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Expedition to North-East Greenland, 1909-12: Discussion

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of scurvy. During this spring we were obliged to make several sledge trips in order to fetch clothes and other necessaries. We attempted to get the boat along, but were obliged to give it up. We also tried to get down to Angmasalik by way of Cape Dalton; but it proved impossible. There was nothing to do but to wait, and fortunately the ice looked promising. At last, on July 19, 1912, we were awakened by the sound of voices outside the house. We had now been alone for twenty-eight months, and were naturally more than glad to see our fellow-creatures again.

Ten days later we were in Aalesund, the journey was over, and our three years in Greenland at an end.

The PRESIDENT (before the paper): Recently we met in the Queen's Hall to honour the achievements of a great Norwegian explorer, Captain Amundsen. To-night we are here to hear the record of a not less adventurous expedition by a brave Dane. Captain Mikkelsen is not unknown to us in this country. It is now some years since his first efforts to solve some of the remaining North Polar problems came under the notice of the Society. In 1907 he made an enterprising journey from the Arctic shores of Canada northward, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not a land of very considerable extent exists across the North Polar Region away from any of the great islands which form the Arctic archipelago. On that occasion he underwent very great hardships, but lack of funds prevented him from fully attaining his object. He succeeded, however, in obtaining a large number of useful observations on the movement of the ice, tides, depths, and other matters of scientific value. His more recent expedition, the story of which he is going to tell us to-night, arose out of the memorable and disastrous experience of his countryman, Mylius Erichsen, who, in command of a well-equipped expedition, landed in North-East Greenland in 1907. He and two companions pushed their way over 200 miles into the interior for the purpose of completing a contour of the northern and north-eastern coast of Greenland. They made very useful maps, and their information proved that Greenland was entirely surrounded by the sea. But on their return journey they lost their way, and these three brave men perished in circumstances of cruel tragedy and suffering. It was to discover the bodies of these unfortunate men, and if possible to obtain any records which they might have left behind them before they died, that Captain Ejnar Mikkelsen succeeded in obtaining support for a search expedition, which left Denmark in June, 1909. He too, in an absence in those frozen regions of more than two years with a single companion, endured privations such as have seldom fallen to the lot of any living man, and both of them were within an ace of losing their lives. Fortunately they managed at last to win their way to safety, and it is to tell us the tale of this adventure of heroism and suffering that Captain Mikkelsen has come this evening. I will now ask him to deliver his lecture.

The DANISH MINISTER (after the paper): It has been a great joy, I am sure, not only to Captain Mikkelsen, my distinguished compatriot, but to every Dane, that you have listened to his most interesting account of his brave and dangerous journey in Greenland with so much kindness and interest. We Danes for many centuries have perhaps been a little late in joining all other nations in mapping out the regions of the north part of the world, where so many British names shine with a glory that can never fail. In later years, however, great interest has been taken in Denmark in the exploration of Greenland, Denmark being along the

western coast of this Arctic country in possession of a chain of colonies. In spite of Captain Mikkelsen's declaration to the contrary, I hope that he may again feel drawn back to the north, and in some years will again be able to tell us something interesting, and I am sure a great ambition would be for Captain Mikkelsen again to be allowed to speak here to this famous Society. Meanwhile I will not detain you any longer, but only express the thanks of Captain Mikkelsen in being allowed to speak here to-night—a thanks in which I and every one of my compatriots join most heartily.

