LIVES OF ACHIEVEMENT



# CAPTAIN SCOTT

by

M. E. CARTER

## LIVES OF ACHIEVEMENT

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# CAPTAIN SCOTT

*Explorer and Scientist*



Captain Scott

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by

M. E. CARTER, M.B.E., B.A.

Illustrated by
LOUIS WARD

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# PREFACE

I HOPE that you will enjoy reading this short biography of Captain Scott and that it will make you want to know more about him. I have drawn most of my material from the four following books:

*Captain Scott*, by Stephen Gwynn.
*The Voyage of the "Discovery"*, by Captain Scott.
*Scott's Last Expedition*, by Captain Scott (including the Biographical Introduction by Sir J. M. Barrie).
*South with Scott*, by Lieut. Evans (now Admiral Lord Mountevans).

I have also made several quotations from George Seaver's delightful biographies:

*Wilson of the Antarctic.*
*Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic.*

You may be able to borrow some of these books from your school or public library. You would be well-advised to begin with *South with Scott*. Lieut. Evans was second in command of Scott's Last Expedition and he gives a very lively and fascinating account of his adventures. But to get to know Scott well, you must read his own two books. They are simply and beautifully written and are still "best-sellers" and the favourite reading of countless men, women, boys and girls. He himself was anxious that the youth of all nations should read such tales of adventure as his "to rouse in them a fine and manly spirit".

His experiences are particularly interesting because nobody will ever again travel in the Antarctic in such adverse conditions as did he and his comrades. They had not the help of wireless, of long-distance telephones, of aeroplanes, of "flying sledges" and other modern inventions. They travelled the hard way and even preferred to do without the help of dogs and ponies. Scott said that he considered "the conquest of the Pole nobler and more splendid when a party of men succeeded by their own hard physical labour".[1] When, in the Last Expedition, they began man-hauling their sledges up the Beardmore Glacier, Wilson cheerily remarked, "Thank goodness that the horses are all done with and we begin the heavy work ourselves".[2]

In this little volume you will learn something of Scott's happy home life, and will realize that only extreme devotion to science and to the advancement of knowledge could have induced him to leave his beloved family, and risk his life in the cruel Antarctic continent.

His first expedition was a great success from the point of view of science and of exploration. The results of his last expedition were still more valuable, but it, alas, ended in tragedy. Scott, Wilson, Bowers, Oates and Seaman Evans all perished on the return journey from the Pole.

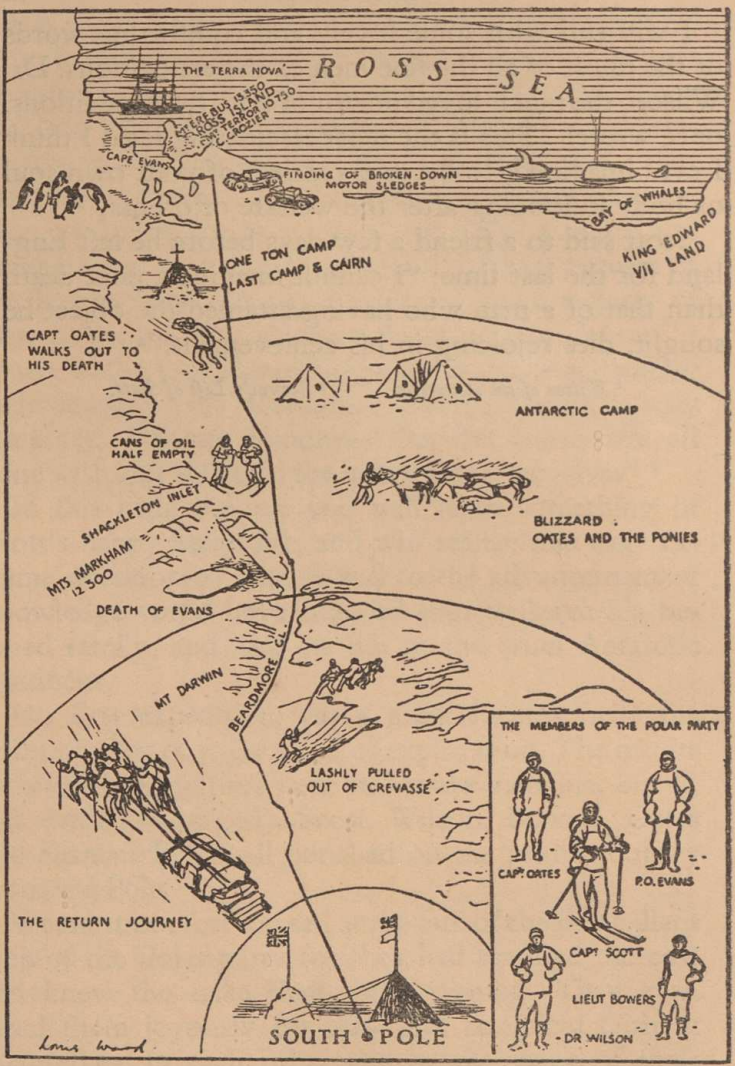
We must not feel too sad at the fate of the five gallant men of the Polar party for they had counted the cost and knew the risks they were running. They even faced them joyously for they had complete faith in themselves, in each other and in the value of their adventure.

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.* [2] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

I will end with some lovely and comforting words of the finest of all the fine men of the expeditions. Dr. Wilson, the much-loved doctor of both the expeditions, once wrote: "This is the most fascinating ideal I think I ever imagined, to become careless of your own soul or body in looking after the welfare of others."[1]

Scott said to a friend a few days before he left England for the last time: "I cannot imagine a finer death than that of a man who having attained the object he sought, dies rejoicing in his achievement."[2]

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.* [2] Seaver's *Life of Scott.*




Map showing the journey to the South Pole.
The distance from Ross Island to the South Pole is 900 miles.

## Chapter I

# INTRODUCTORY

### (*a*) *Antarctica*

If you study the map of the eastern and western hemispheres in your atlas, or still better, if you examine a good-sized globe, you will find a point in the extreme north marked North Pole, and one in the extreme south marked South Pole. These two points are at the ends of the imaginary axis on which the earth turns.

Look at the circles on the map, some going round the earth and others from Pole to Pole. I am sure you know that a circle is divided into 360° (360 degrees). Look for the circle marked 0. That circle is called the equator and it divides the globe into two equal halves. Distance north or south of the equator gives latitude which is measured in degrees. The North Pole is latitude 90° north and the South Pole is latitude 90° south.

You will also find two dotted circles 23.50° from the Poles. These are the Arctic and Antarctic Circles and their latitude is 66.50° north and 66.50° south. These circles enclose the parts of the globe where at midwinter the sun never rises and at midsummer it never sets. At the Poles there are only two seasons—six months winter and six months summer.

The earth takes a year to go round the sun. On June 21 the north end is turned towards the sun and it is

Midsummer Day in the northern hemisphere. At that time the south end is tilted away from the sun so that June 21 is mid-winter day in the southern hemisphere.

Owing to the tilting of the earth, as one travels from the Poles to the edge of the circles the length of the seasons varies. At Cape Evans, Scott's base in his last expedition, the sun disappeared on April 21 (April 23 according to home reckoning) and returned on August 21, so that there were four seasons—four months of winter, two months of spring, four months of summer and two months of autumn.

The members of the expedition managed to have two Christmas feasts in one year, one on December 25, because on that day it was Christmas Day at home, and another on June 21 because it was certainly Christmas weather in the Antarctic. I expect you will agree that they deserved at least two feasts a year when you find how often they had to go hungry when they were sledging.

Look again at your map or globe and you will find that part of Antarctica is in the eastern hemisphere and part in the western hemisphere. It is about the size of Australia and is almost circular in shape, with two big bays breaking into it. They are named after the explorers who discovered them and are called the Ross Sea (facing the Pacific Ocean) and the Weddell Sea (facing the Atlantic Ocean). It is surrounded by the roughest seas in the world. In these seas there is no land to break the force of the wind or change its direction and, during the greater part of the year, it sweeps round and round the end of the world howling like a lost spirit.

Nothing was known about the interior of the great

continent until after Scott's first expedition and, although he and others have explored different parts of it, there are still great tracts where men have never set foot.

Along the coasts of Antarctica there are steep cliffs which bar the way into the interior of the continent. One of the biggest of these bars or barriers is called the Great Ice Barrier or the Ross Barrier over which Scott travelled to the Pole. It is actually a huge glacier, like a great river of ice, the high cliffs forming its face. It has not a smooth surface but is crossed by deep, narrow valleys called crevasses. As the tops of the crevasses are generally covered with snow, it is very easy for the traveller to fall into them. Sometimes the snow is frozen so hard that it forms a kind of snow bridge, but crossing such a bridge is difficult and dangerous. Snowdrifts which have been piled up by the wind and frozen into sharp ridges with edges like knives are called sastrugi. Sometimes they appear like the sea after a storm with the waves frozen into their positions. You can imagine how hard it is to drag heavy sledges over such places.

From the Great Ice Barrier the land rises to mountains and glacier tops thousands of feet high in the central part of the continent and then descends to the Polar plateau (raised plain), the Pole itself being 9,500 feet above sea level.

The foundation (base) of Antarctica is solid rock, but except on the coast and occasionally in the mountainous parts, the rock does not appear, as all the ground is covered with ice and snow.

Some of the ice melts in the summer and forms moving rivers of ice, or glaciers, which slide down the

slopes till they reach the coastal cliffs, from which they break off and float out to sea as icebergs (floating hills of ice). When broken up by the wind and tides, little islands or floes are formed and these again break into smaller pieces. These are the pack ice through which a ship has to force its way in order to reach the mainland.

You will expect the climate (general weather conditions) of such a country to be very severe and indeed it is intensely so (hard and merciless to a very high degree). In the winter there are almost continuous gales (severe storms) and blizzards. A blizzard is a great storm with the wind racing along at perhaps 77 miles an hour or even more, twisting and turning (whirling) the drifting snow (snow driven by the wind). Nothing can be seen but a great white wall, against which a man can lean his whole weight, but can hardly force his way forward. Antarctica has been called "the home of the blizzard". The cold in winter is intense and can reach −78°.[1] There is no country in the world that has a lower temperature (degree of heat or cold) or swifter winds. In the summer the temperature varies greatly. In one day Scott records −15° under a clear sky and later 20° under a cloudy sky. He also tells that it is possible to wear light clothing in places which are sheltered from the wind but open to the sunshine. But gales and blizzards can also rage in the summer, and a warm blizzard is very trying, as you will read later.

Can any living creatures find a lasting home in this cruel continent? In the interior nothing exists except a queer wingless insect something like a mosquito. On

[1] Measurements of temperature throughout the book are in degrees Fahrenheit. This is the scale in general use in England and in it the freezing point of water is fixed at 32°.

and off the coasts there is an abundance (plenty) of life from the biggest of all living creatures, the whale, to tiny fish like little shrimps, and birds from the big skua gulls to the tiny snowy petrel. The blue whales, the dangerous killer whales, the seals, including their very big brothers the sea elephant and sea leopard, are hunted for their valuable flesh and blubber (fat).

There are many penguins, too. They are very primitive [undeveloped] birds. At one time they had wings and flew but their wings have become, in the course of ages, almost like flippers (limbs used in swimming). The Emperor penguins are very fine creatures about four feet high, with black heads, bluish-grey backs and wings, and orange feathers round the neck. The Adelie penguins are small and pretty, but the most charming of all the small birds is the snowy petrel with its white body and its black bead-like eyes, bill and feet.

Plants are very scarce. On the exposed rocks grow mosses; tiny, very soft green flowerless plants, and the lichens of different colours which form a sort of thin crust on rock or stone, but there is very little else.

It is difficult for those of you who live in hot countries to picture to yourselves this frozen continent, but some of you have seen the Lybian or Syrian or Iraqui deserts. You have seen how the surface of the desert is in places covered with ripples, like little waves, and how the wind has piled the sand into low hills or dunes, some of which through long years have become great cliffs and hills. You have felt perhaps, or will have heard how in a sand storm, the hard gritty sand stings your face and gets into eyes, nose and mouth, and how the wind whirls the sand up in front of you, forming a kind of wall. Now think of snow in place of sand and

you may have some idea of the scenes on the barrier over which Scott travelled to the South Pole.

A fine film has been made called *Scott of the Antarctic*. Some of the scenes were actually filmed in the Antarctic and the whole production gives a clear and true picture of Scott's tragic conquest of the South Pole. Be sure to go to see this lovely picture if you have the chance.

### (*b*) *Antarctica and the Scientists*

Scientific research was the chief aim of Scott's expeditions. Those engaged in research are not content to study and to understand what is already known but try to discover new facts, and Scott's greatest desire was to add to the sum of human knowledge. He had an extremely wide and practical knowledge of the branches of science connected with Polar research. On many occasions the highly skilled specialists on his staff declared that his insight into the difficulties of their work was extraordinary and that his expert (practised and skilful) guidance was of the greatest help to them.

At one time it was thought that little could be learnt from Antarctic exploration, and it was only gradually realized that there was a wide field of work in the Antarctic for scientists. It became known, for instance, that the weather there affected weather conditions all over the world so that navigators, foretellers of the weather and others would benefit practically by the sending of scientists to the Antarctic to make and record observations in Meteorology (the study of air conditions in relation to weather and climate); Geography and Physical Geography (the study of the physical features of the earth, its climate, etc.); Physics (the study

of physical phenomena—natural events as felt by the senses); and Magnetism[1] (the study of the attractions of substances and their results).

The observations and records made by Scott and his staff of officers and scientists in very difficult conditions were of extreme importance.

Other specialists collected valuable specimens and made a fruitful study of the Zoology (the ways of life, the form and structure of living animals); Biology (the physical nature of animals and plants); and Geology (the rock formation and surface of the land) of Antarctica.

You will have noticed, I think, that the different sciences have much in common and that no hard and fast line can be drawn between one and the other. So too, the scientists shared their work and produced material that is still the base of any serious study of Antarctic problems (difficult questions).

[1] You have probably played with a magnet or a bit of magnetized iron and watched it attract to itself pins, needles, etc. The earth, sun and moon all possess this power of attraction. The tides, magnetic storms and many other natural phenomena are the results of such attraction, which is not constant but changes, and scientists wished to find the reasons for these changes. The steel needle in the compass used by sailors is a magnet and points always north and south to the Magnetic Poles which are at some distance from the Geographical Poles. So Antarctica is obviously a good place in which to study the power of magnetism.

## Chapter II

## BOYHOOD

OUTLANDS, the home of the Scott family, was not far from Devonport in the lovely county of Devonshire in the south-west of England. It was a fine, old house with a glass greenhouse at one corner, set in a pleasant garden with tall trees very suitable for climbing, a shrubbery full of flowering bushes, green grassy lawns, a stable and some interesting sheds; but best of all was the little stream, called a leat in Devonshire, which appeared mysteriously from underground in the shrubbery and disappeared just as mysteriously in the kitchen garden. The children of the family had the run of all these attractive places.

Our story begins in the summer of 1874 when Robert Falcon Scott, the future explorer, was six years old. He was born on June 6, 1868. Con, as he was called by his family, his three elder sisters and his younger brother, Archie, were giving a children's party in the garden. His youngest sister had to stay in the house as she was too small to join the party, but she watched the fun from a window.

Con, feeling rather proud of himself in his best suit and his high buttoned boots, rushed along to the leat and took a flying jump, not across it unfortunately, but straight into it. A wet and tearful little boy was fished out of the stream. No party for him that day. "Pride goes before a fall," said his nurse.

He was not the only one to fall into the leat for one of their favourite games was "Touch". The enemy were on one side of the stream and the pursuer on the other, and he had to touch across the stream. Someone was sure to fall in sooner or later, to the amusement of the rest.

They were a gay and rather daring group of children, but even the three elder sisters accepted Con as leader in the adventurous games he planned for them. He would climb a tall holly tree, swing out on a branch, and then jump on to the stable roof and the rest had to follow him. Or the daring band crept after him over the glass roof of the greenhouse and took a leap of twelve feet to the ground. Fortunately none of them at any time fell through the glass or made a bad landing and broke an arm or a leg.

Con knew that he was to join the Navy and this coloured his thoughts, his dreams and even his play. Many fierce battles were fought on the leat. The ships were only painted bits of wood, but to the children they were real enough. The enemy was, of course, always beaten by the bravery and skill of "Admiral Robert Falcon Scott".

