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A Recent Journey to Northern Labrador

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The Geographical Journal

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March 1922

A RECENT JOURNEY TO NORTHERN LABRADOR

G. M. Gathorne-Hardy

Read at the Meeting of the Society, 5 December 1921.

I PROPOSE to-night to give some account of a visit which I paid to the northern parts of the Labrador coast in the autumn of last year. I was accompanied by my cousin, Robert Gathorne-Hardy, who had at the time only just left Eton, but whom I chose because I knew him to be keenly interested in archæology, and it was an archæological problem which I proposed primarily to investigate. Now, on a closer acquaintance, I should be puzzled to name any subject in which my cousin was not keenly interested, and I feel I could not, therefore, have had a more suitable or delightful companion.

The journey itself was neither exciting nor arduous; it was no such undertaking as the expedition into the interior which I had the pleasure of sharing with Mr. Hesketh Prichard in 1910. Of this, as its details have long since been published, I do not intend to say much here. Such interest as may attach to what I have to say must depend firstly upon the archæological problem which I went to Labrador to tackle, and also upon the circumstance that the northern parts of this coast are perhaps sufficiently little known to warrant the occasional attention of this Society. A good deal has, no doubt, been written about it, and public interest in it has to a great extent been awakened and kept alive by the energetic propaganda of Dr. Wilfrid Grenfell. At the same time, apart from those connected with the Moravian Mission, and the Hudson's Bay Company, together with the Newfoundland schoonermen, there are very few who have seen it at all, and fewer still to whom it can be said to be at all well known. Of the interior, of course, not even this can be said. It is not particularly easy for the ordinary traveller to get even so far north as Nain. The mail-boats from Newfoundland contract, I believe, to come as far north as this point twice in their season, but no one can exactly tell when these visits will be made. There is, indeed, a very small boat which now carries the mails and a travelling magistrate from Newfoundland to the more northern stations, but this does not supply much accommodation for unofficial passengers, and would be looked askance at by those for whom sea-sickness holds any terrors at all.

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To give an idea of the inaccessibility even of such a place as Nain, I may mention the experience of a Newfoundland canoe-man, who accompanied Mr. Hesketh Prichard and myself in 1910. This man came from Newfoundland to Glasgow, and thence to London, from which port he sailed after some little delay by the Moravian Mission ship *Harmony*, a boat of 250 tons, with a speed in favourable circumstances of about 5 knots—not, therefore, an Ocean greyhound. In this way he came with us eventually to Nain, and found on his arrival that he could not have got there directly from his own country until considerably later. This, I suppose, must be nearly the most roundabout journey on record.

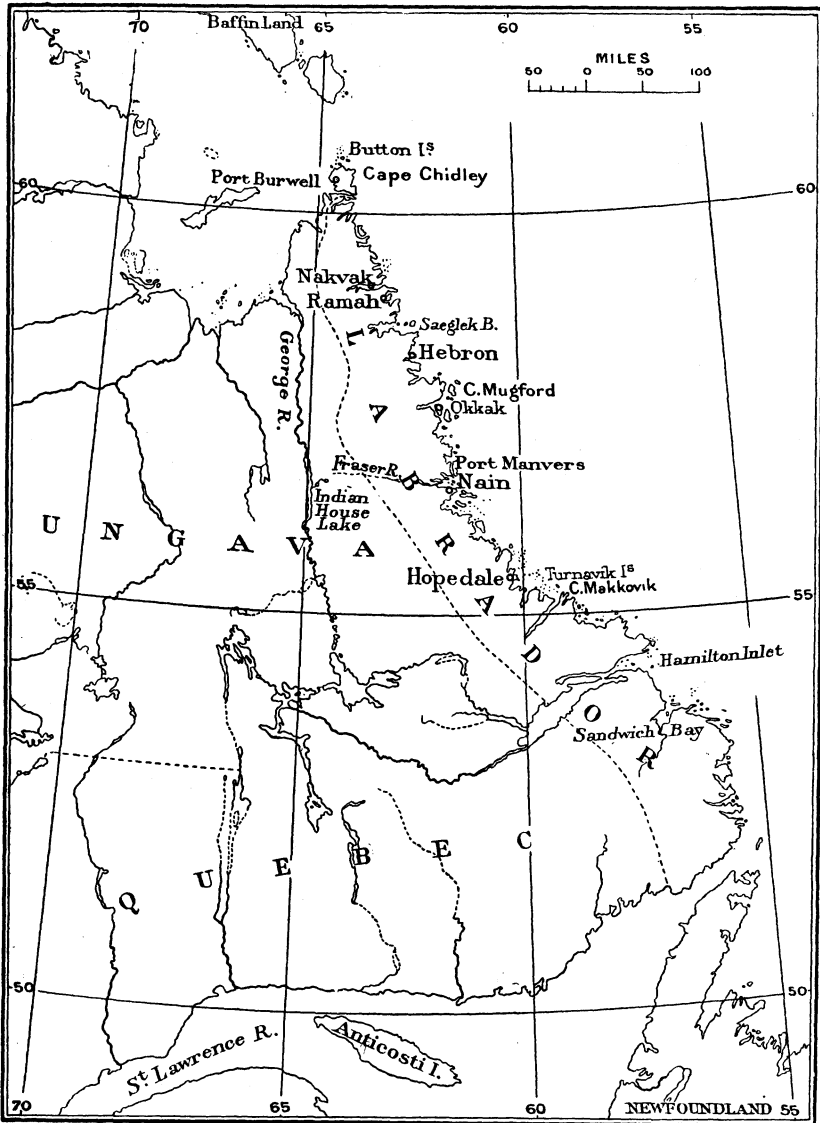
Politically, Labrador is divided between the interior, which belongs to Canada, and the coast, which is a dependency of Newfoundland. When I was there, the precise line of delimitation was a matter of acute controversy, which was about to come before the Privy Council for adjudication.

