along, and is so shallow that it can readily be forded. All around are to be seen in winter snow-covered heights, while far away in the background a dense pine forest extends beyond Frogner

Sæter,¹ beyond which again lies Nordmarken, with its hidden lakes, secret brooklets, and devious paths, like a fairy-tale. And yet close by the hum of a busy city life with all its varied sounds may be heard.

It was in this house that, on Oct. 10, 1861, a baby boy, Fridtjof Nansen, was born.

Many years before this, on Oct. 9, 1660, two of Denmark's most powerful men were standing on the castle bridge at Copenhagen eyeing each other with looks of hatred and defiance. One of these, named Otto Krag, was glancing angrily at Blaataarn (the Blue Tower) with its dungeons. "Know you that?" he inquired of his companion, the chief burgomaster of the city. Nodding assent, and directing his looks toward the church tower of "Our Lady," in which were hung the alarm bells, the latter replied, "And know you what hangs within yonder tower?"

Four days later the burghers of Copenhagen, with the burgomaster at their head, overthrew the arrogant Danish nobles, and made Frederiek III absolute monarch over Denmark and Norway.

It needed unyielding strength and indomitable courage to carry out such an undertaking, but these were qualifications which the burgomaster possessed, and had at an early age learned to employ. When but sixteen he had set out from Flensburg on an expedition to the White Sea in a vessel belonging to his uncle, and had then alone traversed a great portion of Russia. Four

¹ *Frognersteteren*, a forest-covered hill about six miles from Christiania. *Nordmarken*, an extensive woodland stretching for miles and miles to the north of Christiania.