

Knud Rasmussen's Sledge Expeditions
and
the Founding of the Thule Trading Station.
by Therkel Mathiassen.

Before writing an account of Knud Rasmussen's early expeditions up to and including the Fifth Thule Expedition, the journeys which mostly were based upon sledge technique, it is necessary first to have a look at his qualifications for leading them. For no traveller before or since, at home or abroad, achieved the accomplishment of so many and such great tasks by means of sledge technique as Knud Rasmussen. He himself was an extremely clever driver; he loved his dogs, felt with them in adversity and in times of feasting, and never forgot them when the journey was brought to a successful close. These are the feelings that well up in him when his finest deed, the Fifth Thule Expedition, was accomplished and he stood on the east coast of Siberia looking back: „I am overwhelmed by a warm feeling of gratitude to all our patient and uncomplaining dogs.

Knud Rasmussen had a marvellously keen eye for the ability, faults and needs of each one of his dogs. Between them reigned that mutual content which makes each side give of his best when the going is difficult; as he loved his dogs so they loved him, not with the slavish lickspittle affection of civilized dogs, but with the half-wild beast's feeling of „belonging“ in thick and thin.

Born in 1879 at the rectory in Jakobshavn and brought up in this, Greenland's largest, colony, Knud Rasmussen lived his childhood in an environment that favoured the development of his in-born qualities. Jakobshavn lies in Disko Bay, a region where intercourse between colony and colony is kept up by dog sledge for six months in every year; as the ice is not always safe, the route lies along back-breaking paths overland, calling for great skill at the hands of the driver and immense physical strength. Knud Rasmus-

sen had a little Greenland blood in his veins — his mother was a daughter of the Danish colony manager K. G. Fleischer in a marriage with a Greenland woman — with the result that he made friends and comrades of the Greenlanders and took part in their hunts and travels from his earliest youth; he learned the art of both to perfection. In addition, he was taught the Greenland tongue from infancy and mastered it as no other Dane; and not only that: He understood the Greenlanders as no one else did, won their confidence with ease; they recognized him as their equal at hunting and sledge-driving, looked up to him for his strength of will and superior intellect, and loved him for his rich, faithful and vigorous mind. That was why it was so easy for him to secure the very best Eskimos as members of his expeditions and to get them to yield their uttermost. No one has made such use of Eskimos on expeditions as he did; no one realized as he did how wonderfully adapted to the country the Eskimo sledge technique actually is, and knew how to utilize it for his ends. His success as a sledge traveller rested upon this more than anything.

He was also a genius at picking his „white“ expedition members. He preferred mature men, who knew their own minds, who in their own particular fields were capable of laying their own plans. And having assembled them, he shied at no personal endeavour or sacrifice to help them to bring those plans to fruition. It was an unforgettable experience to travel by sledge with Knud Rasmussen; his fascinating personality made all give their last ounce, and one little word of acknowledgment from him was thanks enough for all the toil and moil. He did everything to help his less experienced fellow-travellers over the difficulties, but without letting them feel as if they were not yet out of the nursery. His energy and enthusiasm for the business at hand communicated themselves to the whole expedition, with the result that the work went on brightly and briskly, no matter how tough it was. Personal squabbles and pettishness melted away in his presence; he had an astonishing gift for knocking different kinds of people into one whole with a single purpose: the success of the expedition.

The technique employed by Knud Rasmussen on his expeditions was the same as that of the best of all Eskimo sledge travellers — the Polar Eskimos, supplemented with some of the accessories of civilization: modern rifles, ammunition, tools, primus stove, petroleum, a little reserve of provisions in the form of food concentrates: pemmican, biscuits, rolled oats, etc. and a few luxuries like coffee, tea, tobacco. Most of the supplies were to be procured

by hunting on the way or, when travelling through populated regions, with the assistance of local Eskimos. This system made the journeys quicker and easier; there was no hauling of the deadweight of supplies that had hampered the advance of earlier expeditions and even then had not always been sufficient. Where Lockwood and Beaumont with their hand sledges had dragged their way along the north coast of Greenland with an enormous output of energy and strength, but without attaining much in the way of results, Knud Rasmussen drove along lightly and quickly with his dog sledges; where the gallant crowds of the Franklin Expedition perished from hunger and exposure, he spent months with his Eskimos, depending solely on what the country could provide for him and without having any sort of difficulty.