Apart from this political division, there is a considerable distinction in character to be drawn between the northern and southern parts of the coast. For rough purposes, one may divide the two at Hamilton Inlet. From this point southwards is the country of the white settlers, in fairly regular touch with Newfoundland, and forming the principal though not the exclusive field for the ministrations of the mission associated with the name of Dr. Grenfell. The northern part is the country of the Eskimo, who have been controlled and cared for for 150 years by another mission, that of the Moravians. It is only to this northern half that my personal experiences extend.

Physically, the coast of Labrador presents a considerable resemblance to that of Norway, though it is much more bleak and desolate. There is the same high interior plateau, falling steeply to the sea, and intersected by long fjords and narrow, deep-cut river-valleys. The water in the fjords is generally very deep, so much so that it is often difficult to find satisfactory anchorage at a safe distance from the shore. As in Norway, the coast is fringed with islands, which form in certain places, especially in the neighbourhood of Nain, a very considerable archipelago. The plant-life also resembles that of Norway; one may specially mention the berries known in Norway as *tyttebaer* and *multebaer*, both of which are exceedingly common in Labrador.

The main cause, of course, which keeps Labrador secluded is ice: the drift ice from the north in the early summer, and the freezing of the sea in the early winter. I have not myself encountered this obstacle, except in the comparatively harmless form of bergs, but it is, nevertheless, a very real impediment to navigation. Once you are on the coast of Labrador, the principal obstacle to enjoyment in the early summer is the mosquito, of which pest much has been written and said; but what has been written is inadequate, and what is said is unfit for publication, so we may pass this aspect of the question over in silence.

Apart from this very real drawback, and several other more or less imaginary ones existing in the minds of questioners, I am often asked what attractions are to be found in Labrador. There can be no question,



Sketch-map of Labrador.

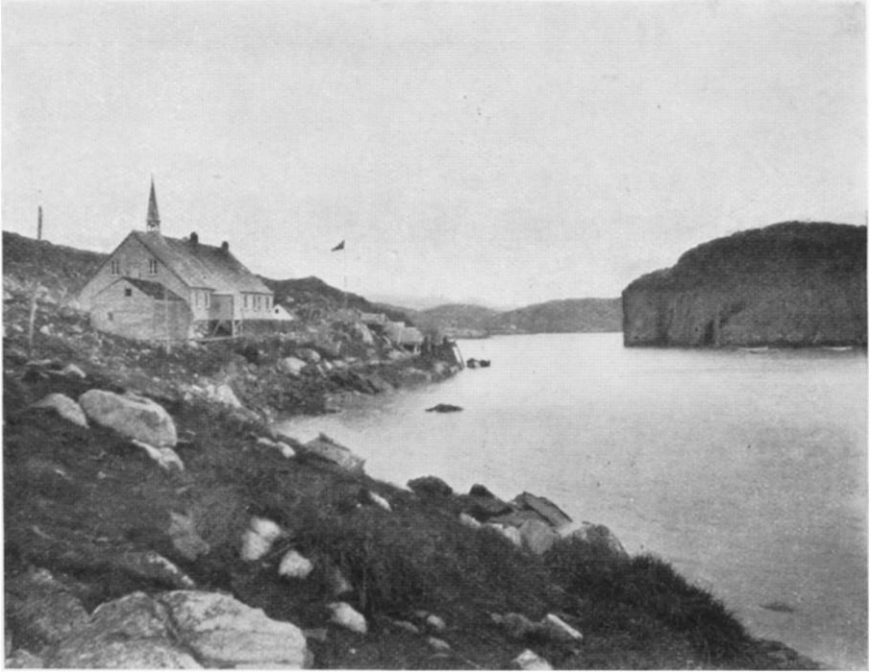
I think, that there are attractions: it is the common experience of practically all who have visited the country that they seek and desire to return to it. Frankly, I do not think much of its sporting or commercial possibilities. As regards the former, there are certainly large herds of

very fine caribou, but it would be difficult for a visitor to remain in the country where these are generally to be found much after the time when the horns are clean. Recently the Newfoundland Government have thought fit to impose and enforce their game laws. As a rule I approve of such a policy, but I must say that in this case I feel that some modification is advisable. The deer have a natural protection in the difficulties of inland travel, and the incalculable changes in the course of their migrations; and they certainly exist in very large numbers, as the wide, worn roads which one comes across demonstrate. By far the greater part of the slaughter is done by the Indians of the far interior, in Canadian territory, largely out of reach of any conceivable application of game-laws, and I consider that the very sparse resident population of the coast might be allowed to kill for their own food supply—and even to preserve the meat—whenever and wherever they get the chance of coming across the game. Of course, it would be the easiest possible thing for the natives to evade the law with impunity; only the extreme candour and truthfulness of the Eskimo stand in the way; and I regret a policy calculated to have a detrimental effect on these good qualities. A prohibition against commercial use and export would, it seems to me, in the circumstances be sufficient. At present feeling on the coast runs very high, and as, so far as I can ascertain, the population is not represented in the Newfoundland legislature, I think it desirable to voice the general view.

Besides the caribou, black bears exist in considerable numbers, and small game, such as ducks, geese, willow-grouse, etc., is abundant at the right time of year.