When at eight years old this hero went to his first school, he had not a particularly heroic appearance. He was rather small for his age and not very strong. His elder sisters said that he was very untidy, quick-tempered and extremely dreamy, "always in the clouds". To his father he was "Old Mooney".

He rode every day to school on his pony, Beppo. One day on his way home he slipped from his horse and stood for a while to admire the lovely view of fields and woods. He lost himself in a day-dream for-

getting all about his pony. When he came to himself, Beppo had disappeared. A sadder little boy, if not a wiser one, walked the seven miles home, but he had the sense to call and report his loss at the village police station and probably the pony was soon found. His great friend, the writer J. M. Barrie, said of Scott in later years, "Scott was naturally a mixture of the dreamy and the practical, and never more practical than just after he had been dreamy".[1]

Another story that Barrie tells also shows how "the boy is father to the man". Mr. Scott and Con were walking together in the garden. The boy had a fine new knife in his pocket, but he had been told to keep it shut. He begged for permission to use it on a very tempting bush. His father agreed but said, "If you hurt yourself, don't expect any sympathy from me". He cut himself rather badly but hid the bleeding hand in his pocket and walked on. We do not hear what happened when he got to his room and washed the blood from his hand. He was probably very sick for all through his life he hated the sight of blood, and indeed of any form of suffering. He found it easier to bear pain than to see others bear it.

The grown-up members of the family all had a share in the training and amusing of the six attractive and intelligent youngsters. Their father was a business man who would much rather have been a sailor like his three brothers. His ancestors had followed adventurous careers for a hundred years and more, but ill health and other things over which he had no control had forced him to keep to work that he found uninteresting. He was determined that his two sons, especially Con, who

[1] J. M. Barrie's introduction to *Scott's Last Expedition.*

was his favourite, should have better opportunities than he had had.

Their mother was the guiding spirit of the house. She was clever, beautiful and very charming. All her sons and daughters loved her, especially Con who inherited many of her fine qualities and much of her charm. Her parents lived with her. They were old and in poor health and she gave them her devoted care.

A lively old aunt of Mr. Scott's lived with them, too. She was seventy-four when Con was born and lived to be ninety-five. She had had an exciting life and had met many interesting people. The children never tired of listening to her tales of old times and of the daring deeds of the family.

Their sailor uncles told of their adventures by land and sea. All was gaiety when they came on visits to the family. Con and Archie longed for the time when they too would visit foreign lands and have exciting adventures of their own.

"Nannie", their old nurse, was a very important person indeed. She looked after them all and they loved her. Though she had so much to do, she was never too busy to join in their fun and to advise and guide them.

Mr. Scott felt at times that the burden of keeping such a large household was too much for him. He found it difficult to conttol his temper, but even so he always tried to be just.

As the boys grew older their father took a very great interest in their studies and carefully examined their school reports. Archie was a bright, cheerful boy, clever at work and at games and was well spoken of by his teachers. Con, who was now at a preparatory naval

school, was backward for his age and inclined to be lazy. His father made him work very hard in the holidays. He was sensitive and hated to disappoint his parents so he studied well and made up for lost time.

At thirteen he became a naval cadet on the training ship *Britannia*. He worked energetically, pleased his officers and was well liked by his companions, so much so that he was made a cadet captain.

A photograph taken of him at fourteen shows that he had much developed. One sees a sturdy boy with a firm, finely cut face, smiling eyes and a thoughtful expression.

When at home he still liked to play with the younger children, but he was also useful to his elder sisters. Looking very smart in his naval uniform, he accompanied them to parties and dances, and felt a very responsible young man.

## Chapter III

## YOUTH

AT the age of fifteen Scott became a midshipman. The Navy is a hard school. A boy has to learn to obey orders exactly and swiftly; he has also to control others and his sense of responsibility is developed earlier than is usual in other occupations. Scott, throughout his life, never avoided a responsibility and he was always readily obeyed by those under him.

Helped by his training and still more by his strong will, he gradually conquered his bodily weakness and

his childish faults. He hardened himself by severe exercise; he learnt to keep his temper; he became so tidy that his motto might have been "a place for everything and everything in its place". He was always a dreamer as all great men have been. Like that famous scientist, Pierre Curie, he learnt, as the years went by, "to make of life a dream and of that dream a reality".

After service on different ships, he was appointed at the age of eighteen to the *Rover*, one of the four ships of the training squadron. It happened that Sir Clements Markham, President of the Royal Geographical Society was a guest on the *Active*, another of the four training ships. He made friends with all the young midshipmen and was specially interested in Scott. He arranged to watch a boat race, for in such a struggle other qualities besides sailing ability are tested. It was a good race and Scott won it. He was asked to dine with Sir Clements who "was much struck by his intelligence, information and the charm of his manner".[1] In fact, he decided that Scott would be the right man to command an expedition to the Antarctic which he was planning, but which would take some years to complete. Scott was of course unaware of this plan, and little knew that the meeting with Sir Clements was to shape his career and turn it in an entirely new direction.

Soon after his nineteenth birthday Scott took his examinations and became a sub-lieutenant. He gained four first-class certificates and one second class. His parents were delighted with this brilliant result. Far from being backward, he was in advance of most of his comrades, for he had read widely on subjects not connected with his examinations.

[1] *The Lands of Silence* by Sir Clements Markham.

In 1888 Scott was appointed to the *Amphion*. The ship was stationed at a place in British Columbia, and on his way to join her, Scott travelled on a small crowded coastal steamer making its way along the west coast of North America. Many years later a fellow passenger, Sir Courtauld Thomson, told the story of their journey as a proof that Scott, young as he was, already possessed practical ability, tact and force of character.

On board there were numbers of women and children. The men passengers were mostly rough, strong miners. A storm broke out soon after they started and raged for days, and nearly everyone was sick. Helpless women and children were lying on the floor of the saloon with nobody to bring them food or to keep the place clean. Scott, as you know, could never bear to see people ill and unhappy and he quickly took command of the situation. At first he had few helpers, but soon even the most unruly of the men joined him. He got the mothers and children washed, fed and clothed. They all found quite a number of things to laugh at while this was being done. The bright, cheerful young officer soon persuaded the passengers that "the whole thing was jolly good fun".

Sir Courtauld said that he was sure other passengers like himself would remember "the fair-haired English sailor-boy with the laughing blue eyes, who at that early age knew how to sacrifice himself for the welfare and happiness of others".[1]

During these formative years Scott was as happy in his home life as in his work. Whenever he and Archie, now an officer in the Army, had leave together, they hurried home and the whole family had a gay time.

[1] J. M. Barrie's introduction to *Scott's Last Expedition*.

Both young men were good at games and played cricket, football, tennis and golf. They took long rides through the lovely Devonshire lanes and across the fields. Archie was the finer horseman, but Con was also good "for a sailor". Best of all they enjoyed sailing, especially as in this sport the whole family joined. Con and Archie were both efficient sailors and had won many prizes for racing. Probably Con told his brother that he was a good sailor "for a soldier". Girls in those days had not the freedom of choice and movement that they have nowadays, and the four sisters took a special delight in helping to work the boat. It seemed wonderful to them to be able to sail wherever they wished.

In the evenings there was plenty of merriment at home, for the girls and their brothers were the best of friends. They exchanged opinions on all kinds of subjects. Their mother was a charming presence among them and always in the background or the foreground of their thoughts. She was "their sweet, kind mother", "always our guide and friend".[1]

Con and Archie often sat up late sharing their experiences and discussing their plans. Each could look forward to a bright future.

## Chapter IV

## TOWARDS ADVENTURE

SCOTT returned home from the *Amphion* in 1891. He was now a lieutenant. His captain reported him to

[1] *Captain Scott.*

be "a young officer of good promise, who has tact and patience in the handling of men".[1] His family were struck by his quick growth in mind and body and by his air of quiet confidence. His father found him a good and interesting companion and they wrote regularly to each other when Con was away.

Con had started a diary intended only for his own eyes. Entries show that although he was entirely loyal to the Navy, he often longed for a wider life. The diary and his letters home express his thoughts and feelings and describe actions so simply, directly and sincerely that they touch the heart. It was natural to him to clothe his experiences "in bright words".

Scott decided that it would be very interesting to study a new naval weapon, the torpedo, which could be discharged below the water and would explode when it hit a ship or other object. To use this weapon a very special training was needed and Scott, who was always attracted by new ways of thought and action, asked leave to join the new service. For three years he was on the *Vernon*, the naval torpedo school at Portsmouth.

While in home waters Scott was able to see much of his beloved family, but he was also working and reading hard, laying the foundation of that deep and practical knowledge of the sciences that so surprised the specialists who accompanied him on his expeditions.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott were very proud of their two fine sons and their love and faith were well rewarded. In December 1894, when Con was on Christmas leave, he heard to his sorrow that his father had lost the money obtained from the sale of his business; that he must

[1] *Captain Scott.*

find other work and that they could no longer afford to live at Outlands.

Con at once made himself responsible for his mother and sisters. He arranged to let Outlands furnished and helped his father to buy another business in Somerset, where his wife and children joined him.

It was a great disappointment to Con to have to leave the *Vernon*, but he asked for a transfer to a ship at Devonport where he would be nearer to his family and could more easily help them, if sudden difficulties arose.

In order to play his part in supporting the family, Archie left the army and took a post in Lagos where he was paid more highly.

The sisters were not going to be a burden to their brothers and the eldest became an actress, another a hospital nurse and two of them, after being well trained in Paris, started a dressmaker's business together. Mrs. Scott did not like her daughters to have to work for their living, but they thoroughly enjoyed the change. Con admired them for he was modern enough to like women who worked and were independent. He wrote later:

My own Dearest Mother,

. . . I rejoice to see that you are beginning to appreciate that by this honest hard work the girls are anything but sufferers. The difference in them since they have been about, meeting all manner of people and relying on themselves, is so very plain to me. . . . They have gained in a hundred points, not to mention appearance and smartness. ...[1]

So Con felt that things were now going well and that he need not worry about his family. During 1896 he

[1] *Captain Scott.*

served on ships going abroad and in 1897 he went to the *Majestic*, the flagship of the Channel Fleet.

While he was away his eldest sister married Ellison-Macartney. He was a delightful man and became the friend of all the family. He was specially devoted to Mrs. Scott and looked after her splendidly when her sons were away. In the same year Mr. Scott died. His wife then moved to London.

In the summer of 1898 Archie came back from Lagos. He was delighted to be home once more. He had been very successful in Lagos and Con told his mother that Archie would certainly be the Governor of a province before long. The two sons settled the money affairs of the family and Con got permission to take his brother on a cruise with him to Ireland. They were thoroughly happy together and Archie was in the best of health and spirits, but a month later he caught typhoid fever and died. It was a cruel grief to them all and left Con the only support of his family. He did all he could to comfort his mother in her sorrow and shouldered his added responsibilities without a word of complaint. He spent as little as possible on himself, but he was by nature a very generous man, and the necessity to save every penny he could troubled him greatly.

In June 1899, Scott was on leave in London and chanced to meet Sir Clements Markham in the street. He walked home with him, and for the first time heard that a Polar expedition was to be sent to the Antarctic. They had a long heart-to-heart talk. Sir Clements looked affectionately at the fine young man of twenty-eight with the deep-set, eager eyes, the determined expression and the sudden smile that lighted up his face

and made it wholly charming. He asked Scott many questions about his past work and his plans for the future, and was delighted with his answers. It was clear that the ten years' experience on ships in different parts of the world had intensified the fine qualities possessed by the youth of eighteen. He was confirmed in his opinion that Scott's high standard of conduct, his intelligence and his scientific knowledge and, above all, his qualities of leadership made him more fitted than any other man to undertake the great adventure in the Antarctic. Scott was assured of a fine career in the Navy, but he realized that the expedition would give him new and exciting experiences and wonderful opportunities for scientific research, so he accepted the advice of Sir Clements and applied to command the expedition.

Scott was a very modest man and although he was sure of Sir Clements' powerful support, he could not believe that he would be chosen for such an important post. He said nothing to his family about his application, but worked as keenly as ever on his ship, the *Majestic*, and wrote his usual amusing and descriptive letters to his mother and sisters. He told them that he was expecting promotion shortly. In June 1900, he was promoted to the rank of commander, and after a month was given leave of absence and permission to command the Antarctic expedition.

## Chapter V

# PLANS FOR THE EXPEDITION

MONEY for the expedition was provided by the Government, the Royal Society, the Royal Geographical Society and by the public. Its aims were geographical and scientific and detailed instructions were given to Scott which, however, left much to his judgment as commanding officer.

A suitable ship could not be found so one had to be built. The design had been prepared before Scott's appointment, but he watched over every detail of its building and loved every inch of it.

He read everything that had been written on Polar exploration, but felt that he needed more than a bookish knowledge of the work. With Sir Clements he went to Norway to visit the famous Arctic explorer, Nansen. They talked over with him all the details of sledging and of Polar research, and he accompanied them by ship to show them the dredging and other deep sea apparatus for obtaining specimens of different kinds of marine creatures. Scott said: "It is an education alone in the work to meet Nansen."[1] He, in his turn, was much impressed by Scott's quick mastery of practical and scientific problems.

While Scott was busy at the Admiralty he lived with his mother and sisters in London and had his office on the ground floor of the house. They all tried to stop

[1] *Captain Scott.*

him from overworking and would often drag him upstairs by force when he was late for a meal. They used to make him play their favourite game of cards in the evening or would persuade him to go to a party with them. He received many invitations from people who were interested in such a charming young man, the leader of an important and dangerous expedition, but he was unable to accept half of them.

He often had long talks with his mother during these days and she must have wondered how this tender-hearted dreamer, this man who could not bear the sight of blood, would get on in the hard, cold world to which he was going. She remembered that he was always easily moved to tears. In an accident in which some person or animal was hurt, he did all that could be done quickly and well, but then "out would come his handkerchief". It was always for others that he wept, never for himself.

Preparations went on busily and for the last part of the time Scott had the help of his very carefully chosen staff. All six officers were from the Royal Navy and so were twenty-five of the twenty-six men. The twenty-sixth was the cook who had not been in the services. There were five scientists. Lieut. Armitage, the second in command, and three of the scientists had had some experience of Polar work.

The ship was brought from Scotland to London. Lady Markham had named it *Discovery*. On every single day for two months Scott was on board seeing to the arrangement of the cargo. He was also kept busy answering the hundreds of questions asked by the many important visitors who came to see the strange little wooden ship.

Within one year from Scott's appointment as leader the ship was ready to sail. Dr. Nansen said he was filled with surprise and admiration; he would not have believed that so much could be done and so many difficulties overcome in the space of one year.

At last it was time to say good-bye. Scott left his mother in the care of his brother-in-law, Ellison-Macartney, and sailed from London on July 31, 1901, but before leaving England's shores the ship called at Cowes and was visited by King Edward VII and the Queen. The King was going to decorate Scott. Scott's former admiral had brought Mrs. Scott on to the ship to see her son decorated and the King handed the ribbon of the Victorian Order to the mother to pin on her son's breast.

The unexpected presence of his mother was a great joy to the son who so deeply loved her. His thoughts as they left the harbour were for the sorrows of the dear ones whom they were leaving behind. For them were "fresh woods and pastures new", but for those they left behind there were only long months of hopes and fears.

## Chapter VI

## THE JOURNEY TO NEW ZEALAND

THE *Discovery* was a sailing ship with a small engine. She turned out to be very slow, difficult to steer and a terrible roller. The voyage was long and gave Scott and

his men time to get to know each other. He had a pretty good idea of the abilities of each one of them before the voyage was over.

The routine work went well; officers and seamen had more than enough to do, but the scientists were ready to help anyhow and anywhere, as soon as their own specialist jobs were finished.

Wilson, who was doctor as well as artist and zoologist of the expedition, was glad that they all got such splendid exercise every day—stoking the fires, chasing and tying up cases that got loose and slipped about all over the deck of the ship, and learning to manage ropes and sails. Scott and Wilson joined in, no matter how dirty the work might be.