Nevertheless, Knud Rasmussen's method of travelling made great demands on the physique and endurance of the expedition members — and not least on their mental soundness. There was always a risk: There was a chance of bad hunting, with starvation as the consequence; bad weather, heavy going and game are factors that cannot always be calculated in advance. But men who throw in their lot with such an expedition know what they will have to face; the risk has to be run if the results are to be forthcoming. Nor was it difficult ever to find those who would take their chance. True, things went wrong on the Second Thule Expedition, which cost Thorild Wulff his life; but what of the Fifth Thule Expedition with its many long sledge journeys, undertaken by five Danes and seven Greenlanders over a period of three years? There was not a single casualty.

At a very young age Knud Rasmussen acquired the long-journey habit. He matriculated in 1898 and came to Copenhagen to study at the University. In 1900 we find him in Lapland, where he met another race with a mentality so primitive and direct that they reminded him of the Greenlanders, the Lapps, of whom he grew fond and whom he often visited later, and on whom he has written a most enjoyable book.

It was not long before he had his chance as an Arctic voyager. In 1902—04 he took part in the so-called Literary Expedition together with Mylius Erichsen and Harald Moltke. It was then that Melville Bay was rediscovered as the sledge road from West Greenland to the Cape York District, that enormous, glacier-filled bay which keeps colonized West Greenland apart from the isolated little band of Polar Eskimos in the most northerly part of Greenland, and which since then has been crossed by sledges on many an occasion.

Under primitive conditions the expedition wintered among the Polar Eskimos, and there for the first time Knud Rasmussen's amazing qualities as a sledge traveller were really unfolded; that the sick man Harald Moltke's life was saved stands first and foremost to his credit. What is more, by means of his faculty for making the Eskimos his friends and comrades he was able to secure a pile of material from them concerning their legends and religious ideas, and thus realized his own abilities in that direction; then he found his true sphere. After his return home his first fine book „Nye Mennesker“ made his name as a writer.

To him, however, his first visit to the Polar Eskimos meant much more. He had made the acquaintance of this little primitive tribe, had travelled and hunted with them as one of themselves. He learned to like them and became attached to them by strong ties which some years later were destined to become even stronger.

In 1905 Knud Rasmussen was sent out to West Greenland by the Government to investigate the possibilities of caribou farming, a subject with which he had become familiar in Lapland and which had left him an ardent advocate. In 1906—08 he was again in Greenland collecting native legends and once more went up to the Polar Eskimos, to whom he felt himself drawn as by an irresistible force. When the Greenland Church Society in 1909 sent a ship to the Cape York District for the purpose of establishing a mission station among the Polar Eskimos, Knud Rasmussen sailed with her as the man who knew the people and the country best and could give the new missionary, the Greenlander Gustav Olsen, a good introduction to his future flock.

Then at length the resolve he had long cherished attained its maturity: In 1910 he established the Thule Station in North Star Bay in the land of the Polar Eskimos, helped by a number of men including his father, the Rev. Chr. Rasmussen, Mr. Adam Biering, Mr. Chr. Erichsen and, not least, by Mr. M. Ib Nyeboe, who was of inestimable assistance to him during his many years as chairman of the „Thule Committee“. During the first ten years Peter Freuchen was the manager of the station, and he was succeeded by the present manager Hans Nielsen.

The object of establishing the Thule Station was a twofold one. Peary's many expeditions, all of which had started from the land of the Polar Eskimos, had familiarized the natives with many of the products of civilization: guns, ammunition, tools, wood, cloth, and many others which they could badly do without, and now, when these expeditions ceased after the discovery of the North

Pole, they were no longer obtainable. As the Polar Eskimos to some extent had abandoned their ancient hunting methods, it would have been a catastrophe for them if all supplies had suddenly stopped. It was the purpose of the Thule Station to remedy this, to sell them these indispensable European commodities for skins and other produce. Secondly, the Station was to form a base for expeditions up there in northern Greenland.