As regards commercial possibilities, fish (cod) and seals remain, as always, the principal resources exploited, though fur-trading, principally in foxes, is carried on during the winter with very variable and uncertain results. The fishing is mainly conducted by the natives from summer stations on the islands and other remote points, as well as by the Newfoundland fishermen in their ubiquitous schooners. The difficulties of transport and the short open season impede the exploitation of such minerals as have been found to exist in Labrador, while timber is almost non-existent north of Nain, and what there is seems to be of exceptionally slow and uncertain growth, so that it is doubtful whether, once despoiled of existing wood, the country would recover; at any rate, I have seen places where timber formerly existed which show no sign, after a considerable lapse of time, of ever bearing it again. My experience of the interior, even in the latitude of Nain, is that away from the river valleys it is almost incredibly barren. One has the greatest difficulty in finding even a few twigs of dwarf birch to feed a fire which needs constant replenishing, and a piece of real wood, however stunted, is so rare as to be a godsend indeed.

To the traveller with scientific instincts, however, the attractions of Northern Labrador are undeniable. The natural history of the fauna has



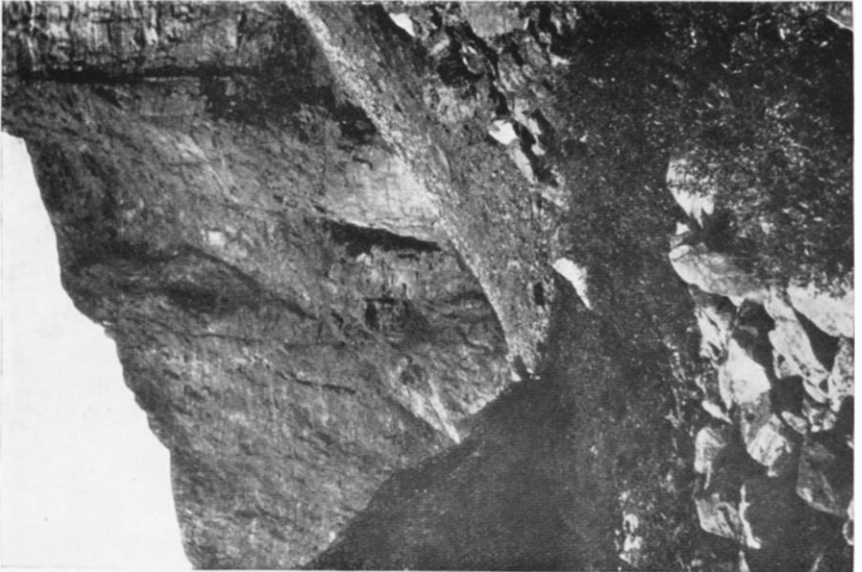
KILLINEK MISSION STATION



FRAZER RIVER NEAR NAIN



MUGFORD TICKLE CLIFFS



TRIBUTARY VALLEY FROM THE BARREN PLATEAU

been pretty thoroughly done, though I should imagine that a competent naturalist would still find plenty to interest him, and not a little useful work remaining. Botany seems to be the science which appeals most generally to the resident missionaries, and one of them—Mr. Hettasch of Nain—is a mine of knowledge on the subject; I hope he may be induced some day to give the public the benefit of his researches. The geology of the country seems to me to offer a promising field, as is perhaps natural in a country whose bare bones are so conspicuously displayed. To a casual observer like myself, the features most striking are the raised beaches and the traces of glacial action. Labrador is undoubtedly rising from the sea at a very considerable rate. All along the coast-line, wherever it is not altogether precipitous, raised beaches are to be seen, frequently several of them at different levels. I may here, perhaps, mention a sort of raised beach of a different character which I met with in the interior on my former journey with Mr. Hesketh Prichard. This was on the hillside above the Indian House Lake of the George River, and, being about 700 feet above the present level of the water, and far inland, cannot be explained in the same way. It has been suggested to me that this beach was an example of a lateral moraine. I am afraid I am not a sufficiently expert geologist to deal with the point; all I can say is that it looked exactly like a level beach of clean and conspicuous gravel. I am under the impression that moraines are more irregular both in composition and in level. I imagined that the true explanation of this feature was the same as that given for the "Parallel Roads of Glenroy" in Scotland, viz. that a glacier in former ages blocked the valley, causing the water to rise to a level far above that which it keeps at present.

Though there are now, curiously enough, no glaciers in Labrador, other traces of geologically recent glaciation are to be met with everywhere. In the interior one sees esker ridges, like railway embankments, running roughly east and west. On the coast all hills, below a certain height, particularly in the neighbourhood of Nain, seem to have the shape of exaggerated boulders crowned with numerous perched blocks. At one point when approaching Nain one comes across a very conspicuous stone of this sort, stuck, with no visible means of support, halfway up a smooth steep slope of rock. Captain Jackson of the Moravian Mission ship told us that he had endeavoured to persuade a stranger that the Eskimo had started rolling this boulder up the hill, but had grown tired and left it where it lies. As the block is the size of a small house, the yarn must have taken some swallowing!

One more characteristic feature which deserves notice is to be seen in most of the bays, but perhaps at its best about Okkak. This is due to the agency of forces still operative, and consists of a solid wall of stranded boulders at some little distance from the shore, forced into position by the sea-ice, and called by the settlers and schoonermen "bally carters," a corruption, evidently, of barricadoes.

Where the mountains grew higher, especially about Cape Mugford and north of Okkak, the coast scenery is really fine, the form of the tops being much more peaked and jagged; these, I imagine, were the original peaks, projecting above the level of the glaciers. This type of scenery extends pretty nearly to the northern extremity, but in the extreme north, around Killinek or Port Burwell, it becomes tame again, depressingly barren, without much picturesqueness. Here again one meets the perched blocks, but the characteristic feature of this locality is the tremendous rise and fall of the tides. At the landing-place one steps ashore at one time, and at another one has to scramble up a sort of cliff. Another feature is the number of narrow rifts with parallel precipitous sides, mostly of no great height. In extreme cases, narrow straits or "tickles" seem to have been formed in this way, and in one place near the station of Port Burwell there is a very narrow, steep-sided fjord of this character.