They reached the equator on August 31 and had the usual fun "crossing the line", as the sailors called it. Anyone who had not previously crossed had to be introduced to Father Neptune, ruler of the waves. The unfortunate person had a bandage tied over his eyes and was seated on a plank of wood over a canvas bath of water. Neptune questioned him, soaped his face, mouth and all, and shaved him with a big wooden razor, making amusing remarks all the time. Everyone laughed loudly except the sufferer. Finally he was pushed into the bath. His troubles were over for he had "crossed the line".

They made a short stay at Cape Town and there was a rush for the post bag. Many were disappointed for some of the mail was late; but not Wilson, who remarked joyfully, "I was lucky for I had ten letters, but then mine's a very special sort of wife".[1]

On October 30, they reached Lyttelton in New

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

Zealand. They took on extra stores of food of the best quality. Some they bought at a very low price, but most was presented by the New Zealanders. Officers and men were invited to dinners and parties and were very kindly treated.

The deck of the ship was an amusing sight on the day of their departure. Every part of it was packed with cases and animals including forty-five sheep, a final gift from the people of New Zealand, and twenty-three sledge dogs which had been brought from Siberia. They left this delightful country on Christmas Eve, 1901.

Dozens of letters had been posted home, as it would be many months before these men would have another chance of sending or of getting news. How amusing and touching these letters must have been! Fortunately for us some of those written by Scott and Wilson have been published in their biographies and we know how they felt towards each other.

Wilson had suffered from tuberculosis in the past and had not been very fit when he joined the ship. Scott knew that Mrs. Wilson must be anxious about him. He wrote a letter telling her that her husband was in splendid health, that he was eating well and gaining weight. . . . "His kindness, loyalty, good temper and fine feelings have endeared him to us all."[1]

Wilson told his parents that Scott was a very able man, ready to listen to everyone and never known to be unfair. . . . "I have a great admiration for him."[1]

As they were leaving the harbour Wilson wrote in his diary, "Now we are fairly started. With God's help

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

we shall do something worth the doing before we sight New Zealand again."[1] That was the spirit of the expedition.

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## CHAPTER VII

## FURTHER SOUTH

IT was Christmas Day, 1901. Everybody on the ship had had so much merry-making while in New Zealand that they were rather tired. They felt very sad at leaving so many good friends. They passed the day quietly for there was plenty to think about.

The stormiest sea in the world behaved like a lamb. Except for fog the weather was fine. Even the pack ice caused little delay and the Ross Sea was reached in a week. On January 8 the very welcome cry of "Land Ho" was heard. All rushed on deck and a splendid sight met their eyes. The Antarctic coast with the Admiralty mountains in the distance all bathed in golden sunshine made a picture of unforgettable beauty. They were in very good spirits and felt that at last they had reached the scene of their real labours.

Adventurers had sailed round the great continent and named some of the bays, capes and mountains; a very few had landed, but none had explored the interior. Our little band of men were to tread where no man had ever set foot before. For them it was an exciting and solemn moment.

Twenty-seven hours later a landing was made at Cape Adare on the north-west coast of the Ross Sea

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

which Scott had been instructed to explore as thoroughly as possible.

The scientists were soon at work. The geologists got some valuable rock specimens; the botanists gathered interesting mosses; the zoologist collected penguin eggs. There were hundreds of mother and father penguins and chicks to watch. The little ones were safe enough if they stayed with their parents, but if they wandered away the great big brown skua gulls seized them and tore them to pieces.

Scott examined the hut left by a previous expedition and placed in it a tin container with a full record of their own journey. This was afterwards found by the relief ship, the *Morning*, and enabled the captain to find where the *Discovery* was anchored.

They left Cape Adare and sailed south. The weather was stormy and the ship only just escaped being crushed between two great icebergs. These were dangerous seas and it was Scott's responsibility to steer the ship safely through them. He also organized the scientific work while the ship was coasting along.

In connection with meteorology, or the science of the weather, the pressure of the air, the force and direction of the wind, and other useful facts were recorded.

Fish, marine creatures and plants, together with the mud and stones dredged up from the bottom of the sea, were studied eagerly by the zoologist, the botanist and the geologist.

The coast line was surveyed and Wilson made pen and pencil drawings of it, as well as beautiful water-colour sketches of the distant mountain tops.

They passed Ross Island where Scott eventually intended to spend the winter, and sailed farther east along

the ice cliffs of the Great Ice Barrier. There they discovered a stretch of high, rocky land to which Scott gave the name of King Edward VII Land. It was very exciting to discover new land and Scott would have liked to go farther east, but he had been forced to use up much coal on this journey and felt that he must now return. He was, however, very anxious to get a view from the top of the Barrier and found a suitable landing place on the Bay of Whales.

He had with him two small captive balloons and thought that it would be a good time to try one out. Two officers and three seamen, who had been taught how to put them together, got one ready for him. The basket fixed to the balloon held one person only and Scott climbed into it. It seemed to him rather small and shaky as it rose into the air. Suddenly it stopped, but instead of letting the sand out little by little, he threw out a great bagful. The basket shook him and shot up so suddenly that it took his breath away. From 800 feet up he got a spendid view of the Barrier surface and could see that far from being a level plain, it was crossed by slopes and valleys.

On February 8 the ship was back in McMurdo Sound, the south-west part of the Ross Sea, between Victoria Land and Ross Island. Ross Island is shaped like a triangle with its south side or base fixed to the Barrier ice, with Cape Bird, Cape Crozier and Cape Armitage (so named by Scott after Lieut. Armitage his second in command) at its north-west, south-east and south-west points respectively. On its west side the McMurdo Sound separates it from the mainland, Queen Victoria Land.

They found suitable quarters for their ship a little

north of Cape Armitage and just under a big rock which they named Castle Rock. The sharp hill above the cape they called Observation Hill.

The Sound could be crossed on foot over the ice in the winter and by the ship in the summer, so that the party would not at any time be cut off from the mainland.

It was now the Antarctic autumn and there was much to be done before the long winter set in.

## Chapter VIII

## AUTUMN IN THE ANTARCTIC

TRY to imagine this little group of thirty-eight men —officers, scientists and seamen—making their home on the edge of this vast continent. They were all young and strong and much excited at the thought of exploring this unknown and wonderful land. Around them were the hills, mountains and valleys covered with snow, its tiny crystals sparkling in the sunshine like bright flowers. But for the moment our band of adventurers did not spend much time looking at the scenery; they eagerly started on the work of settling in.

They were to live on the ship but needed a base on land from which to start sledging journeys. A suitable spot was found on a little bay to the south of the ship. First of all they landed the dogs which had got tired of being tied up on the deck and were often very troublesome. Their kennels were placed at some distance from each other to prevent them from fighting, as many of

the dogs were quite fierce. Next they unpacked the long sledges and placed them on shore, and then put up the three huts which they had brought with them on the ship, two of them were for the magnetic instruments and the other, quite a big hut, they divided into two rooms, a small one for the use of the scientists and a large one to serve as workroom, playroom and store. Here with other equipment they found room for the skis—long, thin, wooden snow-shoes—and the toboggans—small sledges each made of two skis and a wooden packing case.

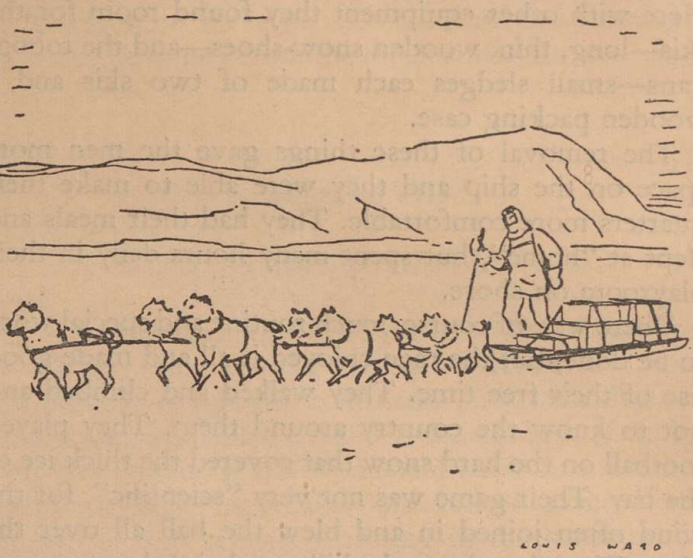
The removal of these things gave the men more space on the ship and they were able to make their quarters more comfortable. They had their meals and slept at "home", but spent many hours daily in their playroom on shore.

There was, of course, much routine and special work to be done, but the men enjoyed it all and made good use of their free time. They walked and climbed and got to know the country around them. They played football on the hard snow that covered the thick ice of the bay. Their game was not very "scientific", for the wind often joined in and blew the ball all over the place. They flew down the hills on their toboggans and went ski-ing, but as most of them were beginners, they found the skis difficult to manage. With practice, however, they soon became more skilful and were proud when they could shoot down the long hills and turn corners without falling.

Training the dogs for sledging was not easy work but was often good fun. Some men were in favour of using the whip while others believed in gentle "persuasion". I fear that the whip was necessary, for al-

though at times the animals behaved very prettily, at others they either refused to move at all, or dashed off like the wind leaving their breathless drivers far behind.

Accidents happened both at work and play, often because men took risks that, with added experience, they would have avoided. Scott had an accident and



A sledge team

hurt his leg badly going down a hard, rough slope on skis. He remarked in his diary, "I determined that never again would I be so rash as to run hard snow-slopes on ski".[1]

Two autumn journeys had been arranged but Scott was unable to take part in either of them owing to his

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery"*.

injury. Shackleton led the first sledging trip taking with him Wilson and Ferrar, the geologist. They went south-east to White Island. They climbed one of the volcanic peaks and got a good view of the great-plain, but found that it was not as smooth as it looked from a distance. Their tent nearly blew away; the cooking stove would not work; the sledges were not properly packed and everything seemed to go wrong. They returned after four days, sadder but wiser men. They had learned that there was no easy road to the south but only a hard, cold, dangerous way.

The other party had still worse experiences. Their aim was to reach their "post-office" at Cape Crozier on the east side of the island. The second officer, Royds, was leader and had with him three officers and eight men. They took two sledges and eight dogs for hauling. Scott watched them start and noted that men and sledges looked anything but orderly. No doubt everything they needed was there, but "everything was on top and nothing handy".[1]

They soon got into difficulties. The sledges sank in the deep snow and the dogs could not drag them along. Royds decided to push on with two of the officers and to send the eight seamen back with Lieut. Barne. The latter party had a terrible time. It took them two days to get to the Castle Rock. A blizzard came on quite suddenly and in their inexperience they made up their minds to leave the two sledges and make their way to the ship. On March 11 four weary but excited men were seen approaching the ship. They told how the nine of them had tried to keep together, but that Lieut. Barne and three seamen had got lost. The remaining five had

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery"*.

waited for them for some time and then decided that they had better find the ship and report. Four of them were wearing ski-boots and they had to help Vince, whose fur boots slipped on the uneven, icy surface. They were travelling very fast when the leading man suddenly jumped backwards and shouted to his companions to stop. All the men were saved from falling over a steep cliff except Vince, who could not keep his foothold and shot over the edge into the sea. Death came to him very quickly in that icy sea. There was nothing the others could do but climb up the slope again. This was a dangerous business, but, thanks to the forethought of Wild, they managed somehow to get to the top. He had hammered some nails into the soles of his boots and so was able to keep his footing and to help the others. It was he, too, who chose the direction for their next move and got them safely to the ship.

As soon as possible Scott arranged for a party under Armitage to search for the missing men. His injured leg prevented him from leading the party himself. His enforced inactivity, his grief at the death of Vince and anxiety about the fate of the rest of the party gave him a terrible night.

After several hours Ferrar, one of Armitage's search party, appeared, bringing with him three of the lost men —Barne and two seamen. The rest of the search party returned later, having been unable to find Hare, a young seaman of eighteen. He was given up for lost, but two days later a stumbling figure was seen at some distance from the ship. Helpers rushed to him and carried him to the hut. Although he was tired out and very hungry, he was able to tell Scott that he had tried to get to the sledges but had lost his way. He had

thought the best plan would be to take shelter under a rock. Seemingly he had slept for thirty-six hours in his snow bed. When he awakened the air was clear and he saw that he was on a slope under Castle Rock. He was very stiff and at first crept along on hands and knees, but little by little his stiffness passed and he walked upright in the direction of the ship. He had been forty hours without food, and in spite of this and the extreme cold, he was not even frost-bitten. After a good meal and a night's sleep he was as well as ever.

On March 20 Royds and the two other officers arrived safely, but they had had experiences like the first sledging party and they had been unable to reach Mount Crozier. Scott now knew the complete story of their journey and could only be thankful that the whole party had not disappeared. Still, Vince's death was a great sorrow, for he had been a fine sailor and a good companion.

By March 28 Scott's leg was better and he was anxious to get some sledging experience before the winter set in. He took twelve men with sledges and dogs. The loads were too heavy and it was terribly cold, at night —47°. For three days they laboured and were then only nine miles from the ship. They had to return but they had learned another lesson. It was not advisable for men and dogs to pull together as their pace and way of pulling is different.

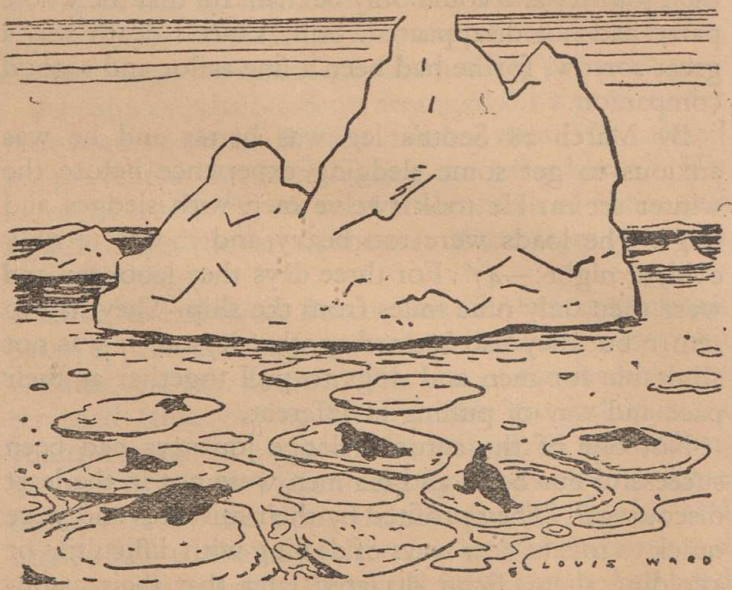
Not one of the autumn sledge journeys had been successful but Scott and his men were not in the least discouraged. They profited by their mistakes and were quick to invent new ways of dealing with difficulties or avoiding them. Scott declared later that their astonishingly successful sledging during their second sum-

mer in the Antarctic was directly due to their disappointing failures in their first autumn.

## Chapter IX

## ANTARCTIC WINTER

WITH the approach of winter the sun gave less and less light and the party hurried to get in a stock of fresh food to last them for the four dark months. Catching seals and penguins gave them healthy exercise and often caused a good deal of amusement. One evening two seals had been caught and, as the light was not




Seals resting on ice

very good, the men tied them up meaning to deal with them in the morning. But it did not take the seals long to get free. They were caught again and this time tied up with the strongest rope and the best of sailors' knots, but in the morning only one was found.

As for the penguins, no one much liked killing them. They looked so like little old men dressed in long tail coats and all ready to go to a dinner party. They were quite tame and often came close to the ship to have a look at these strange creatures, which could not be fish but might be great fat seals. In the sea the penguins had many enemies, but on the land they felt quite safe. One evening a crowd of them were seen very near the boat. Dr. Wilson said that they were the finest kind of Emperor penguins and that he would like some for his collection. The birds were about four feet high and very difficult to hold. The men tried sitting on them but could not keep them down. In the poor light they mistook each other for penguins which added to the confusion. The lookers-on roared with laughter and shouted much unwanted advice. Eventually a good number were caught and were divided between Wilson and the cook. They all enjoyed penguin liver at dinner and in time grew to like the flesh as well. The fat or blubber was also very useful as it was made into oil for the lamps and stoves.