The Station has fulfilled its objects to perfection. It carried to the Eskimos what they required in order to lighten their hard struggle for existence, but without unnecessarily accustoming them to European food, clothing and superfluous luxuries. Knud Rasmussen considered their own natural food, meat, to be best for them, and their own garments of skin to be the most suitable for the climate up there; by introducing caribou skins he endeavoured to make up for the shortage of other suitable materials for garments. But he allowed them to have guns, ammunition, and tools — the very best obtainable — household utensils, primus stoves, petroleum and wood goods; they would help them in the house and on the hunt.

With the high prices of furs the Thule Station had good profits for a number of years, and these Knud Rasmussen spent on his expeditions; the amounts were not small. Only for the Fifth Thule Expedition did he receive a Government grant (one that covered only a fraction of the total cost), and from other sources for the second part of the Seventh Thule Expedition in 1933; otherwise the Thule Station paid for all the Thule Expeditions.

Knud Rasmussen saw one other object for the Station: to raise the cultural and hygienic level of the natives, and he carried it out. The mission station had been established in 1909 at Kangerdlugssuak in Inglefield Gulf. In 1929 it was moved to Thule and a new church and house for the incumbent were built (with the assistance of the Greenland Church Society); the entire population has now been baptized and can read and write. In 1928 a hospital was built and a physician sent up there, and in 1929 a Danish certificated nurse. Much has been done to improve the sanitation, especially by procuring more timber to enable the people to build better houses. The people have progressed in social and political maturity, so that in 1928 it was possible to start a kind of political organ, a Council of Hunters which has a voice in deciding certain matters just as the West Greenland Commune and National Councils do.

Thule, and the Polar Eskimos, were very dear to Knud Rasmus-

sen's heart; he knew everybody up there, and was king, friend and comrade at once. The people loved him; one who has arrived at Thule in the company of Knud Rasmussen will never forget the jubilation and devotion that greeted him.

One fact must not be forgotten, that the establishment of the Thule Station meant one thing more: all those remote parts, hitherto visited mostly by foreign expeditions, especially American, became attached more firmly to Denmark.

After the Station was opened began the long series of Expeditions which bear its name.

The First Thule Expedition.

The year 1912—13 saw the achievement of the First Thule Expedition¹⁾, which crossed the ice cap from Etah to the unexplored regions round about the head of Denmark and Independence Fjord on the northeast coast of Greenland. Besides Knud Rasmussen, the members were Peter Freuchen and the Polar Eskimos Uvdloriaq and Inukitsoq. Its objects were to explore the supposed Peary Channel and the country round about, and to go to the relief of Ejnar Mikkelsen and Iversen, whose ship had been crushed in the ice.

The Expedition left Thule on the 6th April 1912; at the settlement of Neqe it loaded up with large quantities of walrus meat and hide for provisions and dog-feed. A violent northerly gale having smashed the ice on the sea for miles round, Knud Rasmussen abandoned the original plan to travel along the north coast and decided to go direct over the ice cap towards Denmark Fjord. On April 14th the ascent was made to the ice cap at Clemens Markhams Glacier, and on the 19th the four Expedition sledges parted from the last of those which had accompanied them thus far. The outfit consisted of: coffee, tea, sugar and tobacco sufficient for two years if drawn upon economically; biscuits and rolled oats enough for the journey across the ice; in addition they had 1500 kilos of walrus hide, an excellent, nourishing but rather slowly digestible dog-feed, and a quantity of walrus and narwhal meat for the members themselves. They also had two primus stoves with petroleum, guns with ammunition, tools of every kind, and Eskimo hunting gear. Each of the sledges had a load of about half a ton, and there were in all fifty-three dogs to pull them; the sledges were shod with walrus hide to ensure easy running.

¹⁾ Described in *Geografisk Tidsskrift* Vol. 22, 1914, p. 183.

The journey across the ice cap was accomplished without much difficulty in twenty-six days, an average speed of about forty kilometres a day. When it arrived at the east coast on the 9th of May provisions and dog-feed were at a low ebb. During the first three weeks, which were spent in a rugged, gameless land round about the head of Denmark Fjord, it was as much as they could do to procure food for men and dogs. Conditions improved when they reached the sea ice on the 1st of June in the fjord. On the 4th of June they came to Mylius Erichsen's summer camp and found his cairn, but not his report, for Einar Mikkelsen had already recovered it. But as the cairn contained no message from Mikkelsen, the search for him was abandoned and the Expedition concentrated its labours on its other tasks, the Peary Channel. The head of Independence Fjord was reached on the 17th of June and no Peary Channel had been found; it did not exist. The country round about the head of this fjord was explored and mapped; there were discovered the most northerly Eskimo tent rings known on the East Coast. There was game enough, especially quantities of musk oxen. Peary's cairn on Navy Cliff was visited and his message secured.