At Port Burwell, when I was there, the long-standing boundary dispute between Newfoundland and Canada had come to a head. Canada was running the customs, and Newfoundland the Post Office, so that some Canadian police, who had just been introduced, had, I suppose, to contribute to the Newfoundland revenue if they wished to write home. I fancy the grounds of dispute must have originated long ago at home, through some official who did not know the country trying to solve the problem by means of an inaccurate map and a ruler.

Passing from geology, I may point out that Labrador provides exceptional opportunities for the observation of the aurora borealis. The name seems to me something of a misnomer, seeing that in a latitude scarcely further north than that of Glasgow one frequently sees the bands and streamers in any and every quarter of the heavens. Two points occur to me as worthy of mention in this connection. The first is, that I have occasionally seen what appears to be the aurora by day, in the form of faint clouds having the characteristic appearance of the bands and streamers. The second point I raise with some hesitation, as I believe the balance of scientific opinion is against its possibility. This is, that, judging merely by the evidence of my senses, I should say that I had sometimes *heard* the aurora, when in rapid movement, making a faint, crisp, rustling noise. If this is a hallucination, it is a very strange one. I notice that the Manual for the Arctic expedition of 1875 recommends the observer who suspects such a phenomenon to "brush off spicules of ice from the neighbourhood of his ears, his whiskers," etc. In the conditions to which I am referring, neither spicules of ice nor whiskers were present. Still, I would not dogmatically assert that I could not be mistaken, but merely give my evidence for what it is worth.

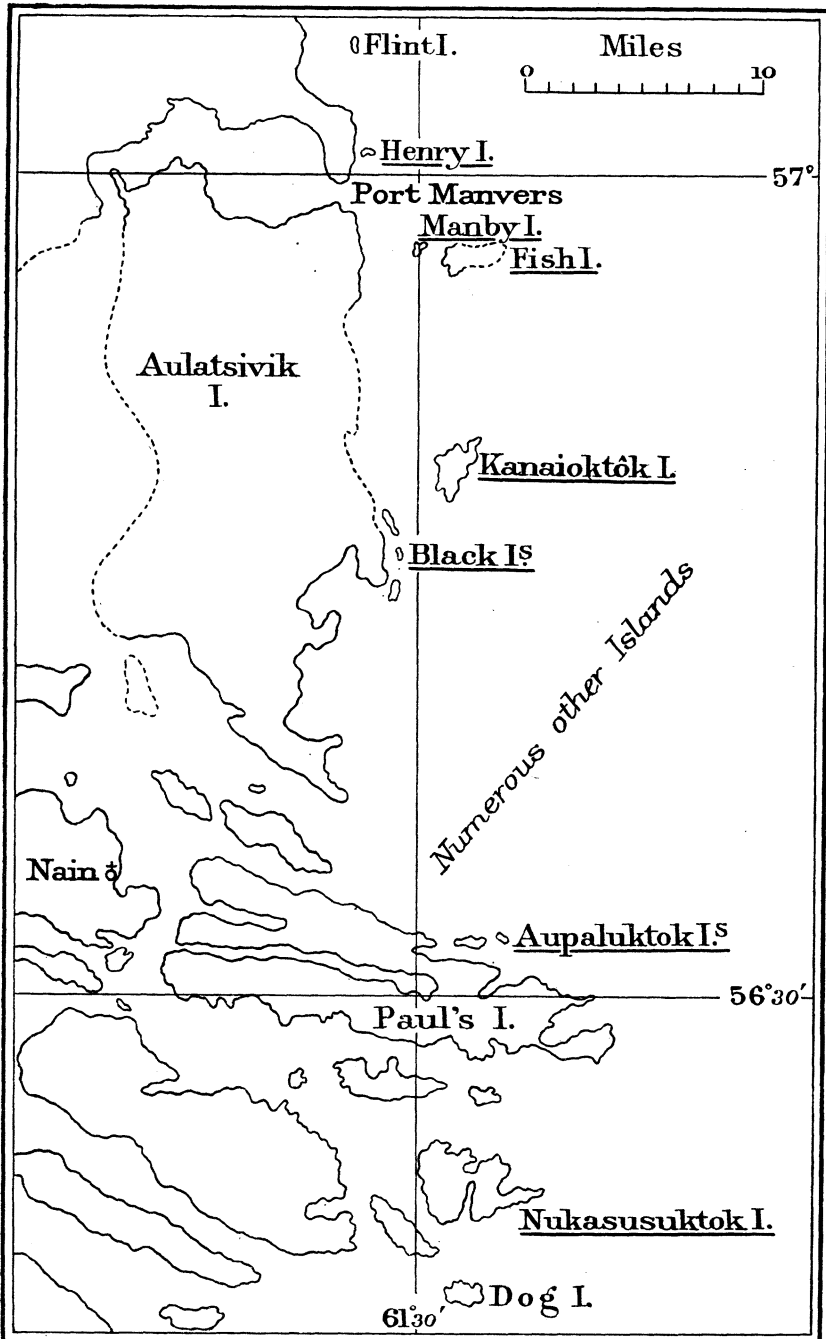
From a strictly geographical standpoint, there is plenty of scope for work, and of this we did a certain amount as opportunity arose. Considering the inadequacy and inaccuracy of the existing chart, and the fact that the interior, except for a few traverses, is practically unsurveyed, there

is in this respect almost a virgin field. With the exception of my friend Captain Jackson of the Moravian Mission, who is extremely careful and scientific, those who navigate these waters, skilful as they are, are rather primitive in their methods. A story is told of a mail-boat captain who, being in thick weather off Belle Isle, hailed a passing liner to find out his position. This was given him in the ordinary way, "latitude so and so, longitude such and such." To which his only reply was, "To hell with your latitude and longitude; I want to know where I'm to."