On April 23 they saw the last of the sun. It would be four months before it would rise for them again. But on a quiet, clear night "the silvery moonlight was beautiful beyond description".[1] Wilson used to go out sketching "when everything was still, cold, silent and unearthly".[2]

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery".* [2] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

Scott wrote in his diary that no one worked harder than Wilson. He was responsible for the airing of all the living spaces on the ships and in the huts; he supervised the preparation of skins; had made a valuable set of drawings of the whole of the coast of Victoria Land; doctored any who were sick and took a kindly interest in the life of everyone on the ship.

The routine was the same every day and life passed quite pleasantly. The seamen worked all the morning and after dinner until five o'clock, when they had supper. This was their favourite meal. They had tea, bread and butter, jam or cheese and anything that was left over from dinner. After this they were free. They read or wrote, played cards, chess or draughts. Some worked at their hobbies—wood-carving, netting, leather work. Seaman Cross used the German silver of an old sledge runner to make beautiful models of a sledge, skis and a pram—a Norwegian boat. At about ten they got into their hammocks and were soon asleep.

The officers worked from breakfast till tea-time at two o'clock. This was their favourite meal. They made toast at their own fire and buttered it well. The jam and cakes tasted very nice. The talk was lively and amusing and the meal generally lasted for about an hour. After this they took their daily exercise or finished any outstanding tasks. At six o'clock they all met again at dinner which was never dull and silent, but often enlivened by heated discussions. After this each did as he liked. Most of them went to bed between eleven and twelve. Scott stayed up till later, working out plans for the summer sledging parties or writing in his diary, but when he went to bed he slept like a top.

To introduce variety into their daily programmes there was a debate once a week; a subject connected with their work one week and a more general subject the next week. They were followed by questions and answers which led to further discussions. The general subjects were not treated at all seriously, and at times the "debate" ended in a harmless free fight.

A monthly journal was started called the *South Polar Times*. Shackleton was chosen to edit it. He himself was a great reader and could recite poetry from memory "by the yard". Scientific or lighter articles, puzzles, jokes might be offered by anyone on the ship, and the editor always made a good choice of those that were the most amusing or instructive. Many of the illustrations were done by Wilson and these were a great attraction. In Scott's opinion, some of the best and quite the most amusing articles were written by the seamen.

On June 23, mid-winter day, the ship was decorated with chains and flowers made of coloured paper, and at each place at table there was an ornament made of ice and lighted from within with candles. Mrs. Royds, the mother of Lieut. Royds, had sent a big, heavy box to the ship requesting that it should be opened on this day of days. It was found to contain a suitable present for each man on board. These gifts from home and the kind thoughts that had inspired them gave great pleasure.

After a very special Christmas dinner there was singing and music which lasted far into the night. At about one in the morning most of the party went outside to get cool. There was a full moon and millions of stars shone in a clear sky. They felt that the happy, merry

day and the lovely night promised them success in their adventures.

The second half of the winter passed quickly enough; but it was not without its lessons for the inexperienced. On the night of August 24, Bernacchi and Skelton were working in the small room of the hut while Royds and several others were amusing themselves in the play-room. The two scientists finished their work early and started for home. A blizzard was blowing and they lost their way, although the ship was only about two hundred yards from the hut. At last they realized that it was useless to walk on, so they stopped and shouted for help. In the meantime Royds and his party had left the hut. For safety's sake they joined hands and spread out in a long line and luckily caught the ship's gangway rope. At this moment they heard faint shouts. They spread out still farther and hurried in the direction of the shouts and came upon the two lost men. They were badly frostbitten, for they were not wearing their windproof clothing. After this more care was taken of the guide ropes stretching from the ship to the hut. They knew now that men could be blinded and confused in a blizzard and lose their way a few yards from home.

## Chapter X

## SPRING AND SUMMER, 1902 TO 1903

By the time the sun returned on August 23, 1902, Scott had arranged in detail the plans for the sledge journeys—the clothes to be worn, the food to be taken,

the weight of stores and equipment for each sledge and whether the hauling was to be done by men or dogs.

You must remember that Scott was the first man to undertake a sledge journey in the Antarctic and that very little was known about the country around.

He decided that a few short journeys should be made in order to find the easiest routes for travel, east, west and south, to test the condition of men and dogs, to obtain practice in packing sledges, managing the tents and to learn as much as possible about the weather and the surfaces on land and over the sea-ice.

Early in September four sledging parties set out. We will go south with Scott, Barne and Shackleton. They took with them two sledges and thirteen dogs. They nearly lost their tent in a blizzard, got frostbitten, and after three days of misery had to return to the ship. Scott said he had learned by this trip never to try to sleep in a tent that had not been properly secured.

After a week Scott set off again, this time with Shackleton and Feather, a seaman who replaced Barne whose frostbites had not healed. Feather was a very strong and intelligent person who had made a careful study of sledging methods. Their object was to reach a headland, which they named the Bluff, about eighty-five miles south of the ship. They intended to lay a depot there, that is to say, to leave a store of food for future use. They used to mark such places by building a cairn—a great heap of stones.

Scott went ahead of the party and learnt much about ice bridges and the deep cracks in the glaciers called crevasses. Feather fell into one of these, but the harness of his sledge was only partly cut through by the sharp ice and with the help of a rope his two companions

pulled him up. After this they travelled roped together. They laid their depot on a hill which they named Mount Discovery. The return journey to the ship was made quite quickly. Scott was proud of this nine-day journey and he now knew the best route to take for the much longer journey to the south, to be attempted in the summer. It was a delight, he said, to get home again and enjoy a hot bath, a fine meal and a comfortable bed. The other two heartily agreed with him.

But that night, after dinner, there was bad news for Scott. Armitage's party, which had been sledging along the coast of South Victoria Land, were forced to return because several of them had become ill with scurvy. This terrible sickness is caused by lack of fresh food, especially of fruit and vegetables, and, unless it is taken in time, death results. To prevent the disease from spreading, the men's diet had to be improved, so a large party armed with long knives was sent north to catch seals. They came back with more than a thousand pounds of seal meat which provided good fresh meat for some time to come. More bottled fruits were allowed each man. One of the officers grew a fine crop of mustard and cress and the fresh green seedlings were much enjoyed. As a further preventive measure, the whole of the ship was thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Dr. Koettlitz and Dr. Wilson took great care of the sick men and all recovered, most of them very quickly.

Scott chose Wilson and Shackleton as his companions for the summer sledging journey to the south. Two supporting parties carried extra food for them and were to lay depots at suitable places. They started on October 30. Three days later Scott's party left the

hut with sledges and nineteen dogs carrying food for nine weeks. The dogs went at full speed and soon caught up with the supporting parties. Each party then proceeded at its own pace. They were slowed down by bad weather, but all met in very good spirits at latitude 79°, the farthest point south that had ever been reached. By October 15 both supporting parties turned back and left Scott, Wilson and Shackleton to go on their lonely way. They started off gaily but owing to the bad surface and the half-hearted work of the dogs, they only did about three miles, and the next day the dogs came to a standstill. Their loads were too heavy. In the end Scott had to divide the loads, take half forward and return for the other half. This trebled the distance travelled. For thirty terrible days they advanced in this way, the three men pulling with the dogs. All of them, but especially Scott, hated to have to force the tired and sick animals. Some of them died by the way and their flesh was fed to the others.

All this time they had been carefully mapping their positions, taking the temperature of air and snow, examining the ice crust formations, noting landmarks—great ice valleys and cliffs—all in the interest of map-making and for the benefit of future explorers. Wilson made drawings of the coast. On their right were the wonderful chains of mountains of Victoria Land, but south and west was the great ice-field of the Barrier. The only living creatures to be seen were the three weary men and their wearier dogs.

They were always hungry, for they had to keep a reserve of food in case they should be delayed by a blizzard or fog. It was very necessary but rather difficult to share out their food exactly, so they played the game of

"shut-eye". The food having been carefully divided was arranged in three heaps. One man turned away with eyes tightly shut and one of the others pointed to a pile and asked, "Whose is this?" The man with his eyes shut named the owner of the pile and so on. "This was quite satisfactory for the matter was left entirely to chance."[1]

By December 25, Christmas Day, they were still going steadily south. But they were now pulling the sledges themselves and the few dogs that were left ran along by the sledges. All three men had been looking eagerly forward to the 25th for they had all agreed that it would be sinful to go to bed hungry on Christmas night and they had decided exactly what they would have for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It was a lovely morning and they smiled happily at each other and at the full steaming plates of seal liver cooked in fat. A hot cup of cocoa and a spoonful of jam made a very satisfying meal. On that day they did a splendid march. They camped at 8.30 and had a "Christmas wash and brush up" and sat down to tasty, hot double rations. Shackleton produced a small Christmas pudding which he had hidden in a sock and there was even a little bit of red holly with which to decorate the pudding and make it seem still more like Christmas. Scott smoked two pipefuls of tobacco and they talked of their homes and their friends. It was a day of days, "a red-letter day".

The next day they returned to ordinary diet. They knew that they could not go much farther as Shackleton showed signs of scurvy and there was very little fresh food to give him.

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery"*

Three hundred miles south of the Barrier edge they discovered a noble mountain and named it Mount Markham after the founder of the expedition.

Shackleton was getting steadily worse and Wilson had a very bad attack of snow blindness. Although he was suffering great pain, he pulled the sledge with his eyes bound up. He suffered more than the others from this illness because he often took off his protecting glasses, "goggles", in order to draw and paint his lovely sketches. On December 30 he was better and again took up his duty as cook. He produced much more tasty dishes than the other two. On that day they reached latitude 82.16°. Scott and Wilson went on skis on the following day to a point a little farther south and Scott was able to add to his map a chain of mountains in about latitude 83°. He named the farthest cape he could see Cape Wilson and the farthest inlet Shackleton Inlet.

They were now about 500 miles from the South Pole and they knew that they had reached the limit of this journey. They had only enough food for about two weeks. Several more dogs had died or been killed to provide food for the rest. It was certainly time to return for it was ninety-eight miles to Depot B. In spite of blizzard and fog they reached their depot on January 13, 1903. They had a good rest and a fine hot meal and started off cheerfully. But on the next day Wilson reported that Shackleton was seriously ill with scurvy. It was necessary to hurry on to the next depot and to travel as lightly as possible. The dog food was left behind and the two last dogs were killed. It made them all, particularly Scott, very sad to have to do this. Wilson and Shackleton knew how the sight of blood

affected him and they did the dreadful deed. Scott blamed himself for his "cowardice".

Scott, unless he was snow-blind, took the lead and he was wonderful at finding the way in the great, icy desert. Although the compass often behaved very strangely, he hardly ever went more than a mile or two out of the course.

They dared not eat full rations so they were always hungry, but luck was with them and they reached their next depot on January 28. By this time Wilson was also showing signs of scurvy and was becoming very lame, but both he and his sick companion took heart at getting nearer and nearer to the ship.

On February 2 Scott wrote in his diary, "One and all we want rest and peace and all being well to-morrow, thank heaven, we shall get them."[1] And they did.

Two of the officers came out to meet the "terrible ruffians" with their torn clothing, their thin faces, long hair and rough beards. They had a splendid welcome from all their comrades who lined the decks and cheered them on to their "beloved ship". They learnt also that a relief ship, the *Morning*, had arrived and brought them the past year's home news.

For ninety-three days Scott, Wilson and Shackleton had travelled over that great snow-field and had slept each night under the canvas of a tent; they had covered 960 miles.

That night Scott wrote, "In the comfort of our bunks . . . we sank into the dreamless sleep of exhaustion."[1]

While Scott had been away his officers and men had

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery"*.

faithfully carried out the journeys he had planned, and had taken numerous shorter sledge trips to increase their knowledge of the surrounding coasts and islands.

On November 2 Royds had paid a second visit to Cape Crozier and discovered that from a headland a very extended view of the Ross Sea could be obtained and the movements of the pack ice recorded. They also came upon the nesting place of the small Adelie penguins and collected hundreds of eggs which provided a pleasant change of food for their party and for their companions on the ship. They found one real treasure, an Emperor's egg, and handed it over to Wilson.

On December 2 a party under Armitage had left to try to climb the great glacier on the mainland by way of New Harbour in McMurdo Sound. They reached a plateau from which they looked down on to the glacier —afterwards named Ferrar Glacier. Wearing steel-spiked boots over their fur boots and using ice axes they descended a long slope and climbed up the other side to a height of 9,000 feet. They were the first men to see the wondrous sight of the melting glaciers, forming lakes and great streams which poured tons of water every minute into the sea.

They reached sea level again by January 10, caught a large number of seals and returned to the ship. They had made records of great value, taken a fine set of photographs and prepared the way for Scott's western journey of the following summer.

Scott was well pleased with the experience he, his officers and men had gained and was anxious to continue his explorations. The arrival of the *Morning* fitted in well with his plans and enabled him to arrange for a second winter in the Antarctic.

## Chapter XI

## 1903 TO 1904

THE relief ship, *Morning*, under Captain Colbeck had been sent to the Antarctic to give and get news and to take further stores and equipment for Scott, should he decide to stay longer in the Antarctic. It was a small whaling boat and had had an adventurous journey, but all difficulties had been overcome by the skill of its captain.

He had landed at Cape Adare and Cape Crozier and had found the tin containers left in these two places by Scott. Instructions had been followed and Colbeck had anchored on January 23 a few miles from Hut Point.

On the next day a party from the *Discovery* walked across the ice to the *Morning*. Joyful greetings were exchanged and the mail collected. The men hurried back to their ship to deliver the precious letters. You can imagine the lively conversations they had that day at meals and how delighted they all were that there was nothing but good news for them.

After about a week the *Morning* was able to move nearer to the *Discovery* and men went to and fro whenever they were free. Many lasting friendships were formed.

Scott, Wilson and Shackleton were the last to read their letters and they also found that all was well at home.

All Scott's officers wished to remain with him in the

Antarctic but Shackleton was still ill and it was thought that he should return. Sub-Lieut. Muloch of the *Morning* was very anxious to join the expedition and Colbeck offered to exchange him for Shackleton.

A quantity of food, fuel and other necessaries were transferred from the *Morning* to the *Discovery*, but Scott decided that it would be better for various reasons to decrease the number of seamen. He explained things to them and asked for a list of those who would like to go home. The list given to him contained eight names; this was the exact number and they were the very men that Scott would have chosen.

On March 1 Captain Colbeck gave a farewell dinner-party to the officers and men of the *Discovery*. After a splendid meal they had music and singing in which hosts and guests joined. In fact, they spent a "right merry night".

The next morning the small group of explorers cheered the ship on its way and returned to the *Discovery* feeling rather sad and lonely. The ship had taken with it dozens of letters and messages to the home folk. Among them went one from Scott to Mrs. Wilson to comfort her in her disappointment at finding that her husband was not on the *Morning*. Scott wrote, "We have had some trying times, and if such come my way again, I hope I may have such a man as your husband by me,"[1] and he added that he was sure that after another winter Wilson would be in still better health. It was such kindly thought for others and the giving of honour and praise where it was due that helped to make Scott such a splendid leader and one for whom men were willing to lay down their lives.

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

The winter of 1903 was colder and windier than that of 1902. In spite of the fact that they were eight people short, the work went on even more satisfactorily than before. The men left were the pick of the seamen and they had learnt much from their past experiences. There was no scurvy to dishearten them, for they had quantities of seal, skua and the twenty live sheep brought by the *Morning*.

Scott was making plans for the western sledging journey which he was to lead in the summer. This needed special care and thought, for he had only three months in which to complete it, as time had to be left for the freeing of the ship from the ice—a difficult and dangerous business.

Wilson was busy with his sketches in pen, pencil and colour and with the arrangement of his zoological specimens.

The scientists had much material to work on—rock specimens, ice formations, small sea creatures and plants—and there were always the magnetic and meteorological observations to be made; some of these had to be taken every two hours and that meant a trip to the hut, however dark it might be and however bad the weather.

The seamen had routine work and more mending than ever before. The sledges needed refitting and, as for their clothes, they looked extremely funny, for they were mended with bits of cloth or other material of different colours and shapes. The best of them were kept for the sledging expeditions.

This year there were to be three sledging parties: Royds and Wilson were to explore in the neighbourhood of Cape Crozier; Ferrar was to explore further

the Ferrar Glacier; Scott's party were to cross the western mountains and proceed as far west as time would allow.