The homeward journey over the inland ice was commenced on on the 10th of August. Sufficient musk-ox meat had been secured for the journey, and a box was taken along containing geological, botanical and zoological collections; on this journey the sledge teams were reduced to three with a total of 27 dogs; on the whole the trail proved to be worse than on the outward journey, the snow being softer; the musk-ox meat did not last nearly so long as dog feed as the walrus hide had done, and during the first part of the journey Knud Rasmussen suffered severely from sciatica. All the same the journey was quickly accomplished; land was reached on the 4th of September at Inglefield Gulf, whence the Expedition continued along the ice cap to Thule.

Thus the First Thule Expedition was carried through quickly and brilliantly and without the slightest accident; it had crossed the ice cap twice with dog sledges, principally with Eskimo provisions. It demonstrated what could be attained by this technique. In „Min Rejsedagbog“ Knud Rasmussen has given a splendid account of the journey.

The Second Thule Expedition.

The results of the First Thule Expedition had to be followed up apparently great geographical discoveries were waiting to be

made on the north coast of Greenland, but an expedition on a somewhat larger scale would be necessary.

The objects of the Second Thule Expedition were to explore and map the great fjords on the north coast of Greenland; it would also be most desirable that a decent map should be made of Melville Bay, which had often been crossed but never properly mapped.

On the 18th of April 1916 the Expedition was landed in Godthaab, whence it had a forced and most laborious journey to Melville Bay, a combat with the Arctic spring, with the use of motor-boats, row-boats, umiaks and dog-sledges in turn, the sledges often fitted with inflated skins and with planks to make them suitable for ferrying purposes. Still, the Expedition progressed, and on the 4th of May stood on Devil's Thumb, face to face with the first task: Melville Bay, which was mapped in the days from the 4th to the 17th of June. The members of this first part of the Expedition were Knud Rasmussen and Lauge Koch as well as the Greenlander Tobias Gabrielsen. The remainder of that summer and the following winter were spent at Thule on work of various kinds; for instance, together with the American Captain Comer a large kitchen midden was excavated, with good archaeological results.

The principal task of the Expedition, the great sledge journey up along the north coast of Greenland, was accomplished from the 6th April to the 20th October 1917. In addition to Knud Rasmussen and Lauge Koch, the members of the party were the Swedish botanist Dr. Thorild Wulff, the West Greenlander Hendrik Olsen, and the Polar Eskimos Ajako, Inukitsoq and „The bo'sun“.

As was the case with the First Thule Expedition, this journey was based upon Eskimo travelling technique and hunting. Only little European supplies were taken along, for instance only 65 kilos of pemmican, which really was intended for emergencies when crossing the ice cap; otherwise most importance was attached to ammunition and hunting gear, as it was expected there would be good sealing in the great fjords and musk-ox hunting in the wide tracts not covered with the eternal ice that were expected to lie round about Victoria and Nordenskiöld Fjord, if the old maps were to be relied upon. When it started out the Expedition had six sledges with seventy-two dogs of its own; in addition, no fewer than twenty-one sledges and 282 dogs went along with it to carry the large quantities of walrus and narwhal meat; these auxiliary sledges were sent back gradually, the last at Hall's grave in Thank God Harbour.

At first the progress made was satisfactory. After starting from

Thule on the 6th of April, Humboldt Glacier had already been crossed on the 22nd of the same month. A cache of tinned mutton left by Nares Expedition in 1875 turned out to be fit for consumption and was very welcome. Cairn messages were found from Peary dated 1900 and from Beaumont dated 1876. On the 8th of May they stood on the shore of Sherard Osborn Fjord; the field of operations proper had now been reached, and work was to start in earnest.