It is, I think, because so much of the navigation is of this character that the positions usually assigned to certain places on the coast often depend upon obsolete observations. The present chart contains an inset plan of Port Manvers, dated 1808. This, though apparently pretty correct in its general features, is entirely wrong in its orientation; indeed, I think whoever copied the original sketch must have made a confusion between true and magnetic north. It looks as though the original was drawn to true bearings, and then supposed to have been drawn to magnetic. Anyhow, the error is so striking that one could almost detect it without instruments. The bearings which we took do not pretend to minute accuracy, but they are, I think, quite sufficient to establish the point.

Again, in the case of Nain, one of the best-known settlements on the coast, Captain Jackson and I satisfied ourselves by repeated observations and every check we could think of that the true longitude is far nearer $61^{\circ} 52' 35''$ W. than the accepted position $61^{\circ} 41' 41''$. Of course, since Nain is approached for a long way through narrow channels between islands, no one, except in the interests of academic accuracy, is likely to take an observation there, and a position nearly a century old might easily remain unchallenged.

But to my mind the principal attractions of the coast are in the fields of ethnology and archæology. At the present moment, among the Eskimo of Northern Labrador, one is a spectator of the last hours of a dying culture. Even in the last ten years the change has been extremely noticeable. When I was in Labrador in 1910, the kayak with its appliances was in common use as far south as Hopedale, below latitude $55^{\circ} 30'$. Now you will not see one till you get to Hebron, in latitude $58^{\circ} 13'$. The kerosine-driven motor-boat has supplanted the native craft, and only the Eskimo name for kerosine, "orksualuk," or nasty blubber, survives to remind us that until quite recently the natives held erroneous ideas as to the proper use of this fluid. Even in the far north, it is plain that the existing facts of to-day will be the archæology of to-morrow. The old sealskin dress is rarely seen, and, worse than this, in spite of the devoted efforts of the Moravian missionaries, the Eskimo themselves seem a dying race in these regions. The outbreak of Spanish influenza in 1918 practically exterminated the flourishing settlement of Okkak; every adult male perished, and nearly all the grown women. It was pathetic to notice all round that neighbourhood the fishing huts of the natives with all the



Sketch showing position of Kanaioktôk and other Tunnit Islands in Nain district. Islands where remains are found or reported, underlined.

gear lying about, suggesting a catastrophe almost as sudden as the destruction of a city in a volcanic eruption. This calamity has been followed this year, I am sorry to learn, by the total destruction by fire of the mission buildings at Nain. Though this is not so tragic an occurrence, the hardship involved must necessarily be considerable.

But the shrinkage of the native population has been going on for a much longer period. When Lieut. Curtis made a census of the Eskimo in 1773, he began at the Straits of Belle Isle. When Captain Cartwright, about the same time, was keeping his famous diary in the neighbourhood of Sandwich Bay, he had ample opportunities of studying the natives in that locality. Now, if one wishes to see Eskimo one must begin north of Hamilton Inlet, and the further north the better.

More pleasant, but equally eloquent of comparatively recent change, is the alteration in the character of the inhabitants. When the first Moravian missionaries, in 1752, tried to found a station, the ruins of which have recently been discovered in the neighbourhood of the present settlement of Makkovik, their leader, with the captain and five of the crew of the ship which brought them, was murdered by the Eskimo. Undeterred by this failure, the mission returned a few years later, and, thanks to its efforts, the Eskimo of Labrador is now as peaceful and truthful a Christian as one could wish to meet. The quality of truthfulness, indeed, he carries to almost absurd lengths. If he makes an accidental misstatement, he will apologize for telling a lie, and I am told that if he asks for credit at the store and his request is refused but on further consideration granted, he will not express gratitude, but will say, "Why did you tell me a lie at first?"

But my point here is that, as was to be expected, the traces of a life so recently extinct are everywhere to be met with, together with the remains of the not much earlier stone age, which may serve to throw light on similar articles to be met with elsewhere throughout the world. I am confident that if the archæology of Labrador were investigated with the same scientific thoroughness which has characterized this class of work in Greenland, results of almost equal interest could be obtained.

With Eskimo remains, however, I was only indirectly concerned, as something likely to throw light on the main problem which I was anxious to investigate. This was that of the "Tunnit," an extinct race, said to be of non-Eskimo origin, remains of whose stone buildings were alleged to exist on various islands off the Labrador coast. References to Eskimo tradition on the subject of this race are to be found in various authorities, and it has been suggested, especially by Mr. W. G. Gosling in his book on Labrador, that the ruins might be connected with the early Norse visits to America. This theory seemed to find some support in the fact that when the Moravian bishop Martin showed some Eskimo the illustrations in Nordenskjöld's book of the Norse remains in Greenland, they asserted that these resembled the "Tunnit" ruins to be found on the

Labrador islands. I may say at once that this was a mistake, and that the resemblance can only have been of the most superficial character. As the subject of the Norse voyages to America is one in which I have been for many years keenly interested, it was natural that I should wish to investigate the problem on the spot, the more so as I could not find on inquiry that, beyond the collection of a certain number of Eskimo legends on the subject, anything had yet been done in this direction. I believe that such photographs as I can show are the first which have been taken of any of the ruins themselves.

I did not myself believe that these ruins could have anything to do with the earliest voyages described in the sagas, but I thought it possible that when the Greenland colony fell on evil times, as it did before its final extinction in the early fifteenth century, some venturous spirits might have tried to find a more desirable home in the lands discovered by their predecessors.