After a false start caused by the failure of the sledges, Ferrar and Scott's party left together on October 26, 1903. They took a carpenter with them, and he soon had to start mending one of the sledges. However, Scott said that he would rather they all carried their loads on their backs than return again to the ship. He found a new and easier path to the glacier and got to the top of it much more quickly than Armitage had done the previous year. They were 8,900 feet up when Ferrar left them. Scott went west with two sledges and five of the men. Three of them, however, were not strong enough for such hard work in icy weather and Scott sent them back. He continued the journey with one sledge and the two huge strong seamen, Lashly and Evans, to support him. They had already learnt several new lessons on this climb up the glacier. One day they left their clothes to dry outside their tent in the sun; a wind sprang up and in a moment their things were flying in all directions. They just saved their sleeping-bag from blowing into a deep crevasse. Without it they would have frozen.

From November 22–30 they pushed on with the icy wind blowing straight into their faces, due west until they reached a spot 300 miles from their ship. Their faces and fingers were frostbitten and to handle the ropes and put up or take down their tent caused them great pain. They had to return, for their stock of food was hardly enough to keep them going till they reached their next depot.

They struggled back with the wind helping them,

but the light was so bad that for safety's sake they had to go slowly or camp for a time. Outside the tent there was darkness and gloom, but inside there was a scene of cheerfulness and activity. Evans was always ready to laugh and Lashly sang to himself cheerfully as he worked. They slept in one sleeping-bag and had long talks together, especially on naval matters, and Scott said, "We are pretty sure that we could run the Navy better than the Admiralty!"[1] He got to know a great deal about the life of seamen on board ship.

On December 14 the light was particularly bad and though none of them was ill, they were all very hungry. Their tobacco was finished and Scott and Evans felt this more than the lack of food. They were making their way carefully among ridges and crevasses. Scott was in front and had no idea where they were. Then, suddenly, they found themselves on a slope. His two comrades tried to hold the sledge back, but Lashly slipped and all three men, and the sledge, seemed to take a great leap and then slid quickly down to the bottom of the 300 foot slope. They were feeling themselves to see if anything was broken, when the sky cleared as if by magic and they saw the peak of Mount Erebus, and knew that they were only about six miles from their depot and a fresh supply of food. They stopped and had a good hot lunch with plenty of steaming cocoa and went on joyfully. But the Antarctic has cruel surprises waiting for those who dare her. They were all three harnessed to the sledge and pulling strongly when it began to slip. Scott ordered Lashly to pull wide to steady the sledge and this order saved the lives of all three of them, for Scott and Evans "stepped

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery"*

on nothing and disappeared". Lashly sprang back and held on to the sledge. Scott was hanging in his harness about twelve feet down a deep crevasse with Evans just above him "quite all right". Scott swung himself on to an ice shaft or rod between two clefts of the crevasse and managed to get hold of Evans's feet and guide them to the shaft. There they were with the slippery blue ice walls all around them. Lashly had enough to do to hold on to the sledge and support the weight of the two men. Scott managed to climb up the trace joining him to the sledge and with Lashly's help hauled up Evans, whose only remark was, "Well, I'm blowed".[1]

In about half an hour of careful pulling they reached their camp. Lashly sang as usual, and Evans and Scott talked merrily. "My word, but it was a close call," said Evans.[1] Each had faced the danger with calmness and courage, each had thought of his comrades and not of himself and they remained good comrades for life.

They reached the ship on Christmas Eve, 1903. They had covered 1,098 miles, an average of about 15 miles a day with a total climb of 19,800 feet. This was indeed a record for "such a country and such a climate".[1]

The *Discovery* was still firmly embedded in the ice and many attempts were made to free her by digging her out. They even tried to explode a passage for her, but without success. It seemed that they must wait for the ice to break away.

Scott decided that he and Wilson deserved a treat. On January 3 they started on "a real picnic". They went north, Scott to watch the ice edge and Wilson to

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery".*

study animal life in the district. They marched slowly and camped when they felt inclined, and ate the nice food they had brought with them—fried penguins-liver and seal-kidney, "eaten straight out of the pan. Oh, very good indeed."[1] The next day they camped on a small bay near Cape Royds. From their tent there was

Penguins near Mount Erebus

a lovely view of the open sea, as blue as blue against the pure white of the pack ice. Erebus was on their right and on their left the great ice plain stretched to the distant western mountains. Near them was a penguin rookery with thousands of birds and tiny brown chicks. They were most interesting and amusing to watch. The

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery"*

two men walked among them and this made the birds quite angry. They used very bad language, we are told.

On January 5, when Scott and Wilson were discussing their plans for the day, they suddenly saw two ships framed in the doorway of their tent. They were anchored close to the shore. They were the two relief ships, the *Morning* and the *Terra Nova*. The government wanted to make quite sure that the expedition was brought safely home.

A boat was sent from the *Morning* and the two men were soon aboard. Captain Colbeck told Scott that the Admiralty wished the expedition to return as soon as possible on the *Discovery*, but if she were ice-bound, she must be left and they must travel back on the *Morning*.

The members of the expedition loved their ship and could not bear to leave her. For a month and a half they made every effort to free her, but without success. Then Nature took a hand in the business; masses of ice broke away, leaving lanes for the ships to sail along.

"On February 16, 1904 the *Discovery* came to her own again—the right to ride the high seas."[1]

After a time the ships separated and all met with storms and difficulties in these unquiet seas, but they arrived safely at the Auckland Islands with their lovely green shores and their still waters. From there the *Discovery* went on to New Zealand where two happy months were spent before she set sail for home. Spithead was reached just before noon on September 10, 1904. So ended the voyage of the *Discovery*.

Scott said that the only cloud that dimmed the joy

[1] *The Voyage of the "Discovery."*

of their homecoming was that they had to say good-bye to each other, but they hoped to meet again. The future was to bring some of them together again in a still greater adventure.

## Chapter XII

## THE YEARS BETWEEN

THE learned societies and all connected with the expedition thought that Scott had done splendidly and he returned to find himself famous. He had done even more than was expected. His sledge journeys had given the world an idea of the interior of the continent, and he had mapped a great stretch of coast. The collection of rocks he had brought back enabled scientists to trace a part of the history of the land. His observations of the life of the sea and in meteorology and magnetism proved of practical as well as of scientific value.

The complete success of the expedition, it was agreed, was chiefly due to Scott's wise, understanding and brave leadership.

Scott was promoted to captain from the day of his arrival home and was given several months leave to write his book, *The Voyage of the "Discovery"*, and to give lectures in various parts of Britain. He disliked lecturing and was quite surprised when people openly expressed their admiration for his speeches.

King Edward VII invited him to the palace at Balmoral. The King was delighted with his lecture, had long talks with him and admired his fine photographs.

Scott wrote telling his mother what an interesting week he had had and added "all kinds of nice things were said to me".[1]

He was invited to dine by many important people, but he did not much enjoy being the guest of honour at official dinners. He preferred to meet interesting and famous people on less formal occasions.

At a dinner-party he met Sir James Barrie who describes, in a short biographical sketch, how extremely delightful he found him. "I was unable to leave him. In vain he led me through the streets of London to my home, for when he said good night, I then escorted him to his, and so it went on I know not for how long through the small hours."[2] That night a lifelong friendship started.

At a lunch party Scott met Miss Kathleen Bruce, artist and sculptor. She had studied in London and Paris. Her originality and independence of mind and the strength and truth of her work attracted him greatly. She felt his charm and his love of adventure. They became friends and were married in September 1908. It turned out a splendid partnership. To her he was "a very perfect, gentle knight", and to him she was the spirit of the things he loved, "the open air, the trees, the fields, the seas and the open spaces of life and thought".[3]

They had agreed before marriage that each would help the other but that each must be free. Kathleen Scott always knew that her husband would follow his star and go south. Nor did his marriage make any difference to his tender care for his mother and sisters.

[1] *Captain Scott.*
[2] J. M. Barrie's introduction to *Scott's Last Expedition.*
[3] *Captain Scott.*

He saw to it that they had a comfortable home and put aside for them nearly half his income, this with the entire agreement of his wife.

Scott was at work on his book for about nine months, and had frequent meetings with Wilson in connection with the drawings he was supplying. Scott's publisher, Mr. R. Smith, wrote a charming sketch in an English magazine. He called it "Two Heroes of the Antarctic—the leader of the expedition and his close comrade and almost brother" (Scott and Wilson). He said it was delightful to watch them together. It was suggested that the picture at the front of the book should be of Scott, Wilson and Shackleton of the southern sledge party. But Scott said, "What do you think, Bill? It wasn't more than any other sledging party. No, we won't have it."[1] So the proud place was given to Wilson's lovely sketch of the *Discovery*. The southern party took a more humble place.

After a long sitting over plans for the form of the book, Scott turned to Wilson. "How do you feel? I hardly know where I am." "No more do I!" "Then let's go and have a cup of tea."[1]

After finishing his book in August 1905, Scott had command of various ships and his exceptional powers of leadership were recognized by all with whom he worked. From March 1909 until December of the same year, he was at the Admiralty and the most important part of his work was choosing men for promotion in the Navy. The experience gained was most valuable to him in connection with the choice of men for his second and last expedition.

While he was away he wrote delightful letters to his

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

wife and his mother. He gave his wife "glimpses of his life as a sailor";[1] discussed books and plays; praised her work and said how he loved the little statuette which she had given him; told her of the progress of the motor sledges in which he was so much interested. He never hid from her his desire to return to the Antarctic. He wrote on one occasion, "I know that you wish me to be up and doing, and not only to love you but to conquer the world with you."[1] She understood him well.

The sledges about which he wrote had been designed by himself with the wheels running on movable bands like those used on the modern tank. He had persuaded a rich gentleman to pay for them and they were tried out successfully in the French Alps. He hoped to experiment further with them in the Antarctic.

While he was working at the Admiralty he lived at home with his wife. They were very happy but very busy months. All day he was at his office and he rarely got home till eight o'clock. There were "lots and lots of things to talk about",[1] both before and at dinner. Later on he started working again but this time on plans for the expedition to the south, which he hoped to organize and lead. Kathleen and he sat side by side and he could not bear to part with her for any length of time. Her very presence inspired him; he was to leave her all too soon and every moment was precious.

She helped him in practical ways for she could make clear drawings from his rough sketches. She also designed his sledging flag. Said Scott, "What's the use of marrying a sculptor if she doesn't do such things?"[1]

Although they had very little money they managed

[1] *Captain Scott.*

to give some jolly parties. Mrs. Scott got to know the Wilson family very well. The two wives had much in common. Both were devoted to their husbands and did everything they could to encourage and help them in their new adventure.

On September 13, 1909, the plans for the expedition were published and subscriptions invited. Dr. Wilson was the first to be asked to join the expedition as chief of the scientific staff. He at once accepted.

On September 14, 1909 Scott's son was born and named Peter Markham Scott. He and his wife had been looking forward to this event with pleasure and excitement. I feel sure that they were glad that the baby was a boy, for Scott had always been interested in the upbringing and education of the youth of England and especially in that of boys. He had not long to get to know his little son, for Peter was less than a year old when his father left England never to return. In Stephen Gwynn's *Captain Scott* there is a charming picture of him sitting on the floor with his sturdy, smiling baby on his lap. The baby grew up to be the worthy son of his splendid parents and has won fame as a sailor, adventurer and artist. He was decorated more than once for bravery in the last World War. His interest in bird life has taken him to many far countries and his pictures of birds are very beautiful. In Scott's last letter to his wife he said, "Make the boy interested in natural history if you can . . . keep him in the open air."[2] She was indeed faithful to her trust.

[1] *Captain Scott.*
[2] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

## Chapter XIII

# PREPARATIONS FOR THE JOURNEY SOUTH

SCOTT had to look round for a suitable ship; there was neither money nor time to build a new one and the *Discovery* was being used for other important work. Finally he bought the *Terra Nova*, one of the relief ships in the *Discovery* expedition. She had afterwards been used as a whaler and was terribly dirty and smelly. Lieut. Evans was made responsible for cleaning and refitting her. The cheerful young officer set about his work with a will. She was no beauty but Evans "loved her from the day he saw her".[1]

There was much to be done—quarters to be built for officers, men, dogs and ponies; laboratories for the scientists; hundreds of tools to be obtained for repairing sledges, as well as huts and tents for the shore party. All these things cost much money and Scott had none to waste. However, "Sunny Jim Evans", as Wilson called him, had his methods. Officers and men from the naval ships near came to work on the *Terra Nova* in their free time, and as for stores and equipment, Evans himself said, "they were not paid for, if we could help it".[1] His youth, bright face and merry smile charmed all sorts of people into giving instead of selling.

Indeed, Scott had had many generous offers of sup-

[1] *South with Scott.*

plies from business men and private people. Schoolboys and schoolgirls had attended Scott's and Wilson's lectures, and it was they who presented the expedition with most of the sledges and dogs.

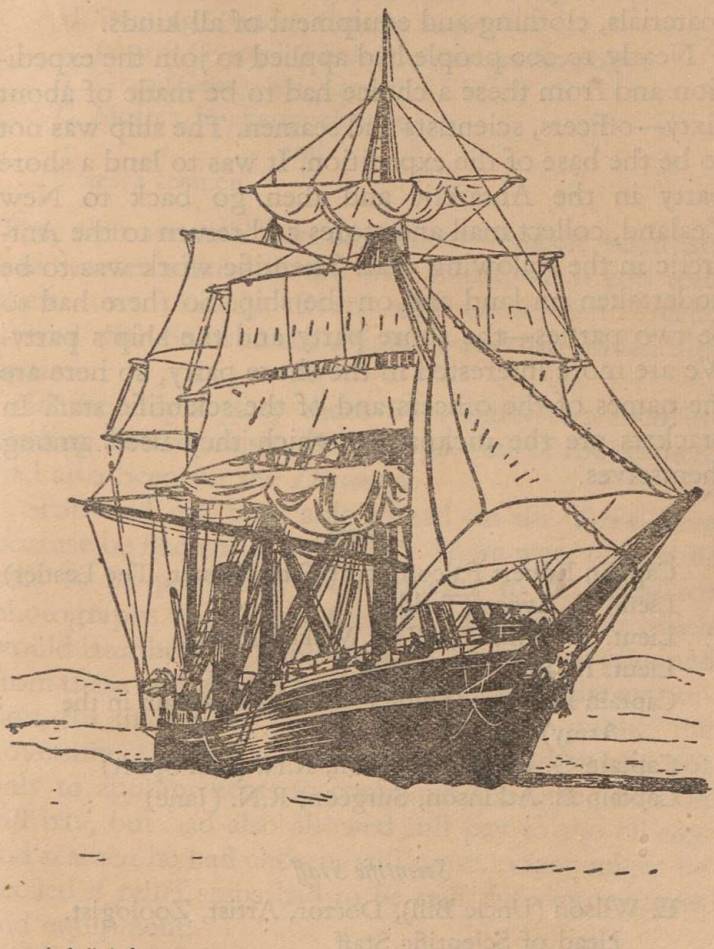
About a month before the ship was to sail several officers joined her, among them Birdie Bowers, so called from his amusing bird-like face with its big curved nose. He was to be the stores officer. The first thing he did was to fall down a trap-door on to some iron bars, a fall of nineteen feet. Evans, hearing of this, said, "What a silly ass," but he changed this to, "What a splendid fellow,"[1] on hearing that Bowers had not hurt himself at all.

On June 1 the ship was ready to sail. She was no longer a dirty old tub but was painted black with a white line all round her and gold badges on her sides and stern. With sails set she was a lovely thing, and sturdy too, for she had been well tried. Scott boarded her and thanked Evans and all on the ship for the work they had done. She left London under the command of Evans.

All this time Scott had much to do, for this was not a government expedition like the last. He was now entirely responsible for the organization and for the monetary affairs of the new expedition. He would have preferred its aims to be purely scientific, but much money had been subscribed by people who were attracted by the idea of the "conquest" of the South Pole, so he had always to bear this in mind.

When he was not away collecting money—a part of his work he did not enjoy—he would be found in his office surrounded by people and packages, examining

[1] *South with Scott.*




The "Terra Nova"

foodstuffs, special stoves which would use little oil, materials, clothing and equipment of all kinds.