During the period from the 8th of May to the 23rd of June these great fjords along the north coast of Greenland were explored — Sherard Osborn Fjord, Victoria Fjord, Nordenskiöld Fjord, the newly-discovered J. P. Koch Fjord and De Long Fjord. It was fatiguing work. There was deep snow everywhere; dog traction was almost impossible, and so everybody had to walk, preferably with snow-shoes on. It wore down the strength of both man and dog. In addition, the quest for food was a hard one; musk-ox hunting turned out almost a complete failure; a number were indeed killed at one place, but the meat could not all be salvaged on account of the difficulties of conveyance. Now and then a seal was shot, and a hare or a few birds were occasionally secured; but keeping the dogs alive was a grave problem, even if their number had gradually fallen to twenty.

On the 21st of June the Expedition reached its most northerly point, De Long Fjord, which turned out to have an appearance quite different from what the older maps said. The principal task had now been completed; and even if it might have been desirable to continue up to the extreme north point of Greenland, Cape Morris Jesup, it would not have meant much more than "a feather in their caps" which, having regard to all the circumstances, could well be done without in view of the risks involved.

They then embarked upon the journey home. The thick snow by this time had partly melted from the sea ice, which on the other hand was lying under a sheet of water; this did not make travelling any the easier or add to its pleasure; for a whole month the members of the Expedition were soaked through up to their waists every day for twelve hours, so it is not strange that both strength and spirits were at a low ebb. At Cape Salor they caught nine seals — one little bright spot in that depressing journey.

On the 21st of July Hendrik Olsen did not return from an excursion to find game, an event which could not fail to add heavily to the general depression. Hunting continued to be fruitless, and the period from the 24th of June to the 5th of August was one of

continual famine. As it seemed impossible to increase supplies by hunting, as much food as possible was kept in reserve for the final dash over the ice cap; but bad weather, rain and snow following one upon the other, created constant obstacles to rapid progress. It did not clear up till the 5th of August, and then the last stage of the journey could begin.

The distance to be traversed over this almost iceless country south of Humboldt Glacier was 435 kilometres. Of provisions they still had pemmican, biscuits and rolled oats for sixteen days if they could manage on half rations per man; there was also some seal and musk-ox meat, which had to be used for the dogs in order to keep as many of them alive as possible; it was not encouraging to think of the prospect of having to drag the sledges in the exhausted and under fed condition in which all the members of the Expedition were by that time. There were still fourteen dogs left.

The hope of a rapid passage over the ice cap was doomed to disappointment. Two wide valleys which had to be crossed had no snow, and this delayed matters greatly. Finally, on the 10th of August, they reached the cap, and by the 21st they were already in sight of Humboldt Glacier, an astonishingly quick journey under the circumstances. But fresh difficulties met them: tremendous rivers of water from the melting ice had to be crossed by wading; there was only a little dog flesh left to eat. On the day when the last dog was eaten, the 24th of August, land was reached in the neighbourhood of Cape Agassiz. The presence of numbers of hares made things look brighter, but it was still 225 kilometres to Etah, to the nearest dwellings of man.

It was vital that communication with these people should be established as quickly as possible. Knud Rasmussen, and Ajako, who were feeling the effects of the journey least, made a forced march to Etah while Wulff and Koch, who were very exhausted, together with the other two Eskimos were to make their way slowly down to a big lake behind Marshall Bay, living on the game they could shoot on the way.

Knud Rasmussen set out on the 25th of August, and was already at Etah on the 30th. That same night five relief sledges were made ready, and by next day they were up on the ice cap. They met Koch's party on the 4th of September, but by that time Wulff had already succumbed.

It seems that the journey over the ice cap had been too severe for Dr. Wulff; everything apparently went well until he had to live on the flesh of the famished dogs and had to wade through the

icy streams from the glaciers. Then when Koch and Wulff moved forward slowly, living on hare flesh, Wulff was attacked by severe pains in the heart and stomach and felt that he could hold out no longer, could eat nothing, and asked to be left behind; he had lost the will to live. There was nothing to be done; the others could not carry him, and staying with him in a place where game was rare might mean death to them all. Slowly Koch and the Eskimos continued their march until the relief sledges met them on the 4th of September.