I am anxious to concern myself rather with facts than theories to-night; I will not therefore go into such questions as the significance of the name "Tunnek" or "Tunnit," about which a good deal might be said. The evidence of tradition supplies the following data: the Tunnit were a race, few in numbers, but in stature and physique superior to the Eskimo, whose central habitat appears to have been the archipelago about Nain and Port Manvers. The mutual attitude of Eskimo and Tunnit was hostile, and the Tunnit were gradually driven north toward§ Baffin Land, where again they are mentioned in popular tradition. Except for a colony at Nachvak, which was mentioned to Mr. E. W. Hawkes while he was preparing his monograph on the Labrador Eskimo, they seem to have lived exclusively on islands, a circumstance which led Rink, in his 'Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo,' to suggest "this looks as if ancient settlers of European race are hinted at." They are said to have used weapons of slate and hornstone, and the most persistent part of the tradition maintains that they clothed themselves in sealskin with the blubber attached, which, I take it, means that they were inferior to the Eskimo in the art of dressing skins. The word "Tunnek" is now applied by the natives to a very dirty man, much as one says, "a Hun" or "a Vandal." All one can say is, that if they struck heathen Eskimo as dirty they must have been the last word in squalor.

I may add that the tradition as reported by the earliest missionaries constantly speaks of the Tunnit as "Greenlanders," and connects them with that country, but I cannot help thinking that this idea was based on a misunderstanding on the part of the original questioners as to the meaning of the word "karalit," which seems also to have been occasionally applied to this people.

Having said so much, it seems best to refer directly to the remains themselves, and to compare them with the relics of primitive Eskimo culture to be found in the same region.

The usual site for an ancient Eskimo settlement, of which we saw several, is upon the low neck or isthmus of a promontory providing two alternative means of access to the sea, in case one of them should be unduly exposed to the weather. Kivalek, near Okkak, is a typical specimen. The settlement of Kivalek figures in quite old Eskimo legends, and appears not to have been occupied for over one hundred years. In such a spot will be found the ruins of the old turf houses, the characteristic plan of which is either a rude oval or an oval with one flattened side. From the curved side, facing the south, runs a long narrow passage or tunnel, forming the entrance. This feature is so characteristic that it is retained, in the form of a sort of porch, even in the wooden huts occupied nowadays by the natives at the more civilized stations. Where, as at Killinek in the north, the old form of house has undergone less modification, this passage, which is partly used as a kennel for the dogs, is even more clearly maintained.

The summer camping sites are chosen on similar ground, and are marked by the disconnected ring of stones originally used as ballast for the tent. Occasionally traces will be seen of a kind of pavement of flat stones, which I took to be a hearth, but was informed was used mainly for cutting up seals.

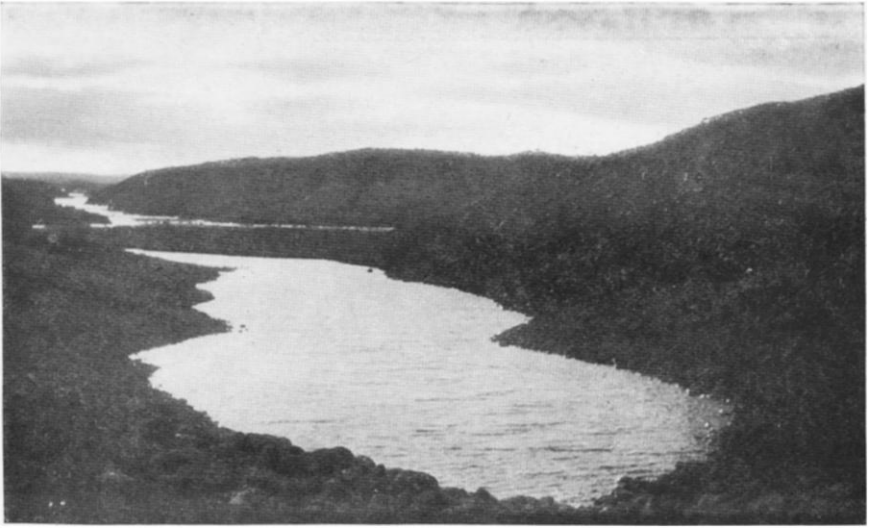
On adjacent headlands will be found the graves. It is sometimes rather inaccurately stated that the primitive Eskimo method of burial consists merely in covering the body with a heap or cairn of stones. The process is really more elaborate than this. Even when a grave is empty, or contains nothing more than a few bones, it still keeps its hollow form. It consists of a low wall of stones built round the body, and roofed in with some rocks long enough to reach right across. Near the grave will be found a somewhat similar structure about a foot square (internal measurement), containing, or formerly containing, the gifts or offerings left with the dead. Sometimes a few articles will be found in the grave itself. As the positions of burial-places near former settlements are well known, and the graves themselves distinctly conspicuous, the gift-chambers have, in practically all cases, been rifled of their more valuable contents, though there are still numerous articles of archæological interest to be gleaned from them. Until recently, the superstition of the natives caused them to insert some other article by way of exchange, so that the presence of iron nails or a broken fishing reel is not to be taken as evidence of recent date. None of these graves is really modern.

Perhaps a richer mine for objects of archæological interest is to be found in the turf walls and floors of the old houses, or in the surrounding turf and adjacent middens. In such places I and my cousin, Robert Gathorne-Hardy, who has a *flair* for such things, discovered a good many of the old stone weapons; in at least two places also, at Saeglek and Killinek, we were lucky enough to find places where formerly the manufacture of such things had been carried on; here the ground was plenti-

fully littered with flakes, and we found several implements, complete or fragmentary. With only two exceptions, all the relics of the Eskimo stone age found by us consisted of chipped, unpolished implements, made principally from a kind of cloudy quartz, and occasionally of other similar stones giving the required flint-like, conchoidal fracture. The same characteristics were observed in the collections of various missionaries. The exceptions were a small weapon-point of ground slate, and what appeared to be a partially polished axe or adze-head of a hard black stone; one of the Eskimo regarded it as a whetstone. These things were certainly not typical of the local culture. There were also the usual implements of bone and walrus ivory, and a few ornaments of pierced copper.

