

The Danish Arctic Station.

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THE Danish Arctic Station at Godhavn, on the south coast of Disco Island, off the west coast of North Greenland (lat. $69^{\circ} 14' N.$), is not so well known, at least to British scientific workers, as it deserves to be. It is the only station in the world within the Arctic Circle where it is possible under very favourable conditions and with adequate facil-

ceives contributions from foreign institutions and from individuals in return for papers published at the station or for specimens. British authors whose work deals with subjects bearing upon Arctic problems will do good service to science by sending reprints to the director.

Near the main building is a large workshop, and an adjacent stream provides an abundant supply of excellent water. The station is built on glacial sand at the foot of the rounded hummocks of gneiss which on this part of the coast form the foothills in front of the terraced basaltic cliffs rising to a height of more than 2000 ft. (Fig. 1). On the seaward side the station faces Disco Bay, with the Crown Prince Islands in the distance, and in the foreground there are always several icebergs (Fig. 2) which have stranded on the shore after drifting across the bay from the large Jakobshavn ice-fjord.

The main objects Mr. Porsild had in view in founding the station were to provide a base for a geographical and geological survey of the country, a centre from which to investigate the fauna and flora of a particularly rich Arctic region, and means for experimental work, both biological and chemical. It would be difficult to find a more suitable place as a training school for men who wish to qualify

FIG. 1.—The Arctic station, showing Archaean gneiss in the foreground and, behind, one of the mountains carved out of the plateau of Tertiary basalt sheets and beds of tuff.

ties to carry out experimental scientific investigations.

In 1898 the present director, Mr. Morten P. Porsild, on his return from an expedition under the late Dr. K. J. V. Steenstrup, to which he was attached as botanist, made an unsuccessful attempt to induce the Danish Government to establish a station in Greenland. Some years later funds were obtained from private sources, chiefly from Mr. A. Holck, of Copenhagen, and Mr. Porsild, with the assistance of two Danish carpenters and some native labourers, but largely with his own hands, built the present station and established himself there in 1906. The Government at once took over the station, with Mr. Porsild as director, and made an annual grant of 10,000 kronen to cover all expenses, including the director's stipend. The director for Greenland, at present Mr. Daugaard-Jensen, an official who, under the Minister of the Interior, is responsible for Greenland affairs, has the assistance of a Commission composed of a few scientific men to advise him on all matters connected with the station.

The station is about 1 km. from Godhavn harbour, and is reached by a road, probably the best road in Greenland, made by Mr. Porsild. The station consists of a well-built and exceptionally warm wooden house of two stories approximately 20 by 10 metres in plan. On the ground floor there is a well-equipped laboratory and a dark room, a library containing about 5500 books and pamphlets, and an excellent herbarium of Arctic and some Alpine plants, and living rooms; on the first floor are two good bedrooms for visitors and a workroom. The library re-

them selves for Arctic exploration, as in winter the locality is particularly well situated for sledging and skiing. The station's motor-boat is available for expeditions and for marine investigations, while for shorter trips, especially to places where the anchorage is bad, visitors can hire a umyak (a long flat-bottomed skin boat).

Since 1908 there have been fourteen visitors to the station from Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, and America, who have resided there several

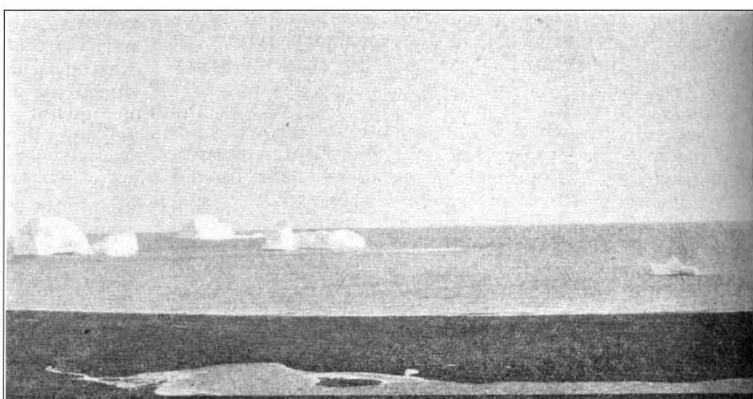
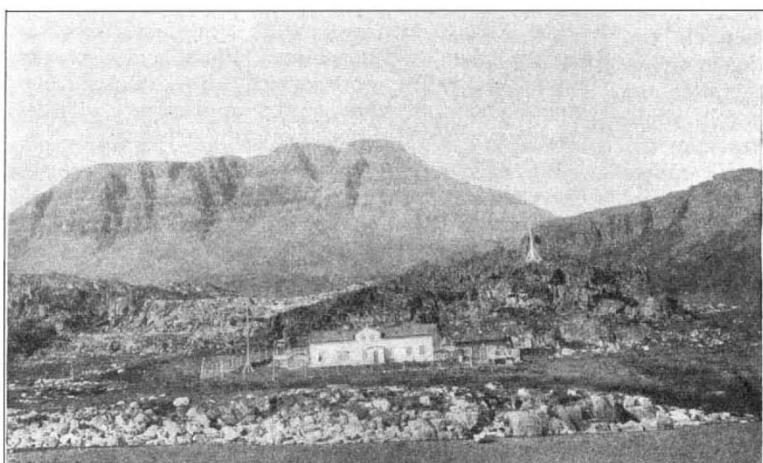


FIG. 2.—View from the Arctic station. Icebergs stranded on the beach of Disco Bay.

weeks or months, and many others for shorter periods. Forty scientific papers on work done at the station or dealing with material collected in the neighbourhood have been published, and of these twenty-five are by the director.