The scientific results of the Second Thule Expedition were great. Melville Bay and the almost unknown fjords on the north coast of Greenland had been mapped and surveyed geologically, botanically and archaeologically; the geological results especially had been surprisingly important, most of all the discovery of an ancient now entirely broken down fold, contemporaneous with the Scandinavian fold. Knud Rasmussen himself described the Expedition in „Grønland langs Polhavet“.

The Third Thule Ekspedition¹⁾ did not include Knud Rasmussen himself. It was employed in laying out depots for Roald Amundsen on Cape Columbia in 1919—20. Godfred Hansen was in charge, and part of the cost was defrayed by the Thule Station.

The Fourth Thule Expedition was Knud Rasmussen's journey to Angmagssalik to collect Eskimo legends in 1919. The results have been published in the large but unfinished three-volume work: „Myter og Sagn fra Grønland“.

The Fifth Thule Expedition.

For many years Knud Rasmussen had cherished a desire to learn to know the American Eskimos: in fact, he had voiced his plans as long ago as in the year 1909, in „Geografisk Tidsskrift“. But it was only much later, in 1921, that he was able to realize them²⁾.

The members of this Expedition were: Knud Rasmussen, leader and ethnographer; Peter Freuchen, cartographer and zoologist; Kaj Birket-Smith, ethnographer; Helge Bangsted, assistant; myself, archeologist and cartographer; in addition there were the West Greenland curate Jacob Olsen as interpreter, and six Polar Eskimos, three men and three women, as hunters, sledge drivers and seamstresses. Captain P. M. Pedersen took the expedition ship

²⁾ Geografisk Tidsskrift Vol. 26, 1921, p. 24.

³⁾ Preliminary reports on the 5th Thule Exped. have appeared in Geografisk Tidsskrift Vol. 27, p. 192, Vol. 28, p. 11, Vol. 29, p. 159, Vol. 30, p. 39 and 72, and Vol. 31, p. 199.

„Søkongen“ over to the winter quarters, Danish Island near Lyon Inlet, north of Hudson Bay.

On the 22nd of September 1921 our baggage was discharged on Danish Island and the ship was able to go home. Winter had already set in; the land was covered with snow, and ice was forming.

That autumn was spent in building the house which we called „Blæsebælgen“ (the Bellows), sealing and hunting, as well as reconnoitring the country round about. In December the Expedition for the first time got in touch with the local Eskimos, of the Iglulik tribe, in Repulse Bay. And in January the long sledge journeys began.

Knud Rasmussen, Birket-Smith and Bangsted travelled south to Chesterfield Inlet and on from there to the interesting inland Eskimos who lived in on the Barren Grounds round about the great waters Baker Lake and Hikoligjuaq. Peter Freuchen and I went northwards, to Iglulik, where we parted company, Freuchen to map the unexplored stretches of the west coast of Baffin Land, i to map Admiralty Inlet; we met again at Iglulik and travelled together back to Danish Island, which we reached on the 29th of May. Ten days later I went to Repulse Bay, where, helped by Jacob Olsen, I made archaeological excavations at Naujan for about two months, sailing in an Eskimo whale-boat on the 14th of August for Southampton Island to continue the work of excavation there. Drift ice prevented our return to Danish Island; we had to join an Eskimo family and with it move round about the island, often under very difficult circumstances, until on the 21st of February (1923) we managed to get over to our companions on Danish Island.

A month later we again set out for a distant objective, leaving „Blæsebælgen“ for the last time: Birket-Smith and Jacob Olsen travelled southwards, to proceed home via Fort Churchill and Winnipeg; I again went north, via Iglulik to Ponds Inlet, whence I returned home on the Hudson's Bay Company's ship to St. Johns and from there on to New York. Knud Rasmussen started out on his long sledge journey westwards. „Blæsebælgen“ was left to Freuchen, who was ill after serious frostbite in one foot, and Bangsted; they did not start for home until the following spring, Freuchen to Ponds Inlet, where he and three Polar Eskimos were called for by the „Søkongen“, Bangsted along the same route as Birket-Smith.