Turning now to the Tunnit, the normal site for their buildings presents a remarkable contrast to that favoured by the Eskimo. As I have said, all that we saw or heard of were on islands, many of which are inaccessible for small boats except in the calmest weather. Moreover, such remains as we saw, and others of which we heard, are placed on the most exposed sides of these islands, facing for the most part rather away from than towards the mainland. The sites are otherwise uncomfortable, consisting of raised beaches of large boulders, and these appear to have been used even though far more attractive camping-sites existed in the immediate neighbourhood. The sole advantages which they seem to possess are the presence of plenty of building material on the spot, and the fact that the structures so closely resemble their surroundings as to be provided with a sort of *camouflage*. This fact renders it extremely difficult to give a proper idea of them by means of photographs.

On these boulder beaches are found, firstly, tent-circles of a somewhat different type from the normal Eskimo, being built of larger stones in close contact with one another. This type has been found among the more ancient Eskimo remains in East Greenland, where indeed the stone ruins investigated by the late Mylius Ericson and Mr. Thostrup (see *Meddelelser om Grönland*, vol. 44) show many points of resemblance to the Tunnit remains of Labrador. The diameter is about 10 feet. There are also a number of structures with higher walls, regarded by the Eskimo as shelters or houses. A large specimen measured 17 feet 6 inches by 10 feet, another 15 feet by 9 feet 6 inches internally. Most were somewhat smaller. Many are of a strictly rectangular plan. The floors had been levelled by clearing away the large stones. The walls seen were about 2 feet high, and did not appear ever to have been much higher. I heard, however, of one, on a small island near Port Manvers, where I was unable to land, which must have been at least 4 feet 6 inches in height, as my informant, a somewhat diminutive Eskimo named Michael Atsertatajok, or "tomtit," stated that he could not see over it. The walls had evidently never consisted of any other material besides the stones, and great care and experience must have gone to the construction of such dry stone



THE BARREN INTERIOR PLATEAU



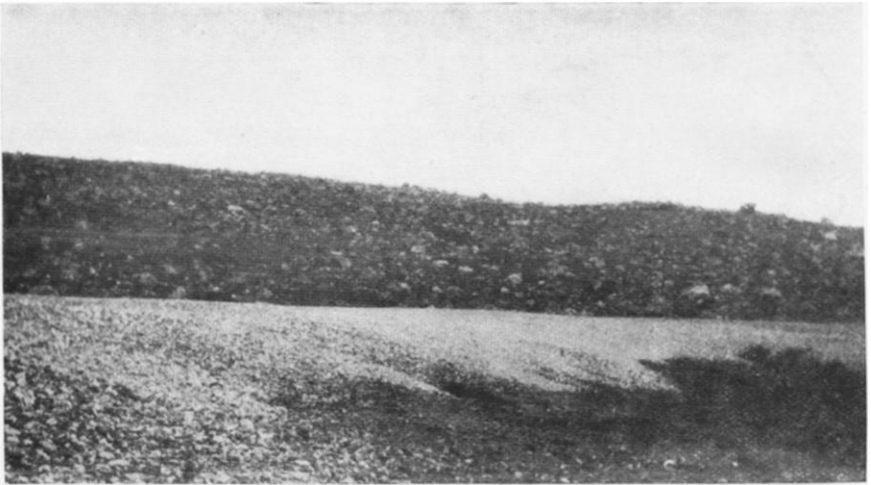
BARRENS AND LAKES OF THE INTERIOR



ESKER RIDGE ON INLAND LAKE



ICE-BORNE ROCK BARRIER NEAR OKKAK



RAISED BEACH NEAR INDIAN HOUSE LAKE



TUNNIT BUILDING

walls, seeing the excellent condition in which many of them remain at the present day. In no case was there a trace of any dwelling with the characteristic passage entrance.

One specimen was seen of a different kind of shelter, which is also to be found upon the Turnavik Islands, near Makkovik, where use has been made of a shallow cave in a cliff, which shows traces of building in front of it. Besides dwellings, there were numerous small structures of a similar character, which I take to have been *depôts* or caches for meat and other property. Some of these were attached to the larger buildings. Whale-bones abounded, and it was evident that the pursuit of these animals was an important part of the Tunnit economy. Now, as Mr. E. W. Hawkes has pointed out, the Eskimo themselves build stone structures both as hunting blinds and meat caches, but I would emphasize the fact that the Tunnit ruins appear to me to be very different. They are of a much more regular form, the stones are far larger and more artistically fitted together, and I may support my own view with the general opinion of the natives that these structures do not resemble Eskimo handiwork.

Of special or exceptional objects there were a few which seem to merit attention. In one place there were pairs of stones arranged in a perfectly straight line, four pairs in all, occupying a total length of 21 feet 9 inches. This we took to be some sort of boat rest; but it was unsuitable for a kayak, and rather suggested a craft with a keel. Possibly, however, it was intended for some wholly different purpose. In another place there was a stone table, which seemed to me to resemble a similar structure described by Mr. Thostrup in East Greenland. It may have been used for cutting up meat, or perhaps, as Thostrup suggests, for keeping it out of the way of animals, though I rather doubt its efficacy for the latter purpose. In this connection I may mention that an Eskimo informed us that we should find large stones to which the Tunnit used to bind captives, so that they were, as he expressed it, "all same rock." Unless he was referring to some such structure as this, we were not able to confirm this report.