Nearly 10,000 people had applied to join the expedition and from these a choice had to be made of about sixty—officers, scientists and seamen. The ship was not to be the base of the expedition. It was to land a shore party in the Antarctic and then go back to New Zealand, collect mail and stores and return to the Antarctic in the following year. Scientific work was to be undertaken on land and on the ship. So there had to be two parties—the shore party and the ship's party. We are more interested in the shore party, so here are the names of the officers and of the scientific staff. In brackets are the nicknames which they used among themselves.

*Officers*

Captain Robert Falcon Scott (The Owner, The Leader)
Lieut. E. Evans (Teddy)
Lieut. V. Campbell (The Wicked Mate)
Lieut. H. Bowers (Birdie)
Captain L. Oates (Soldier—he was a captain in the Army) (Titus)
Captain G. Levick, Surgeon, R.N. (Old Sport)
Captain E. Atkinson, Surgeon, R.N. (Jane)

*Scientific Staff*

E. Wilson (Uncle Bill), Doctor, Artist, Zoologist. Head of Scientific Staff
G. Simpson (Sunny Jim), Meteorologist
T. G. Taylor (Griff), Geologist
E. Nelson (Marie), Biologist
F. Debenham (Deb), Geologist
C. Wright (Silas), Physicist

R. Priestly (Raymond), Geologist
H. Ponting (Ponco), Camera Artist
A. Cherry-Garrard (Cherry), Assistant Zoologist
T. Gran (Gran), Ski Expert
C. Meares, in charge of dogs
and
Twelve seamen.

They were splendid men, all of them—officers, scientists and seamen alike—as you will realize when you read their story. Lashly, Evans and Crean had already served with Scott in the *Discovery* and had joined him again.

In the ship's party there were thirty-two men including two scientists. Williamson, one of the seamen, had also been on the *Discovery*.

Scott had not been able to sail on the *Terra Nova* because he had still much to do. There were numerous bills to be paid, and arrangements to be made for photographs and cinema films of the expedition which would later be shown in England. The money obtained from these would help with the expenses of the expedition, for in spite of the generosity of the public, the government, and the Admiralty, who had agreed not only to appoint Scott to command the expedition on full pay, but had also allowed full pay to the officers and seamen he had chosen, still more money might be needed if relief ships had to be sent with more stores and equipment.

Before he left he made all arrangements for the comfort of his family and confided his little son to the care of his mother, for Kathleen was to accompany him to New Zealand. Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Wilson also went with them on the mail steamer.

## Chapter XIV

## OFF TO NEW ZEALAND

SCOTT wrote to his mother from Cape Town and told her how pleasant the journey had been and how kindly they had been received in Cape Town. Kathleen was popular everywhere and this made Scott very proud of her.

The *Terra Nova* arrived soon after them and Scott found that everything had gone quite smoothly on the voyage. Evans and Wilson reported that officers, scientists and seamen had worked together in the utmost friendliness.

Scott now changed places with Wilson, who went on to Melbourne with the ladies, and Scott travelled on the *Terra Nova*. All were glad to have their leader on board, for it enabled detailed plans to be drawn up, covering the arrival in the Antarctic and the setting up of huts, rules for pitching and striking tents, rations at home and on sledging journeys; in fact, a kind of handbook was produced which could be consulted at any time by members of the expedition. Scott's previous experience was now invaluable. His second-in-command, Lieut. Evans, wrote, "His master-mind foresaw every situation wonderfully as he straightened out plan after plan and organized future procedure".[1]

Scott found time while on board to write a very special letter to his wife "to be opened in England". It

[1] *South with Scott.*

would be many months before she could read it. He told her that although he would not be able to send her letters, he would always be thinking of her and of the happiness she had brought him. He longed for the time when he, she and the boy would all be together again. "There is only one person who ought to bring our boy up," he wrote. "I am sure he is going to be a fine fellow, but I want you to have the making of his mind as much as you have of his strong little body."[1] He speaks of the sun shining on her in the daytime and on him at midnight while sledging. "As I tramp along it will be good to feel the rays and think that similar ones are falling on a small lady, and a still smaller man who is toddling about with her."[1]

On reaching New Zealand he wrote a charmingly descriptive letter to his small niece, Esther, the daughter of his eldest sister. First he says how pleased he is with the letters she has written to him:

You know we are right round on the opposite side of the world. If you could look down through the earth right under your feet with a great big telescope, you would see Auntie Kathleen and me at the other end, but you wouldn't see Peter, would you? because I expect he's crawling about on the floor at Henley. You would see the *Terra Nova* lying in the harbour and not very far away a whole lot of white ponies in charge of two Russians who cannot speak any English at all—but they must be able to talk sense because the ponies and the dogs understand them quite well. The dogs are rather fierce and the people who don't know them have to be careful not to go too close or they would get bitten, but wasn't it funny—there was a very small girl who went up to the fiercest dog of all and put her arm round his

[1] *Captain Scott.*

neck, and the dog didn't mind at all. When you grow older you will understand that there are lots of animals and lots of people who are like that dog.

We are getting ready to sail away and when you are having your Christmas dinner, which will be very soon after you read this, you can imagine the *Terra Nova* all amongst the ice—great big pieces—and the sea will be full of seals and penguins.[1]

The nineteen white ponies and the thirty-four fierce-looking dogs had had a long and exciting journey from Siberia. Meares and Bruce—Mrs. Scott's brother—had chosen them and brought them from Siberia by train and ship. The young Russians who looked after them, Anton and Demetri, had been very helpful and were two useful additions to the shore party.

The New Zealanders were most generous and presented to the expedition money, frozen sheep and bullocks, oil, coal and many other things. They gave the warmest invitations to officers and men. It is good to think that all had such a wonderful time before setting off on their adventures.

They left New Zealand on November 29, 1910. Mrs. Scott and the other two ladies stayed on board till the last possible moment and were taken back by a tug. We can imagine Scott's feelings at the parting with this woman "on whom he had grown to depend with a sweet dependence".[1] Wilson watched his wife waving and brightly smiling. He wrote in his diary, "The sight will be with me till I see her again in this world or the next. I think it will be in this. . . ."[2]

[1] *Captain Scott.*
[2] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

Evans wrote, "Personally I had a heart like lead but, with everyone else on board, bent on doing my duty and following Scott to the end."[1]

Scott's brave words to his mother were, "I shall leave with high hopes. . . . Don't be anxious for me at any time."[2]

## Chapter XV

## A STORMY PASSAGE

THE ship was overloaded and all were praying for fair weather, but they had no luck. On their second day out a storm blew up such as none of them had ever before experienced. Without sails or steam the ship rolled so that it seemed impossible for her to right herself. The deck cargo was all displaced and had to be retied. A pony and a dog were swept into the sea and the men themselves narrowly escaped being washed overboard. There was trouble in the engine-room and the pumps would not work. Officers, scientists and seamen worked up to their waists in coal dust and oil. Things were so bad that there was talk of getting the lifeboats ready. But skill and courage pulled them through. On the third day of December the wind decreased in force and the sea gradually became smoother. The sun came out and the wet clothing was dried. The men could have a wash and change and all were smiling and cheerful. At dinner they ate most

[1] *South with Scott.*
[2] *Captain Scott.*

heartily and all had the feeling that luck was with them.

Bowers remarked cheerfully, "Under its worst conditions this earth is a good place to live in."[1] Of Wilson Scott said, "He was everywhere and enjoyed every minute of it";[2] the same might have been said of Scott himself for he lent a hand everywhere, and had words of praise and encouragement for his hard-pressed helpers. "He's one of the best,"[3] was Birdie's opinion, and all agreed.

Their bad luck followed them into the pack ice for instead of getting through in four days as the *Discovery* had done, they took twenty.

The scientists used every minute to great advantage, either in work connected with their special subjects or in manual labour which they much enjoyed. Ponting was a real artist and knew exactly what effects would make a good picture. Wilson found material for his delicately coloured drawings—the sun or moon shining on the icebergs, or on the calm, clear pools between the floes; the strange and lovely effect of the ship with its ropes and masts covered with a thin, shiny coating of frost, glazed frost as it was called.

Sport was to be had in catching seals and penguins. You will remember how necessary it was to have fresh food if the men were to keep free from scurvy.

Ski-ing practice was often possible on the big floes. Gran, the Norwegian, was a fine teacher, but he could not always prevent his pupils from falling. Some of them said that, for a beginner, being on skis was rather like being on a horse for the first time. The horse did

[1] *Birdie Bowers of the Antartic.*
[2] *Scott's Last Expedition.*
[3] *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic.*

as he liked and so did the skis, turning and twisting at queer angles and in any direction except the right one.

There was certainly a holiday spirit about and Scott seemed as gay as the rest, but in reality the delay to him was heartbreaking. The engines were using up too much coal and a shortage later would be very serious. Also, he was losing the precious summer days.

They kept December 25 as a Christmas holiday. Scott said that the scene was altogether too "Christmassy" for they were still in the pack and it started snowing. Certainly summer in the Antarctic is rather different from summer at home. Still, "a good time was had by all". The food was excellent and the musical evening quite amusing if not very musical.

Scott was happy because "his smiling second-in-command" had handed him a letter from his wife. She had entrusted "Teddy" with letters to be delivered to her husband at stated times.

He wrote many nice things to her in reply. "I miss you at every turn. . . . How I wish I could see you with the little ruffian. . . . I like to think of him growing up with a determination to master things, and opportunities to acquire knowledge in a more methodical way than his father did."[1] Scott felt that hard work was the best cure for all ills of the body or the spirit.

[1] *Captain Scott* (slightly simplified).

## Chapter XVI

## THE LANDING

On December 30 they were out of the pack and in the open sea, and on the last day of 1910 land was sighted. They steamed slowly in the direction of Cape Crozier where Scott would have liked to winter, but the swell was too strong and it was quite impossible to land. They sailed round Cape Bird into the McMurdo Sound, landed on Ross Island and decided to winter at a little cape which Scott named Cape Evans "in honour of our excellent second-in-command". It was about twenty miles from Hut Point of the *Discovery* days. It faced north-west and was sheltered by a number of small hills behind. All the day they had lovely weather. Ponting was delighted with the view and it was not long before he was at work with his camera. Campbell at once started unloading. The motor sledges were in quite good condition in spite of the waves that had washed over them in the great storm. The ponies were "persuaded" or lifted on to the shore by the big strong seamen or bluejackets as they are often called. Two of the parties slept in tents on shore—Oates and Anton to look after the ponies and dogs, and the building party who were to put up the huts.

The next day Scott was watching the men at work when his attention was drawn to some killer whales which were swimming excitedly around a floe on which two of the dogs were tied. Ponting was trying to take

a picture of them, but the whales got under the floe on which he was standing, raised their heads and split the ice into pieces. He held on to his camera and managed to jump from one bit of ice to another and reached land safely. For some reason the whales passed on without seizing the dogs and the terrified animals were quickly saved. Ponting and the two dogs would have made a very small meal for the whales. One had been caught by a whaler and the remains of thirteen porpoises and fourteen seals were found in its stomach.

It was lucky for the expedition that Ponting was saved, for he was a very fine fellow as well as a fine photographer.

The motors, the sledges drawn by dogs or ponies, were all used by the members of the expedition to get stores to the huts. You can imagine how carefully the scientists arranged their delicate apparatus and watched over it till it was safely housed in the huts.

Scott was everywhere, now with the men, now with the ponies and now with the dogs. He even learnt the orders for right, left, keep straight on, etc., in Russian, for the dogs refused to learn English and if they became confused they would try to run away, and it was very difficult to get them in order again.

A few days after landing they had a piece of bad luck. The newest of the three motor sledges was being moved on to some firmer ice, when it broke away and sank in very deep water. Scott was disappointed, as he felt that the accident would not have happened had more care been taken.

On January 17, just thirteen days after landing, the shore party moved into the hut. The stables, the ice house for the safe keeping of food, the magnetic huts

and other buildings were also nearly finished.

Can you imagine the scene on a cold but sunny day? In the background the ice cliffs, Castle Rock and the two smoking mountains; in the foreground the long stretch of black sand on which the camp was built with the fine roomy hut facing "the most lovely view in the world"; the small huts, the tents, the ponies, the stables, the dogs in their kennels dotted over the surrounding slopes. It was like a small village and a very lively one, for all the shore party and many of the officers and seamen from the *Terra Nova* were happily and busily at work.

The hut was indeed a palace of a hut. Nothing like it had ever been constructed in these parts. It was 50 feet long, 9 feet high and 25 feet wide. Big cases piled one upon the other made a wall between the officers' and the seamen's quarters. There was a large kitchen with a fine stove ruled over by Clissold, the very clever cook of the expedition.

In the middle of the officers' room was a long table and round it were the sleeping bunks, the laboratories and Ponting's dark room where he developed his photographs. Scott, Wilson and Evans had separate rooms and the rest shared.

The seamen had plenty of space and comfortable hammocks to sleep in. It was convenient for the officers to have their meals at different times, but the food for all was the same.

Life on shore was good, and Scott wrote in his diary, "We have made ourselves a truly seductive (attractive) home within the walls of which peace, quiet and comfort reign supreme."[1]

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

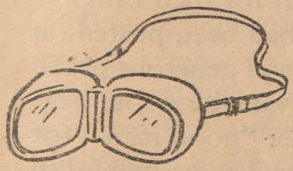
## Chapter XVII

# AUTUMN SLEDGING

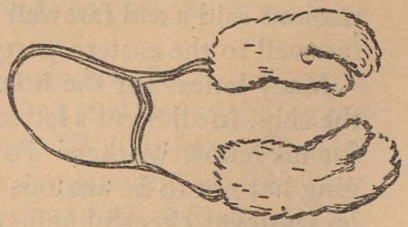
PREPARATIONS were being made for the autumn sledging trips. Meares and Demetri, helped by Clissold, looked after and exercised the dogs. Oates spent much time with his beloved ponies and Anton was his faithful assistant. Scott said of the two Russian boys, "They are both most anxious to help on all occasions; they are excellent boys."[1] Scott and Bowers examined stores and clothing. Felt and fur boots, summer and winter wind clothes seemed of very fine quality. All the articles

Boots

Sleeping-bag



Goggles



Fur gloves

Some of the stores

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

of food were entirely satisfactory and worth all the trouble that had been taken in choosing them.

There were to be three autumn sledging parties: the eastern party, under Campbell, hoped to land on the Bay of Whales and explore King Edward VII Land; the western (geological) party, under Griffith Taylor, were to explore the Koettlitz and Ferrar Glaciers in South Victoria Land; the southern party, under Scott, were to lay depots as far south as possible on the route to be followed by the Polar party in the summer. It was hoped to reach latitude 80°.

Scott had prepared the plans for all these journeys with a skill and thoroughness that had been impossible in the previous expedition.

The southern and eastern parties started off on January 24. Scott and Evans, on the *Terra Nova*, took most of their stores and equipment to Glacier Point; the rest of the party led the ponies and dogs by the southern road to a spot a few miles away from Glacier Point. This was called Camp 1.

The *Terra Nova* was soon to leave for New Zealand. Scott was most grateful to her captain and crew for the help they had given to the expedition. He and his companions said a sad farewell to all of them and a cheery farewell to the eastern party and left for their camp.

Many letters for the home folk had been posted on the ship. In all Scott's letters there was generous praise for his fellow workers. To Mrs. Evans he wrote begging her not to be anxious about her "good man", for he was ever cheerful and content, and most helpful in any difficulty. To his sister he wrote that all was going well and that he could not speak too highly of his companions, especially of Wilson. "He is the most valuable

and valued of all, for by force of character he has great authority (power) over all and yet keeps their warm affection."[1] He sent loving messages to the "dear small girls" and hoped that they would see the cinematograph pictures of the expedition which the Gaumont Company were to show.

To his wife he wrote, "I love you as much as ever. . . . I have with me the little red case with your picture in front and the boy at the back."[1]

Wilson also wrote to Kathleen Scott, ending the letter with, "There is nothing I would not do for your husband, he is just splendid."[1]

## Chapter XVIII

## DEPOT LAYING TO THE SOUTH AND RETURN TO CAPE EVANS

SCOTT had left Cape Evans on January 24 and by January 26 all the stores and equipment had been taken from the ship to Camp 1, and the party were ready to start.

There were twelve men including Scott, with eight ponies, twenty-six dogs and ten sledges—eight for the ponies and two for the dogs. Without great difficulty they reached Safety Camp on January 30. This was their home depot and large quantities of food and fodder were to be kept there.