Knud Rasmussen's journey was the longest sledge journey ever undertaken; accompanied only by the two Polar Eskimos, Qavigarssuaq and the woman Arnarulunguaq, he travelled by dog

sledge through the whole of Arctic Canada and Alaska through the Northwest Passage. He started from Danish Island on the 11th of March 1923 and on the 23rd of May came in to Point Barrow, Alaska's most northerly settlement, continuing from there, by sledge and by boat, to Nome, with an excursion to the east point of Siberia. On the way he visited a great many Eskimo tribes: Netsilik, Copper, Mackenzie and Pt. Barrow Eskimos, and wherever he went he reaped a rich harvest of ethnographic and folkloristic material; in King William Land and in Alaska he excavated ancient ruins. It was an extraordinarily profitable and happily accomplished sledge journey, the last Knud Rasmussen was to make.

The scientific results of the Fifth Thule Expedition are immensely rich. A collection of more than 20,000 specimens, of which 15,000 are ethnographical and archaeological, was brought home and presented to Danish museums. Large areas of unexplored lands, especially in the north of Baffin Land, were mapped. All the American Eskimo tribes and some of the Indian tribes in the vicinity were thoroughly studied, both ethnographically and for their folk lore; philological and anthropological studies were also made, and in particular the inland Eskimos on the Barren Grounds yielded interesting results. A large number of old house ruins were excavated, leading to the discovery of a hitherto unknown ancient Eskimo culture, the Thule Culture, which once held sway from Alaska to Greenland. Many observations were made, as well as collections of geological, zoological and botanical specimens.

The scientific results have been made accessible to the world at large in the „Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921—24“, published in English in a series of stately volumes; this work is not yet completed. Danish readers have had the large book „From Greenland to the Pacific“ in abridged form under the title of „Den store Slæderejse“.

The Fifth Thule Expedition was the last sledging expedition in which Knud Rasmussen took part. A new era with a new technique had commenced in polar research; his later expeditions, the Sixth and Seventh Thule Expeditions, were of another character. But often he thought with sadness of his sledge journeys and of the personal labours he had put into them. To him it was unnatural merely to be the organizer, without actually taking a hand in the toughest problems.

As he said in the preface to one of his last books: „With all my heart I bless the fate that let me be born in a time when polar research with the dog sledge had not become obsolete“.

In conclusion, a list of the scientific works so far published as results of the first five Thule Expeditions:

- The First Thule Expedition 1912.* Meddelelser om Grønland, Vol. 51. 1915:
 Knud Rasmussen: Report on the First Thule-Expedition.
 Peter Freuchen: General observations as to natural conditions in the country traversed by the expedition.
 Peter Freuchen: Report on the First Thule-Expedition, Scientific work.
 Peter Freuchen: Meteorological observations.
 C. H. Ostenfeld: Plants collected during the First Thule-Expedition.
 O. B. Boggild: Examination of some Rocks.
The Second Thule-Ekspedition to the North Coast of Greenland 1916—18:
 Medd. o. Grønland 64—65. 1926 og 1928.
 Knud Rasmussen: Report on the 2. Thule Expedition 1916—18.
 Lauge Koch: Note to map of Melville Bay from Wilcox Point to Cape York and of North Greenland from 81°—83° 35' N, 38°—56° W.
 Lauge Koch: Contributions to the Glaciology of North Greenland.
 Chr. Barthel: Recherches bactériologiques sur la sol et sur les matières fécales des animaux polaires du groënland septentrional.
 Martin Knudsen: Dr. Thorild Wulff's Hydrographical Investigations in the Waters West of Greenland.
 P. Jespersen: Dr. Thorild Wulff's Plankton-Collection in the Waters West of Greenland, Metazoa.
 C. H. Ostenfeld: Critical Notes on the Taxonomy and Nomenclature of some Flowering Plants.
 C. H. Ostenfeld: Flowering Plants and Ferns from Wolstenholme Sound.
 C. H. Ostenfeld: The Vegetation of the North Coast of Greenland, based upon the late Dr. Th. Wulff's Collections and Observations.
 Aug. Hesselbo: Some Mosses from N. W. Greenland.
 Aug. Hesselbo: Mosses Collected by the late Dr. Th. Wulff.
 B. Lynge: Lichens Collected by the late Dr. Th. Wulff.
 J. Lind: Fungi Collected by the late Dr. Th. Wulff.
 Johs. Boye Petersen: Freshwater-Algae Collected by the late Dr. Th. Wulff.
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