Of particular interest were two sections of wall whose siting suggested that they were intended as breastworks for defensive purposes. They were too far from the shore for hunting blinds, and seemed evidently meant to be manned, as there was a cleared floor on the landward side. They were built on high ground along the crest of a slope, commanding a direct view towards Mount Thoresby and the mainland by Port Manvers. Altogether there were about 30 yards of wall, divided by a gap of about 50 yards into two nearly equal portions. The end furthest inland terminated in a sort of shelter, facing the col over which we had come from one collection of ruins to another.

We were unsuccessful in finding anything which was certainly a Tunnit grave, though I am inclined to think that a structure built on the Eskimo principle, but with unusually few and large stones, which was close to a

Tunnit settlement, was of this description. Nor did we find any weapons or implements. I think our failure in this respect was due to the care we took not to disturb the ruins. We did, however, procure from an old Eskimo a number of articles which he had taken from what he at any rate regarded as the gift-chamber of a Tunnit grave. It was certainly in a Tunnit locality, and the unusual size and character of the grave and chamber were considered by the finder to be evidence of Tunnit origin. The weapons included in the find were markedly different from such Eskimo stone-work as came under our observation, being made of ground slate and, in four cases, of a harder stone, finely ground and polished. This use of slate appears to be common among the Eskimo of Greenland and elsewhere, though it has been regarded as a late phase, contemporary with the, at any rate occasional, use of iron. In Labrador the use of ground as opposed to chipped stone appears to be very exceptional, and the natives and missionaries agreed in regarding the weapons of this find as unlike anything in their experience. It will be remembered that the Tunnit are traditionally credited with the manufacture of implements from slate, and altogether I am inclined to think that this find really represents the Tunnit culture. But if so, either the theory ascribing a comparatively late date to such things is incorrect, or the Tunnit must have existed on the coast up to a far later period than is usually supposed. Considered generally, the Tunnit culture seems pronouncedly Eskimo, though of a different type from that commonly found on the coast of Labrador.

And yet, on consideration, the theory that the Tunnit were merely another Eskimo tribe does not appear satisfactory. All along the Labrador coast, where several different Eskimo tribes existed, the Tunnit are consistently treated by tradition as something not Eskimo, but contrasted with that race. Further, when we refer to Baffin Land, whither the Tunnit seem eventually to have retired, we find, as Dr. Boas has recorded in his paper on the Central Eskimo, that there too, among quite different tribes, they are regarded in the same way, as aliens. The legendary accounts of their strength and size, coupled with numerical weakness, tell in the same direction, and these are to some extent corroborated by the size of the material used by the Tunnit in making their shelters, etc. For that type of building one would not, presumably, use material that could not be handled with considerable ease.

Consider again the matter of their boats. Legends relating to the Tunnit after they were driven north, both at Nachvak and in Baffin Land, state that they had no boats of their own, but depended on theft from the Eskimo. Now an island folk like the Nain archipelago colony of Tunnit, who evidently made an extensive practice of whale-hunting, must necessarily have used boats, though the kind of shore which they favoured does not appear very suitable for the kayaks of the Eskimo. If they were a mere Eskimo tribe, which had had boats and lost them, they could easily make fresh ones. But if, like other nations, they had elaborate

wooden boats, if these were wrecked or lost and the owners driven north, they could not be replaced in that treeless country.

One other point. If these Tunnit were a primitive Eskimo race, ultimately expelled by a later immigration of more highly civilized tribes of the same stock, one would expect these later comers, working down the coast from the north, would push the primitives further and further south. But the story of the Tunnit is just the reverse ; they were pushed north. On the other hand, if the Tunnit did not arrive on the coast until the normal Eskimo were already in occupation, they could hardly have pushed past them as far as the Nain archipelago. The existence, then, of the headquarters of the Tunnit on islands halfway down the Labrador coast looks as if they had come there direct from oversea ; in fact, as tradition seems to assert, from Greenland.

What then are the data? A people Eskimo-like, but regarded as alien ; seamen, but ultimately without boats ; dressed like savages in skins, which, unlike savages, they could not clean or prepare properly. There was blubber on the skins. Their weapons, though of stone, differed apparently from the local culture, and were of a type usually associated in Greenland, where it occurs, with some knowledge of metal prototypes. Finally, a race physically bigger and stronger, but numerically weaker, than the surrounding Eskimo.

Such is the problem. It is for others to solve it ; I will do no more than point, in the most guarded language I can, to a possibility which does not seem to me to be altogether excluded. If the Tunnit were not Eskimo, then what fits the facts is an Eskimoized race, living across the sea, and capable of crossing it. This brings one back to a modification of the suggestion we discarded at the outset. It is a widely accepted theory, adopted by Dr. Nansen, that the Norse colony of Greenland was ultimately fused, by neglect and hard times, with the Eskimo civilization. Any part of it which survived must necessarily have undergone this change, since as Norsemen its members disappeared. Here you have a race, largely Eskimoized, but not Eskimo, accustomed to sea voyages, and most probably with some knowledge of the western side of the Atlantic. Bearing in mind the discredit brought upon the study of the first voyages to America by previous suggestions of Norse remains, I do not feel inclined to appear definitely to advocate this fancy by developing the argument further. I have tried to show that an interesting problem exists, and to give some results of a preliminary investigation. But I venture to hope that it will not be allowed to rest where it is, but that some one with more time, better opportunities, and a greater special knowledge may be tempted to pursue it further.

Before the paper the PRESIDENT said : I have much pleasure in introducing to you Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, a distinguished student of Oxford, President of the Union in his time, and a wide traveller, who will describe a recent visit to Labrador,