As Greenland occupies an exceptional position as a "closed" country, it is necessary for all foreigners,

also for Danes not officially connected with Greenland, to obtain permission from the Danish Government to go there. British applicants should submit recommendations through the Foreign Office and specify the purpose of their visit. There is at present no fee for working at the station, and for board and lodging the charge is at present only 8 kronen a day. The North Greenland district is accessible to ships from the latter part of May to the end of September, but during that time there are usually only two opportunities of direct connection with Copenhagen.

The director is an ideal man for the position; he is generally acknowledged to be the leading authority not only on the natural history of West Greenland, but on the history of Eskimo culture, and he is always willing unreservedly to place his knowledge and the results of his wide experience at the disposal of fellow-workers.

It was my privilege this summer, in company with Mr. R. E. Holttum, of St. John's College, Cambridge, to spend some weeks at the Arctic station, and I cannot speak too highly of the hospitality and scientific assistance which we received. Unfortunately for the cause of research, the director has no paid assistant to relieve him of much of the routine work of the station which makes serious inroads into the time available for investigations in his own special fields. One of the director's sons, Mr. Erling Porsild, who is not only a keen naturalist, but also is able to speak the Eskimo's language with ease, took us for a week's trip in the station's motor-boat to some localities where we wished to collect fossil plants. Our intention was to return to Godhavn in time for the King's visit before visiting more remote places, but the breaking of the boat's shaft and a spell of bad weather rendered this impossible, and threatened seriously to interfere with our subsequent plans. Mr.

Porsild at once approached the Director for Greenland who accompanied the Royal party, and he very kindly placed at our disposal for a month's trip his official motor-boat—an act of generosity for which it is difficult adequately to express my gratitude.

The particularly favourable climatic conditions in the Godhavn district have produced an exceptionally rich and varied flora, including several southern types not found elsewhere in North Greenland. There is a legend that Disco Island once lay much further south, and as it was an obstacle to navigation a hunter towed it behind his kayak to its present position.

Mr. Porsild has taken steps to protect the vegetation in the immediate neighbourhood of the station and at Englishman's Harbour, near the warm springs, of which there are several on the south coast of Disco, by putting up notices in the Eskimo language asking the natives to abstain from gathering fuel or collecting plants for food within certain protected areas—a request which is almost invariably respected.

The Danish Government by officially adopting the Arctic station showed its appreciation of the foresight and determination of Mr. Porsild, and set an example to other nations possessing territory within the Arctic Circle. One may venture to express the hope that the State will see its way to increase the value of this pioneer station by augmenting the annual grant sufficiently to provide an adequate stipend for the director and for a trained assistant, by the provision of an additional and larger motor-boat, and by expending the comparatively small sum required to make certain much-needed extensions of the building to relieve the present congestion in the rapidly growing library, and to accommodate the very valuable collection of Eskimo implements and weapons obtained by the director in the course of excavations made by him during several years on the mainland.

Psychological Tests for Vocational Guidance.¹

THE newly-formed section of Psychology had, at its first meeting in Edinburgh, a large and enthusiastic attendance. It opened its sittings on the morning of Thursday, September 8, being joined by the sections of Education and Economics, under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Hadow (president of the Education Section), with a discussion upon "Vocational Tests and Vocational Training." It appeared, in the course of the several speeches, that economists, educationists, and psychologists alike were agreed upon one general and practical conclusion, namely, the feasibility and the importance of diagnosing during early childhood, whether by tests or other means, each individual's special vocational aptitudes.

Sir William Beveridge (director of the London School of Economics), who spoke late in the discussion, summed up the arguments for this conclusion most clearly. With other speakers he welcomed cordially the progress of industrial psychology, and maintained that if boys could be selected with greater care for the vocations they had to take up, three distinct economic consequences might be predicted. In the first place, unemployment would be appreciably diminished; although it was impossible to expect that lack of work would be altogether abolished simply by right vocational selection, it would beyond question be very much reduced. Secondly, the tenure of employment would be more nearly permanent: one of the chief causes that prevented people from sticking

to the jobs they had obtained would be largely eliminated. Lastly, productivity would be greatly increased. Besides these more limited effects, economic in their special nature, there would be a wider benefit to the public at large—a general decrease in human misery, and a general increase in human welfare.

He proceeded with some severity to criticise the method, or lack of method, now obtaining among employers in their choice of persons for different kinds of occupation. There were few things, he said, which employers handled more inefficiently than the selection of their employees. It is true that the president of the Economics Section later on disagreed with these criticisms of the employers' method of choice. Mr. Hichens considered that employers exercised an extraordinary amount of care in choosing workers, both for higher and for lower positions. Indeed, they showed some advance upon the methods hitherto adopted by educationists. Instead of setting examination papers in which candidates were asked to name the kings of Israel, they asked questions and used trial tasks which had a definite bearing upon the trade process concerned.

In face of this slight disagreement among the economists, the psychologists replied that, even if the employers' methods were superior to the old-fashioned methods of the educationists, they were still highly unscientific and quite unstandardised. As an instance of the work possible and necessary in this direction, Dr. C. S. Myers (director of the Cambridge Psychological Laboratories) described the work of the new

¹ Discussion at a joint meeting of the Sections of Psychology, Education and Economics of the British Association at Edinburgh on September 8