The routine of the march was much the same every

[1] *Captain Scott.*

day, or rather night. The air was always warmer during the daytime, so, for the sake of the ponies, it was better to travel during the night and rest during the day. At about midnight Scott would shout to the Soldier (Oates), "How are you?" This was the sign for all to get to work. Ponies and dogs were harnessed, tents packed up and the sledges loaded and a cairn built to show the position of the camp. Birdie, on his eager but heavy pony, often started off first, the others soon followed and the steady march went on till about 3 a.m. when they stopped for lunch and rested the ponies. They generally made their final camp at about 8 a.m., and most of them were in their sleeping bags about an hour and a half later, but not Scott, you may be sure. He felt it his duty to write up his diary every day. He thought always of future explorers and entered everything that might be of use to them.

He often wrote with affection and admiration of his men. "Bowers is wonderful. I have never seen anyone so unaffected by the cold." "Cherry can only see through glasses, but manages to do more than his share of the work."[1] His glasses would get misty and then freeze over. "Gran is doing very well. He has a lazy pony and a good deal of work to get him along, but does it very cheerfully." "My companions to-day were excellent; Wilson and Cherry if anything the most intelligently and readily helpful."[1]

He knew, too, all the tricks of the ponies as Wilson and Meares did of the dogs. Of Wilson's eleven the most interesting was the leader named Stareek, the Russian for "Old Man". He was like a funny old man and "quite the nicest, quietest, cleverest old dog gentle-

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

man I have ever come across".[1] Wilson was Uncle Bill, or Bill to all his staff, and I think he was uncle to his dogs, too. He loved them all and they got to know him well.

Camp 6, or Corner Camp, was reached on February 4. A blizzard started and the party were delayed for three days. It was warm and comfortable in the well pitched tents, but "it was not fun to be out of the tent".[2] Oates had to feed his ponies at regular hours and Meares and Wilson fed the dogs. The others went out only if occasion made it necessary. It was dull for all except the dogs which ate well and slept comfortably and enjoyed the long rest.

The bad weather and the deep snow drifts exhausted some of the ponies and three were sent back with Lieut. Evans and two of the seamen. Unfortunately two of the ponies died on their way home.

From Cape 11, Bluff Depot, it was a hard march for the weather was bad and the thick snowy surface especially trying for the ponies. The weakest of them, poor Weary Willie, had a very bad time. He slipped and fell in the snow and was attacked and bitten by some of the dogs. They were beaten off, but Weary Willie was rather badly hurt and some time was lost while he was being doctored by Oates.

On February 17 they reached latitude 79.29° and could go no farther. This was their fifteenth camp and their fourth and last depot. They called it One Ton Depot for they left about a ton of food and stores there. Had it not been for the blizzard, the last depot

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*
[2] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

would have been about thirty miles nearer to the Pole and the Polar party might have been saved.

Scott arranged that he with Wilson, Meares and Cherry would start off with the dog teams for Safety Camp, leaving the rest to finish arranging the stores at One Ton Depot and follow at their own pace.

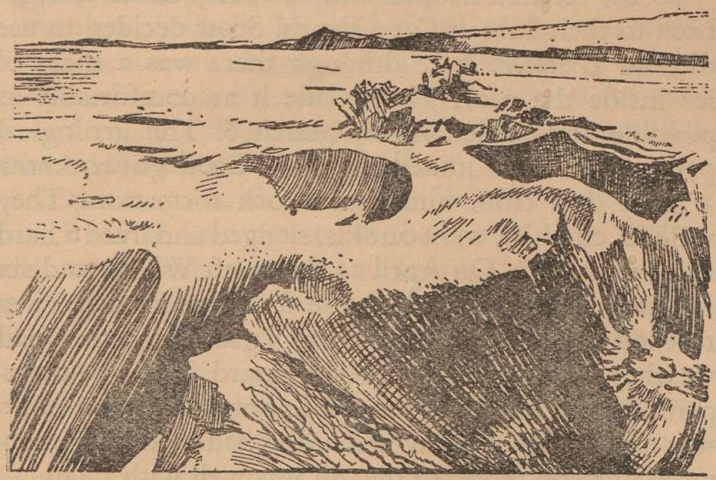
The dogs pulled steadily and fast and by February 21 the party made a new camp about twelve miles from Safety Camp. They had a fearful experience on the next day. The light was poor and the men could not see the surface very well. Scott and Wilson were running alongside the leading sledge. Suddenly their dogs sank two by two into a crevasse, but Osman, the leader, somehow managed to keep his footing and prevent the sledge from disappearing. The two men quickly dragged the sledge back and freed Osman, who was nearly choked by the harness which was twisted round his neck. All four men then hauled up eleven of the thirteen dogs; the other two had slipped from their harness and lay curled up on a ledge about sixty-five feet below. Scott would not leave them although Wilson told him that if someone must make this dangerous descent, better anyone rather than the leader of the expedition. But Scott insisted on going himself and he was lowered down by the Alpine rope. The two dogs were hauled up, but their rescuer had to wait some time for a fight broke out among the dogs and they had to be separated. Scott wanted to explore a little from his ledge, but the others just pulled him up. He said, "I had a good chance of examining the crack!"[1] Cherry said, "It is a great wonder the whole sledge did not drop through: the inside was like the cliff of

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition*

Dover."[1] Scott had the last word in his diary—"All's well that ends well."

On February 22 they reached Safety Camp and found Evans and his party quite well, but unfortunately with only one pony instead of three. Scott had bad news here. He heard that the Norwegian explorer, Amundsen, was encamped on the Bay of Whales and meant to make a dash for the Pole as soon as the winter was over. He had about 120 dogs and could start early, whereas Scott was relying mostly on his ponies and they could not stand the intense cold of the early spring. He therefore decided to make no change in his plans, but he, as well as the rest, felt rather discouraged.

On February 28 Bowers and his party, with five ponies, also reached Safety Camp. One of these ponies died in the night. On March 1 Bowers, Cherry and



Ridges in sea ice

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

Crean, with four ponies, were sent to try to cross the sea ice to Hut Point. They found great cracks in the ice but managed to get to a seemingly safe floe near the Barrier, and there they passed the night. To their dismay, in the morning they found that the ice had broken up all round them and that one pony had disappeared. Killer whales were raising their heads on all sides of them and their position was desperate. Crean somehow succeeded in jumping the floes and in climbing the steep Barrier cliff. He reported the position to Scott, who started off with Oates, Gran and Crean to rescue them. The men, sledges, equipment and one pony were saved. Scott had to forbid Bowers to make further efforts to rescue the two ponies and they were shot to save them from the death of being torn to pieces by the killers.

So the ice had broken and the party could not get back to their base at Cape Evans. Scott decided to use the old *Discovery* hut, although there was a sheet of ice inside the roof. They made it as comfortable as possible and settled in on March 6. The geological party under Griff joined them and Scott got to know a great deal from him about rock formation. They walked, climbed, went on skis, sledged and lived a hard and healthy life. On April 11 Scott left Wilson and six others at Hut Point and made for Cape Evans. They reached the hut safely on April 13 after meeting bad weather—icy winds and a real blizzard. The nine occupants of the hut gave them a fine welcome and news was exchanged. A pony and a dog had died but otherwise Simpson reported that all was well with them.

To Scott and his party the comfort of the hut seemed wonderful after their hard journey. They had their first

hot bath for months, clean clothes and a good, well-served meal.

The leader had to go round the camp to see all the improvements that had been made during his absence. Simpson took him to his laboratory, "his corner", to show him how carefully all the weather records had been kept. Ponco seized him to show his beautifully arranged apparatus, his dark room and the many pictures he had taken. Scott praised the artistry of his snow pictures and his cinematograph scenes. He next visited the neatly arranged laboratory of Nelson, the biologist. Day was working with him and he was skilled in the handling of delicate instruments as he was in the management of his motors and in his arrangements for lighting, warming and airing the hut. Then it was Clissold's turn. Before becoming a cook, he had taken a practical course in engineering and was "quite a mechanical genius". He had fitted to his stove an electric device which rang a bell or showed a red light when the bread in his oven was ready to be taken out. He had made a dog-sledge out of packing cases and other odds and ends. He did all the "dirty" work for the scientists and with all this was "a perfect cook who could make seal meat taste like the finest beef".[1] Lastly, Scott went to the stables and found that Lashly and Anton had made them very comfortable for the ponies. Clissold and Demetri had improved the quarters for the dogs.

The leader felt that things were indeed well on the home front.

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

## Chapter XIX

## ANTARCTIC WINTER, 1911

SCOTT and a small party sledged to Hut Point on April 17, and on April 22 he returned with Wilson and his companions. Meares was left in charge at Hut Point with Demetri to look after the dogs and the two ponies. Nelson, Day and Forde stayed in order to gain some experience of less comfortable quarters than the hut at Cape Evans. With the exception of these men and Campbell's party, all the members of the expedition were now settled at the home base at Cape Evans.

They watched the sun disappear on April 23. There was a beautiful sunset followed by a long twilight, "the long mild twilight when morning and evening sit together hand in hand beneath the starless sky".[1]

Some took photographs, painted or sketched while the rest enjoyed the lovely play of lights and shadows, "lights that never were, on sea or land".

The body of men who were to pass the long, dark winter together were exceptionally gifted, of noble character and of unbeatable courage. Every day they got to know, like and respect each other more and more.

Each of the officers and scientists worked during the winter at his own subject under the general guidance of Scott and Wilson with the single aim of adding to the world's stock of knowledge. These two worked together as one man. Scott wrote after the depot journey,

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

"Wilson stands very high in the scale of human beings —how high I scarcely knew till the experience of the past few months. . . . He has been consulted in almost every effort which has been made towards the solution of the theoretical or practical problems of our Polar world."[1]

Routine and special work took up from seven to eight hours of the day and it was also important that the seven to eight free hours should be well spent. Scott often made his rounds watching everyone at work and making useful suggestions of his own. No one, he said, was ever idle. All were either working, taking necessary exercise or playing games, reading or writing.

Very interesting lectures were given three times weekly. Each of the officers and scientists was an expert in one or more subjects and all could express themselves clearly and often amusingly. Scott gave a course of lectures on his plans for the journey to the Pole and on the nature of the Great Ice Barrier. Every lecture was followed by discussion and very searching and intelligent questions were asked and answered. Among the lighter subjects, Ponting's choice was much approved, because his lectures were illustrated by the most lovely coloured pictures. His pictures of Japan had been delicately tinted by a Japanese artist, and you can imagine how pleasing it was for these men, living in a setting of ice and snow, to see the feast of the flowering cherry, the gardens with their tiny trees, waterfalls and streams. Wilson charmed them with his talks on birds and on sketching. Simpson talked of the rainbow and of those beautiful streams or curtains of

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

light called the Aurora, seen only in the extreme northern and southern skies. Of this lecture Scott said that he had learnt more in an hour than he had learnt previously from many experts.

Cherry became the editor of the *South Polar Times*. The articles and illustrations were even better than those of the *Discovery* days. Officers, Ubdugs (can you guess why they were called by such a funny name?) and seamen often consulted the books in the hut library when preparing their articles and lectures. The first volume of the magazine looked very smart in a cover of wood and sealskin made by Day.

Another duty which each took in turn was that of night-watchman. He had to keep up the cook's fire; to visit the ponies and dogs; take scientific records; go outside to observe the Aurora and in general see that all was well in the camp. A pleasant part of his duty was that at some time during the night he was allowed to have a nice meal of cocoa and sardines with bread and butter. Scott took the first turn and said that the long night hours gave him time to finish up a number of small tasks.

On May 13 Meares brought his party and the ponies and dogs safely across the ice from Hut Point. They were all very well and in good spirits.

June 6 was Scott's birthday. Clissold made him a wonderful cake decorated with sugar, chocolate and dried fruits. At dinner they ate roast mutton with red currant jelly, fruit and sweets. Speeches were made and many nice things said about their leader. Scott said of them, "They are boys all of them, but such excellent good-natured ones."[1] He went to sleep that night

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

laughing because he had heard Nelson offer Taylor a pair of socks to teach him some geology.

Mid-winter day was kept as Christmas Day. Cherry, who was always giving gifts, produced a big fruit cake from a famous shop in London. Bowers had made a fine Christmas tree from coloured paper and string and had lighted it with coloured candles. Everyone drank in sparkling wine to the expedition and to their leader.

The Soldier danced with Anton and Lieut. Evans with the cook and all took a turn. They were hot and excited and went outside to look at the view. The sky on this night of nights showed great bows of brilliance, long streamers and moving curtains of light. It was delightful.

Wilson was very anxious to see the Emperor penguin rookery at Cape Crozier in winter conditions. Scott, though unwilling to agree at first, eventually withdrew his objections. Never up to this time had a winter journey been undertaken in the Antartic and you can imagine how dangerous it was. The aims were to obtain exact knowledge of winter conditions on the Barrier; to try out different clothing and diets as well as to visit the breeding place of the Emperor penguins and observe their nesting habits.

Wilson was the leader of the party and Scott very generously gave him as companions Cherry and Bowers. Wilson wrote in his diary, "Scott has allowed me the two best sledging members and I MUST bring them back safely".[1] So, on June 27, the three friends set off cheerfully on what Cherry afterwards called "The Worst Journey in the World".

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

"All good luck go with them," was Scott's anxious thought.

The three men were much missed and life went quietly on in the hut. On July 4 Atkinson was lost for some time in a blizzard and was found after several hours suffering from very bad frostbite. In such weather Scott's thoughts turned to Wilson, Cherry and Birdie. How was it with them?

On Tuesday evening, August 2, three weary and weatherworn men returned from their terrible journey. They looked half-dead and had to be almost cut out of their clothes which were frozen upon them. After a good long sleep Wilson told Scott their story. It was a wonderful tale but can only be given very shortly here. They had journeyed in almost complete darkness. The weather was so bad that they had hardly ever seen the moon. The cold got worse and worse until it reached -77°. Not only their teeth chattered but also the whole of their bodies. They had built themselves a hut 800 feet above the sea at Cape Crozier. They roped themselves together and climbed down the cliff, killed three penguins and got six eggs. In the hut they had built, they spent the two days and nights of a blizzard with the wind at a speed of eighty-four miles an hour. They had no food for forty-eight hours. Their tent blew away, but luckily was found by Bowers, who then tied it round him. If the tent blew away again, he would go with it. The whole journey had been like a bad dream, but all ended happily. After a few days the men seemed to be none the worse for their bitter experience.

The three were better friends than ever. Cherry said long afterwards, "Courage, unselfishness and faith will

carry you far".[1] It carried these men through unspeakable hardships.

## Chapter XX

## THE RETURN OF THE SUN

ROUTINE life was resumed after the return of the Crozier party. Everyone must have felt, "Well, if they could come safely through such trials, surely we shall succeed, too".

August came and the twilight was a little longer each day. The horses and dogs could go farther afield and had greater freedom of movement. Scott had invented two kinds of snowshoes for the ponies, one for hard ground and one for soft. He allotted the ponies to their masters, who were in future to exercise them so as to get to know their ways.

On August 25 Scott described in his diary the very bad and windy weather they had had for some days and how they found it necessary to wear their wind clothes instead of overcoats and that led him to a very touching and human entry. He said that in general he did not become attached to articles of clothing but that he rather loved his uniform coat which was twenty-three years old and had had many adventures with him and had experienced rain, the spray from the sea, tropic heat and Arctic cold. His staff knew of this weakness and smiled when they entered the "Holy of Holies" and saw that he preferred to have his old coat on his bed rather than a nice warm eiderdown.

[1] Cherry-Garrard's introduction to *Wilson of the Antarctic*.

They did not see the sun until the afternoon of August 26. Scott and Ponting climbed an ice hill to get a better view. They felt very young and sang and cheered the brilliant sunshine which took some of the terrors from even the worst of storms.

Bowers and Cherry were very busy working out the sledging figures, weighing, sorting, and repacking all the clothing, equipment and rations.

Ponting had been giving Scott and other officers lessons in taking photographs. Scott was a little too impatient and expected to get quick results, but after some trials and errors became quite a good photographer.

There were to be two spring journeys. Evans, Gran and Forde were to visit Corner Camp and lay a depot there and Meares, with the dogs, would take as much fodder as he could. They were away six nights, found the camp easily and returned.