Admiral Sir LEWIS BEAUMONT: It is not many years ago that one of the Danish officers who belonged to the Mylius Erichsen expedition read a paper here and gave us an account of the work that was done by them and of the sad story which became known to them when they found the record left by the Eskimo Brinland. But compared to the expedition we have just heard of it was child's play. The amount of work which has been done by these two men is simply wonderful. It really is astounding to think that they should have deliberately set out to go those 700 miles directly north with so small an equipment—it shows a courage, at the outset, remarkable in a leader who was not ignorant of Arctic conditions. You have heard the extraordinary difficulties met with throughout the whole time; the extreme difficulty of getting over the inland ice, the poverty of the land—the absence of food even when they got to the point at which they expected to find it; where in summer you generally find musk oxen and other animals, but where they found nothing. They had only started with fifteen dogs and by that time, I do not think, had eight left, yet they contemplated coming back round the coast further than the direct line home, for the sole purpose of completing the work that they had taken in hand. I think their courage and endurance and their wonderful power of resisting cold, illness, and hunger were simply extraordinary. I think in this it forms a record expedition, for never have two men done such work single-handed with so many difficulties to overcome, or remained for two years and four months in those regions absent from all contact with any human beings at all. Through two Arctic winters they were absolutely alone, without anything to interest them, no work, no books, no animals, nothing to wile away the long winter nights. It is a record of human endurance and courage that has no parallel, and I hope that as a reward of the indomitable courage, fortitude, and patience of these two wonderful men who have stood the test of such a trial both physical and moral, that the names of Captain Ejnar Mikkelsen and his companion Iversen will appear, as a memorial of their work and of themselves, on some part of the land over which they travelled with so much pain and difficulty.

The PRESIDENT: In closing the proceedings I should like to say how entirely I and all my colleagues endorse the words which have just fallen from Sir Lewis Beaumont, speaking with his exceptional authority and experience. The modest and attractive lecture to which we have just listened, and the wonderful slides thrown upon the screen, left upon my mind the impression, as I am sure they did upon that of every one before me, that never in this hall has our Royal Geographical Society listened to a more remarkable tale of human sacrifice, endurance, courage, and heroism. Certainly, I myself have never, in any record in any part of the world, heard anything to equal the moving pathos of the description which was given to us to-night by the hero on my left of the sufferings of himself and his friend. We admire them for their courage, we congratulate them on their survival, we honour the nation which has produced two such men, and I earnestly hope, following Sir Lewis Beaumont's suggestion, that their names may live not only in the grateful recollection of their own

countrymen, but in the land which they have dignified by their achievements. I am sure you will join me, ladies and gentlemen, in carrying a hearty vote of thanks to Captain Mikkelsen for his lecture.

Captain MIKKELSEN: I have spoken so much I will just say a few words to thank the Council and the members for their kindness and interest. While we were up there going through the journey we were never thinking of coming home, but that it will be interesting to tell people about it and wonder how people would think of the work we had done. For the reception I have had here to-night we feel grateful, and whatever hardships there may have been, they have been fully repaid. I thank you once more for your kindness and interest.

THE BALKAN PENINSULA.*

By D. G. HOGARTH.

WHAT is meant by this term "Balkan Peninsula" and what ought to be meant? It is in popular—at present very popular—use; but those who use the term rarely ask themselves what precisely they mean, and, if they do ask, their answers do not agree. The definition of a peninsula we all know, and that the Balkans, as generally understood, mean the mountainous spine which runs obliquely across a south-eastern peninsular projection of our continent—this, too, we all know. But where exactly does that peninsula begin to distinguish itself from the continental mass? If somewhere about N. Lat. 46, below a line drawn from Trieste to Akkerman or to Odessa—and as a geographical peninsula it certainly starts from such a line—do we mean, when we think or speak of the "Balkan Peninsula," anything like so large a tract? I take it most of us do not, unless we happen to be giving a geography lesson. We think of it sometimes as bounded on the north by the line of the Lower Danube prolonged to the north-western angle of Bosnia; more often, as everything which lies on the farther side of the southern frontier of Austria-Hungary. The truth is that the term belongs less to geographical than to political nomenclature. It originated in politics, and it has varied and will vary in current meaning with changes in political grouping. It may yet expand to include all that, as a term of regional geography, it ought to include—nay, even more than this, were the proposal realized which was ascribed lately to an Austrian Archduke by the Press. It may shrink to mean no more than a fraction of the peninsula south of the Balkans, exclusive, as in common use now it is usually exclusive, of the most peninsular part of all—the present Kingdom of Greece.

I offer this short preface as a sort of apology for an arbitrary limitation of the Balkan Peninsula which, for my own purposes, I am going to impose on myself and you to-night. I propose to deal with only so much of the peninsula as lies south of the Balkan ranges. If I have put forward an

* Royal Geographical Society, March 10, 1913.