

THE DRIFT ICE OF THE GREAT NEW-  
FOUNDLAND BANK AND ITS DANGER  
TO NAVIGATION.

THE principal article in *Naturwissenschaftliche Wochenschrift* of June 9 is devoted to a very interesting contribution by Herr Otto Baschin (Geographical Institute, Berlin) to our present knowledge of this subject and of icebergs generally, to which the *Titanic* disaster of April 14 has directed attention. It is pointed out that nowhere do the masses of ice from polar regions advance so far in the equatorial direction as those which frequent the vicinity of Newfoundland. The drift of this ice southwards and eastwards is most active between January and July. About the middle of June the ice-limit begins to recede north-westwards, and after August ice is usually only met with (if at all) on the northern edge of the banks and on the east coast of Newfoundland. Icebergs generally appear later than field ice, but the probability of meeting with both differs considerably from month to month and from year to year, and it may be seen from this article and from the valuable monthly charts issued by our own and other meteorological offices that great bergs may be met with in any month. The chart of the North Atlantic for July issued by the Meteorological Committee states: "The first berg of 1912 was passed on January 7 . . . but ice has been present in the North Atlantic since January 28, 1911."

The region in which ships must probably expect to meet ice lies between long.  $40^{\circ}$  and  $60^{\circ}$  W., and the district in which it is most frequent is between  $45^{\circ}$  and  $55^{\circ}$  W., and extends southwards to latitude  $41^{\circ}$  N.; but, as shown in the charts above referred to, icebergs have occasionally been seen in nearly all parts of the Atlantic north of latitude  $30^{\circ}$  N. Most of these bergs have their origin in western Greenland, being the seaward projecting ends of huge glaciers broken off by the upward pressure of the water. Some of them are of enormous dimensions, of which only about one-seventh part is visible above the surface of the water. The part below water, the so-called "foot" of the iceberg, mostly projects sideways for a considerable distance. To add to the difficulties of navigation between northwest Europe and Canada and the United States, the prevalence of fog is very great, owing to the meeting of cold and warm ocean currents in the vicinity of Newfoundland.

Since the *Titanic* catastrophe, with the view of minimising the risk to shipping, a more southerly route has been agreed upon, in which the meridian of  $45^{\circ}$  W. is crossed in latitude  $38^{\circ}$  N. It has been shown by Dr. G. Schott, of the Deutsche Seewarte, to whose work on the subject the author of the article is much indebted, that there is an intimate connection between the east Greenland and Newfoundland ice conditions, and Herr Baschin suggests that useful forecasts might possibly now be issued, based on ice reports received by Iceland cable and by wireless telegraphy, in addition to the notices in the charts above referred

to. With respect to the loss of the *Titanic*, he expresses the opinion that the hull of that vessel was ripped by the far-reaching invisible "foot" of an iceberg, resembling to all intents and purposes a sunken reef, and rejects the idea that she collided directly with the visible portion of the berg.

NOTES.

At the seventy-eighth annual general meeting of the Royal Statistical Society, held on June 18, Prof. F. Y. Edgeworth was elected president for the year 1912-13.

THE Livingstone gold medal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society has been awarded to Captain Roald Amundsen for his geographical discoveries on his recent expedition to the south pole.

THE Secretary of State for India in Council notifies that no vacancies in the Geological Survey Department are expected to occur during the current year. It is anticipated that one appointment will be made in the year 1913.

MR. JAMES MURRAY has been awarded the Neill prize by the Royal Society of Edinburgh for his paper on Scottish Rotifers collected by the Lake Survey, and other papers on the Rotifera and Tardigrada; and Prof. Alexander Smith the Keith prize for his researches on sulphur and vapour pressure.

WE regret to see the announcement of the death, on June 18, at sixty-three years of age, of Mr. Alexander Knox, map curator of the War Office, and author of a valuable work on "The Climate of the Continent of Africa," published last year by the Cambridge University Press.

A REUTER message from Berlin states that a German expedition to the Arctic, which will endeavour to make the North-East passage, and is expected to last three or four years, will start, under the leadership of Lieutenant Schröder-Stranz, in June, 1913. The Berlin Museum will supply the scientific equipment; and a staff of prominent men of science will accompany the expedition.

WE regret to record the death on June 22, at thirty-nine years of age, of Mr. R. W. C. Shelford, known by his work in entomology, particularly on the Blattidæ, on which he was the leading authority. Mr. Shelford was a graduate of the University of Cambridge, and for a time was curator of the museum at Sarawak. Upon his return to England he became an assistant in the Hope Department of the museum at Oxford, where he did valuable work. He suffered from tuberculosis of the thigh, and had been in a nursing home at Margate since last January.

THE annual exhibition of antiquities discovered during the third season of excavations at Meroë, Sudan, carried on in connection with the Institute of Archæology, University of Liverpool, will be held in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, London, W., from July 9 to July 23 inclusive. The exhibition will be inaugurated by the Bishop of