

BOOK REVIEWS

GRÖNLANDS HISTORIE.

By FINN GAD. *Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaards*, 1946. 10 x 6½ inches; 272 pages; illustrations. Kr. 10

GRÖNLAND UNDER KRIGEN.

By FINN GAD. *Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads*, 1945. 9 x 6½ inches; 56 pages; illustrations. Kr. 3.50

Mr. Gad went to Greenland in 1937 to teach young Greenlanders at the college in Godthaab, southwest Greenland. Owing to the outbreak of the war he was unable to return to Copenhagen and remained at the college until 1945. During these war years he collected the material for his *History of Greenland*.

This is not a story of discoveries and arctic exploration. Mr. Gad has attempted to write the history of the inhabitants of the great island from the year 1500 until the present time. The result, therefore, is the often sad, but very human, tale of the meeting between the native and the white man's culture. It is the history of men who settled among the Eskimo as representatives of the church or as representatives of the Danish kings. We learn of the struggle for souls and the struggle for earthly gains. And, during the last century, we follow the struggle between the two main principles in all colonization: the principle that the development of the new land should foremost benefit the mother country and the principle that the development should first of all be to the benefit of the native population.

Through his extensive studies of the available archives it has been possible for Mr. Gad to collect and present much little-known material concerning the early travellers and their life in Greenland. As mentioned above, the author starts with the year 1500, thereby stressing that his goal is to describe the relationship between the natives and the settlers, and leaves out the early Norse settlements about which an extensive

modern literature already exists. As an introduction he has, in a few concentrated pages, given us a picture of the newest archaeological findings on the history of the Eskimo and their migration into Greenland. He continues with a description of the earliest European contacts with the Greenlanders up to the time Hans Egede settled on the West Coast in 1721. After this we follow the development of the missionary work and the "colonization" up through history, where varying policies in the Danish administration and varying capabilities of the Danish rulers influenced the life of the Greenlanders in each of the small communities along the coast. Some very interesting population statistics show how these policies affected the size of the population and it is encouraging to see the increase in population under the modern Danish administration.

The second world war produced a revolution for the Greenland population. All contacts with Denmark were cut off and Greenland had to rely on the United States for its necessary imports. In many ways this influenced life in Greenland and developments already started were considerably accelerated.

Mr. Gad's book takes us up to the day when Denmark was liberated by the Allied Forces. The Fifth day of May 1945, an historic day in the home country will always be remembered in Greenland as the day when the old contacts were resumed and the Greenlanders all along the coast celebrated their reunion with Denmark. The description of the war years in Greenland makes up the last chapter of "*Grönlands Historie*". In another smaller book, "*Grönland under Krigen*" (Greenland during the war), Mr. Gad has described this exceptional period in the history of Greenland in greater detail.

GUNNAR SEIDENFADEN