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buying, and capture of slaves. These unhappy creatures are, as a rule, seized during a raid, and become the property of the conquerors. The indigenes know and care little about the Americo-Liberians on the coast, and when they do come in contact with them, their presence is only tolerated by the chiefs because they give guns, powder, and liquor, and make no attempt to interfere with slavery.

It seems deplorable that the indigenous wealth of the country is being lost year by year owing to the prevailing conditions. Apart from the commercial aspect, the country is full of interest to those who would explore away from its seaboard with note-book, pencil, and camera. Much of the history of Liberia is necessarily bound up in her frontiers; for even in this little-known part of Africa they have played, and are playing, an important rôle in her history, even as frontiers play their part in the life and history of other and greater nations.

PROJECT OF A DANISH EXPEDITION TO THE CENTRAL ESKIMO.

By **KNUD RASMUSSEN.**

It is, I think, universally acknowledged that the study of the Eskimo is a natural task for Danish men of science. For more than two centuries Denmark has held the fate of the West Greenland Eskimo in her hands, and literary and scientific work done by Danish men has resulted in modifying the views held by the civilized world regarding the culture of the Eskimo. In recent years our knowledge of the areas inhabited by the Eskimo in present and past times has been steadily nearing its completion. We know that the Eskimo have lived nearly everywhere along the shores of Greenland, and we now are brought face to face with the problem—from where and along which routes did the Eskimo migrate into Greenland?

Geographical and ethnographical facts prove beyond a doubt that the Eskimo territory at Smith sound and Cape York must be looked upon as the first station along the marching line of the Eskimo on their migration into Greenland. Apart from this one point, however, we know very little, and numerous questions bearing a more or less direct relation to this point are still awaiting their further solution. Partly as a member of the first Greenland expedition of the late Mylius-Erichsen, partly travelling on my own accord, I have, since 1902, chiefly occupied myself with the study of the Cape York tribe, and among them, as well as among the other Greenlanders, I have collected a very considerable ethnological and ethnographical material. In my travels, as well as during my stay among the Eskimo generally, I have profited largely by the fact that I myself was born and spent

my early years in North Greenland, so that I am fully familiar with Eskimo life, and the peculiar way of travelling in Eskimo countries. Through my mother I further descend from Eskimo ancestors, and I speak the Eskimo language as my native tongue, all of which circumstances have helped me, as though I were one of their own, to win the confidence of the Eskimo, thus enjoying an unusual opportunity of penetrating into their contemplative life, their religious ideas—in short, the whole of their intimate life and culture. In consideration of all this, I look upon it as a sort of vocation to try to find a solution of the above-mentioned problems as to the immigration of the Eskimo into Greenland in connection with the general study of the American Eskimo tribes.

Among the Greenland Polar-Eskimo at Smith sound I have been so lucky as to meet a number of families who must be looked upon as being the last immigrants from the American Eskimo districts, and though through conversation with these immigrants I have not been able to establish where exactly they had their native country, among other things because the men who made and directed the voyage are dead, while those who are now alive only took part in it as small children, I look upon it as all but settled that the country from where they immigrated must be sought about the north-western interior of Baffin's Land; that is to say, in the sea inside Bylot island, as well as along the Fury and Hecla straits, in which two territories the population along inland routes which are till now unknown to us seem to have been in close communication with one another.

These inhabitants of the north-western Baffin's Land are, however, very little known, and, at any rate, have never been subjected to a thorough ethnographical study. The Baffinlanders, found and studied by Frans Boas in the Cumberland sound towards the south-east, live so far from the inhabitants of the north-western Baffin's Land, and under such widely different conditions of life that it is impossible to make any comparison between those two groups. Upon the whole, the Eskimo in the north-western Baffin's Land are among the most unknown of the Eskimo people, though this district must naturally be looked upon as the very thoroughfare from the American continent to Greenland.

It is further known that the Eskimo at the Fury and the Hecla straits are closely connected with and related to the Eskimo inhabiting the southern part of the Melville peninsula, or the districts round Lyon inlet, Repulse bay, and Wager river. These Eskimo are likewise very little known, and have never been properly studied.

Still scantier is our knowledge of the group of Eskimo who now and then visit the shores of Hudson bay, near Chesterfield inlet, but whose chief territory is the inland and the lake groups in the tundra-land (barren grounds) between Hudson bay and Coronation gulf. In

opposition to almost every other Eskimo tribe these Eskimo, who are known by the name of the Kinipetu, are inland dwellers, and, if only for that reason, of the greatest interest.

Among the problems which seem most pressing as regards the latter tribe suffice it to mention their limits of extension in relation to their neighbours, the Tinne-Indians; further, the problem of the number of tribes among the inland Eskimo, as well as the districts of these tribes along each of the lake groups, and finally their means of livelihood during the two principal seasons, summer and winter. Above all, this latter question leads to the problem of the Eskimo culture itself, in that the theory has been set forth (H. P. Steensby, PH.D., 'The Origin of the Eskimo Culture.' Copenhagen, 1905) that the fishing methods used by the inland dwellers on the frozen lakes of Canada have been transformed by the Eskimo along the sea-shore, where they became the well-known methods of seal-hunting from the sea-ice (the Manpok methods, etc.). According to this supposition the Eskimo culture was to have its seat near the hemmed-in seas towards the Arctic archipelago, north of the ice-sea shore of the continent, or, in other words, the districts round Coronation gulf and further east, near King William's Land and the Boothia spit.

The last-mentioned districts were last visited by the Norwegian Gjõa expedition, which from there brought back very valuable ethnographical collections, though it had not been able to carry on a thorough ethnographical study. Even less than their kinsmen at the Boothia spit had the inhabitants of Coronation gulf been brought into contact with Europeans, and consequently they are still more unknown. It may be remarked that their technical culture offers the peculiarity that they make their weapons and utensils out of solid copper from the surrounding districts.

If the above-mentioned theory about the culture of the Eskimo should prove to hold good, we have, perhaps, here in Coronation gulf, one of the points of departure of the immigration of the Eskimo who at last reached the Danish possession, Greenland. And therefore, as for many other reasons, the tribes at Coronation gulf must be included in the researches, the starting-point of which was the problem of the origin and the routes of the immigration of the Greenland Eskimo.

It is to be observed that I intend to carry on my researches on as wide a basis as possible, and study, not only the way in which the various districts obtain their means of livelihood, their technique and utensils, but also, as thoroughly as possible, to collect legends and old social and religious traditions. I have already done a good deal of work in the last-mentioned direction, some of the results of which have been laid down in my book, 'The People of the Polar North' (Kegan Paul, London, 1908). Besides, I have a very extensive collection of material from the whole of Greenland, which material can

only be used to the full, and attain its real value, when supplemented with material for comparison from the American Eskimo tribes.

As a practical solution of the problem, I propose the following :—

The expedition, the official name of which will be "The Danish Ethnographical Expedition to the Central Eskimo," will start from Copenhagen on its own ship in the summer of 1911. The type of ship which I propose to use is the *Göa* type (with a motor), seeing that it has been used with such great success in these very districts. On its way out the expedition will call at Danish West Greenland for sledge-dogs and fur-clothes, which, as far as possible, must be ordered beforehand. From there it will go through the Hudson strait, and after that, by way of the Fox basin, it will try to reach a good winter harbour in the Fury and Hecla straits. With these headquarters as a starting-point, it will be convenient to carry on the above-mentioned studies and sledge-trips in and round north-western Baffin's Land.

In the following summer the expedition will start south, and look out for new winter quarters in the neighbourhood of Chesterfield inlet; only it is very probable that I myself will prefer to make this voyage by sledging along the coast. From these southern winter quarters the expedition will study the inland Eskimo on Barren Grounds, while the ethnographical material, collected and bought from the natives, will be brought on board the ship.

In the following spring part of the crew will lay a *depôt*, partly consisting of provisions, partly of things for bartering with the Eskimo in Chesterfield inlet, as far as possible towards bottom of the latter, eventually as far as the western side of Baker lake. After this work has been done, the ship will start for a new winter-harbour in the neighbourhood of Repulse bay, at the southern end of the Melville peninsula, while I myself, with the assistance of a couple of Eskimo, possibly using canoes of birch-bark, will bring the *depôt* as far north towards Coronation gulf as the natural conditions permit.

This work, however, must not prevent me from keeping in constant touch with the Eskimo, so that I can study their inland wanderings, their doings during the summer hunting, and, if possible, make archaeological researches. As soon as the lakes and rivers are frozen over, and the snow covers the ground so as to make sledging possible, the expedition will continue the voyage and the freighting of the objects acquired through bartering towards Coronation gulf. Among the Eskimo of that neighbourhood I shall remain until April next year, when I intend to make the last sledge trip along the coast of the continent, visiting the Eskimo tribes which live there.

In the course of the winter the crew will have laid a *depôt* of provisions for me, in a place agreed upon beforehand, somewhere near the Boothias pit. In June I have to be back in the ship, and with the first breaking up of the ice the expedition will start directly for Copenhagen.

From the above it will appear that the extensive sledge-trips, and the collections which will, it is hoped, be the results of these sledge-trips, must necessarily pre-suppose a ship as the headquarters of the expedition. To manœuvre the boat we must, I think, have a captain, a mate, and three sailors.

Besides, the captain of the ship, together with the mate, must do the necessary cartographical work, which, especially in north-western Baffin's Land, will be very considerable; likewise, they must be able to make the meteorological observations.

Seeing that the route followed by the ship-expedition, also in other respects, will offer very interesting, hitherto unsolved scientific problems, the staff will further include a geologist and a physician who, together with the geologist, will be able to undertake the botanical and zoological studies if necessary, also to do the work of an anthropologist and archæologist. Chiefly as regards the study of glacial geology the districts round the projected winter harbours are of the greatest interest, and offer the possibility of making important comparison with the natural conditions found in Greenland. In northern Baffin's Land the glacial formations, the extension and nature of which are hitherto unknown, as well as the Quaternary formations in connection with the glacier, will offer an instructive transitional stage between the totally ice-covered district of Greenland and the Barren Ground, now free from ice, but in former days covered with glaciers. In Baffin's Land and the Melville peninsula there is also the prospect of carrying on important palæontologic studies, while the Barren Grounds to the west of Hudson bay, which, geologically, are hitherto known through a few hasty visits from Canadian geologists, are furthermore of the special interest that the great American glacial period probably originated in these districts, for which reason researches carried on here offer the possibility for solving a series of problems as to the motion of the ice.

From a geographical point of view, the regions in question are, generally speaking, so unknown that every increase of our knowledge will be of the greatest value, and the expedition therefore ought to profit by the opportunity of making studies and collections in various directions, provided that this work does not throw obstacles in the way of the chief purpose of the expedition—the ethnographical researches.

NOTES ON DETERMINATION OF POSITION NEAR THE POLES.*

By **ARTHUR R. HINKS**, Royal Geographical Society Lecturer in Surveying and Cartography, Cambridge University.

THE writer is fully conscious of the fact that in the severe conditions of polar travel it is not a question of what observations might with advantage be made, but of what can actually be done. The only purpose of these notes can be to

* Research Department, November 18, 1910.