Scott, Bowers, Simpson and Seaman Evans went west to take some stores for Griff who was to lead the western party in the summer expedition. They discovered a great deal about the movements of glaciers in the Ferrar Glacier district and passed this knowledge on. They took some valuable photographs showing that they had learned much from Ponting. Scott said that he had never met such a spendid sledger as Bowers and described his hard pull for thirteen days as "a remarkably pleasant and instructive little spring journey",[1] while Bowers called it "a jolly picnic".

The time for the great march to the Pole was coming near and Scott, after discussion with his staff, left detailed instructions in writing and useful advice for the

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

programme of work for the expedition. Every man knew what was expected of him and nothing was left to chance. Plans for those who were going to stay a second winter were included as were instructions for the *Terra Nova* when she arrived.

He wrote home suggesting how any debts due from the expedition should be paid, and of course wrote to his mother, wife and other relations and friends. He hoped to return but fully realized the dangerous task ahead of him.

Scott knew that if Amundsen reached the Pole before him, some might belittle the work of his expedition and he wrote to his wife that she must be prepared for this. "After all it is the work that counts and not the applause (praise) that follows."[1]

The feelings of his two closest companions were much the same. Wilson wrote to his wife, "Whether we reach the Pole or not I really care very little so long as we feel we have done all we could."[2] And Bowers, in a charmingly boyish letter to Scott's wife, wrote, "Whether we succeed or not, we all have confidence in our leader and I am sure he will pull it through if any man will". And a friendly touch—"I hope your little boy is as lively and strong as he appears in the many photographs of him I see round the captain's table."[3]

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*
[2] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*
[3] *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic.*

## Chapter XXI

# JOURNEY TO THE POLE: THE GREAT ICE BARRIER

It was 900 miles to the Pole—over the Great Ice Barrier, the Beardmore Glacier and the icy desert of the Polar Plateau. It was 150 miles to One Ton Depot, the last of those laid the previous spring. Scott had decided that eventually the Polar party would consist of four men only, but supporting parties would accompany them to lay depots along the route to a distance of about 150 miles from the Pole.

On October 24, 1911, Lieut. Evans left with Day, Lashly and Hooper and the two motor sledges, which hauled five twelve-foot sledges carrying about three tons of stores. The motors broke down and were repaired several times but carried on for about sixty miles. This was a great help to the ponies and lightened their work on the rough ice of the Barrier.

Scott left with the ponies on November 1. Each dragged a sledge packed with about 700 lb. of food and fuel. First went the slow ponies with their drivers, then the fairly fast ones, and lastly the "fliers" with Scott, Cherry and Wilson. Meares and Demetri with the dog teams left on November 4. They caught up with Scott's party on November 7 at Camp 4.

So far the ponies and dogs, and of course their masters, had travelled splendidly, but the light was very bad and a blizzard started and delayed them for a day.

Scott had found a note from Evans at Corner Camp and had come across the broken-down motors between Camps 3 and 4. Evans said that according to instructions they were man-hauling their sledges and would go forward at their own pace. Each was pulling about 190 lb., but they covered the ground splendidly and reached 80.50° latitude, and decided that they had better wait for the main party.

Scott pressed on from Camp 4 with varying fortunes. They had some fine days when the ponies pulled splendidly and some days when they could hardly move forward. Oates had been afraid for some time that they would have to shoot the two weakest ponies, Jehu and Chinaman, but somehow the two kept on and the men showed their admiration for their courage by naming them "The Barrier Wonder" and "The Thunderbolt".

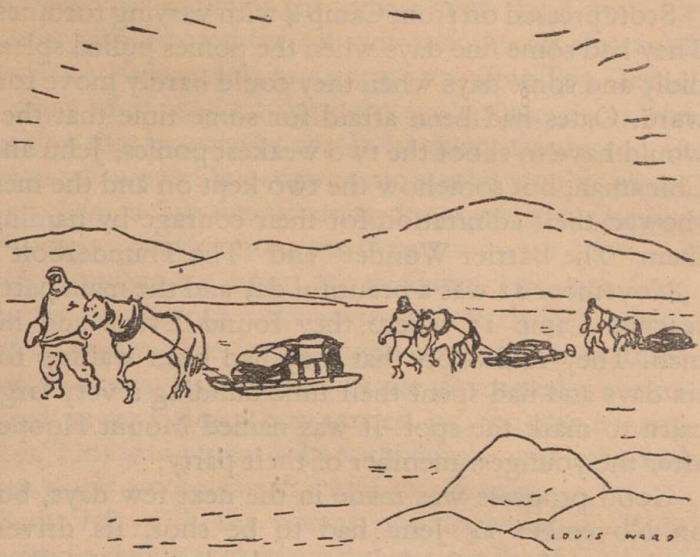
November 21 was a beautiful day and the main party reached Camp 17 where they found Evans and his men. They told Scott that they had been waiting for six days and had spent their time building a very large cairn to mark the spot. It was named Mount Hooper after the youngest member of their party.

Good progress was made in the next few days, but on November 24 Jehu had to be shot. Its driver, Atkinson, then joined the man-hauling party. Poor Jehu's flesh provided food for ponies and dogs and gave the men the fresh meat so necessary to keep off scurvy.

On November 24 Day and Hooper, taking with them two sick dogs, left for home. They reached Cape Evans safely on December 21. The dogs could not have been so very sick for they were always trying to steal their masters' food.

Pony food was getting very short and Chinaman was shot on the 28th.

On December 5, after several days of very trying weather they reached Camp 30. They woke up the following morning to a "raging, howling blizzard". It was a warm blizzard with snow and sometimes rain. Everything was soaking wet.



The Expedition's ponies

Oates was the worst off, as he kept going outside to see if he could help his beloved ponies but, alas, only five of them were left. The men who had nothing else to do got into their damp sleeping bags after each meal.

Scott kept looking out, but there was nothing to see; the drifting snow was like a great white wall hiding

everything. He wrote in his diary, "This is too crushing, no one could have foreseen such weather in an Antarctic summer".[1] This delay was very serious. They were already using food that should not have been eaten until they reached the top of the glacier. The supporting parties would have to return earlier than had been hoped.

It was not until nine o'clock on December 9 that they got away. They camped at 8 p.m., the ponies and men exhausted. They felt miserable for a time as the five ponies now had to be shot; but they had lived to fulfil their task of dragging stores and equipment to the Gateway, the foot of the glacier. Oates was the man who had made this possible by his ceaseless care of the ponies. Scott thanked him and Wilson praised him. His services had been so great that it seemed probable that he would be one of the Polar party.

## Chapter XXIII

## THE BEARDMORE GLACIER

FOR the first day of their climb they had lovely weather, but it was no easy task to get the sledges up the steep slopes through thick, heavy snow or over knife-like ice ridges and round the frequent crevasses. On December 11 Meares and Demetri handed over their loads and, with the dogs, made for home. They reached Cape Evans after a journey of twenty-five days. They took letters with them and we know

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

some of the contents of those written by Scott and Wilson.

Scott wrote to his wife on December 10, "Just a tiny note to be taken back by the dogs. Things are not so rosy as they might be, but we keep our spirits up and say that the luck must turn. . . . I find I can keep up with the rest as well as of old and that I think of you whenever I stretch tired limbs in a very comfortable sleeping bag."[1]

Wilson wrote on the same date to his wife, "All is well with us, and as for me I was never stronger or fitter in all my life. . . . No one yet knows who the final four will be, but I hope to be one of them for your dear sake."[2]

So, you see, Scott had not yet quite decided on the men who would go with him to the Pole. Each man of the party hoped that he would be one of the chosen.

All were now man-hauling and Scott, Wilson, Oates and Seaman Evans dragged the first sledge. On December 21 they laid the Upper Glacier Depot. The surface had been very bad and all had had a fall or two. Scott always went first so that he had the first chance and, said he, "It's decidedly exciting not knowing which step will give way".[3]

From here four men—Atkinson, Wright, Cherry and Keohane—were sent back and they also took letters. This is part of a letter sent to his wife by Scott: "The weather is a constant anxiety otherwise arrangements are working exactly as planned. . . . I am exceedingly fit and can go with the best of them, so that I am not ashamed to belong to you."[3] And Wilson wrote to his

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*
[2] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*
[3] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

wife on the same date: "I am as fit and strong as a horse and have great hopes of being one of the final party."[1]

Atkinson's party got safely back to Cape Evans, doing the 528 miles in thirty-seven days. Scott found it heartbreaking to have to send men back, they were so terribly disappointed, but the question of food made it impossible for more than four, or at most five, men to travel to the Pole.

There were now only two sledging teams: Scott's as before, and Lieut. Evans with Bowers, Crean and Lashly. They were pulling 190 lb. each, but these loads, of course, got lighter day by day. All were happy and fit and pulled faster and farther than had been thought possible.

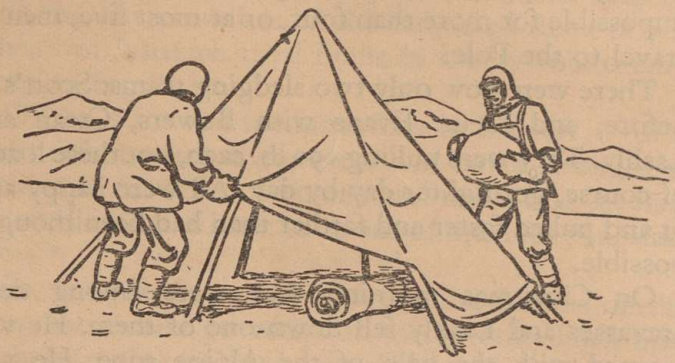
On Christmas morning they were among deep crevasses and Lashly fell down one of them. He was rescued with the help of the Alpine rope. He was forty-four that very day and, as he was brought to the top of the hole, one of the party wished him the birthday greeting, "Many happy returns of the day", and before he had recovered from that another wished him a "Happy Christmas". His reply was "unprintable".

They got to Camp 47. Bowers, who could turn his hand to anything, cooked a fine Christmas dinner and they had such extras as dried fruits, sweets and ginger. They ate their fill and, feeling warm and comfortable, slept soundly in those two little tents among the ice and snow. It was the last Christmas for five of them.

The sun shone on them at times and put heart into them as they went their difficult way. On December 31, the last day of 1911, they marched for a half day only and laid a depot with a week's food for two parties

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

(Three Degree Depot). That afternoon the officers did "odd jobs" and the seamen turned the twelve-foot sledges into ten-foot sledges and fixed up a lining to Scott's tent. After supper Scott and his officers sat in the tent feeling as warm as toast and talked till 2 a.m.



Pitching a tent

On January 3, at Camp 56, they were 10,180 feet above sea level and 150 miles from the Pole. Scott had now made his final choice. Lieut. Evans, Lashly and Crean were to return. With the consent of Evans, Scott added Bowers to the Polar party. The next morning the home party accompanied Scott a little way "in case of accident". I think they could hardly bear to leave their leader. He wrote in his diary that day, "Teddy Evans is terribly disappointed but has taken it very well and behaved like a man. Poor old Crean wept and even Lashly was affected."[1]

They took with them letters, photographs and some of Wilson's sketches. Scott wrote to his wife, "A last

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

note from a hopeful position. I think it's going to be all right. We have a fine party going forward and arrangements are all going well."[1]

Wilson wrote, "I am one of the five to go on to the Pole. . . . Our five are all very nice together and we shall be a happy party. . . . Be strong in hope and faith if you hear no more of me till next year. . . . God bless all the family and you."[2]

Scott had expected these three men to have an easy journey home but, in reality, they had a dreadful time. Evans, who had worked so hard and loyally for Scott, had used up his strength and made himself more liable to scurvy. He would have died had it not been for the two brave and devoted seamen, Crean and Lashly. They pulled him for several days on their sledge until their strength gave out. Crean walked for eighteen hours towards Hut Point for help. Lashly stayed behind to nurse the almost dying man who again and again begged him to seek safety. There was a happy ending to this story of devotion and all were saved.

## Chapter XXIII

## OVER THE PLATEAU TO THE POLE

ONE hundred and fifty miles across the plateau to the Pole and then 900 miles back to their base. Scott and his four comrades marched on cheerfully, Scott and Wilson leading, Bowers between and a little behind

[1] *Captain Scott.*
[2] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

them, and Oates and Seaman Evans a little farther behind, all harnessed to the small sledge.

Scott felt that his choice of men could not have been better. Bill Wilson and he were tried and affectionate friends. Scott had said, in answer to an inquiry made when he was in New Zealand, "Whom will you choose for the final Polar party?" "I think I should like to have Bill's hand to hold at the Pole."[1] Scott and Wilson had both found Bowers the finest of sledge-companions. He was only twenty-eight and gay and amusing. "I am Captain Scott's man and shall stick to him right through."[2] Oates had, by his care of the ponies, made the Polar journey possible, and his inclusion was his reward. "Evans' one great desire was to stand beside his beloved chief at the Pole."[3] He was a fine, true man.

Although on the plateau, they were still climbing. Bowers was the only man without skis. He pulled at his own pace without putting the others out of step. The first few days they made excellent progress, but the surface became worse as they advanced. The sastrugi were sometimes like great frozen waves on a stormy sea. It was painful toil, but once in their comfortable, double-walled tent they were happy.

The work was well divided among them. Wilson was a fine cook, treated their cuts or frostbite and was always thinking of something new to make camp life more pleasant. He was also a grand hauler. Oates worked hard the whole time and did his share of camp work, and stood the hardships as well as any of the party. Evans was a wonderful worker and very intelli-

[1] *Captain Scott.*
[2] *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic.*
[3] Seaver's *Life of Scott.*

gent. He looked after the sledge, the tent, sleeping bags and harness, and packed the sledge very tidily. Bowers was a wonder and enjoyed everything. He never made a mistake in distributing stores and kept exact meteorological records in the worst of weather. He didn't seem to feel the cold and was writing in his sleeping bag long after the others were asleep. But not Scott, you see, for he also was writing.

On January 9 they laid a depot, One and a Half Degree Depot. It was exhausting work for they were pulling over sandy, gritty snow with a cold, biting wind blowing the sharp crystals into their faces. But at their lunch and their night camps they became quite merry again. On January 16 they left Camp 68 in high spirits at the thought of being within two marches of the Pole, but during the morning they came upon the remains of a camp and the marks of dogs' paws and knew that Amundsen must have reached the Pole before them.

That night Scott wrote, "It is a terrible disappointment, and I am very sorry for my loyal companions. To-morrow we must march on to the Pole and then hasten home. All the daydreams must go; it will be a wearisome return."[1] On the morning of January 18, 1912, they found the Norwegian tent at about half a mile from the Pole. They walked on and camped at the Pole, made a cairn there and put up the Union Jack. Bowers took photographs and Wilson sketched. In one of the groups that Bowers took, Scott and Wilson, with heads thrown back, are roaring with laughter. Nothing can damp for long the spirits of such men.

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

## Chapter XXIV

# RETURN FROM THE POLE

"NOW for the run home and a desperate struggle. I wonder if we can do it?"[1] Nine hundred miles to go and almost every yard to be fought for. At first, they had the help of the wind for, from some wood and a flag, they had made a sail and fixed it to their sledge, and went on merrily. The ground was hard and ridgy and their skis and fur boots were beginning to wear out. They felt the cold rather badly, especially Oates who seemed very tired. But they were confident and Scott spoke of keeping up the pace of marching so as to arrive in time to catch the ship.

On January 25 they reached Half Degree Depot. Scott noted that Oates and Evans got frostbitten very easily and the march was delayed while Wilson attended to them. They left the depot in a gale. Besides the great discomfort of the cold, driving snow, it was very difficult to find their tracks and they feared to lose their next depot. Wilson took off his goggles so as to see more clearly and afterwards had a bad attack of snow-blindness. A few days later he hurt his leg badly, and the same day Evans lost two finger-nails from frostbite.

On January 31 they reached Three Degree Depot. Bowers was very glad to find the skis which he had left there on December 31. The marches would be less

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

trying for him. He had never complained, but the others knew that it was hard for him to keep up with them; not only were they on skis but their legs were longer. A few days after leaving the depot, Scott fell on the hard, slippery surface of the sastrugi. Three out of the five of them were now injured and this was a serious matter. On February 4 Scott and Evans fell together into a crevasse. After this Evans became "dull and incapable". He had hurt his head in the fall.

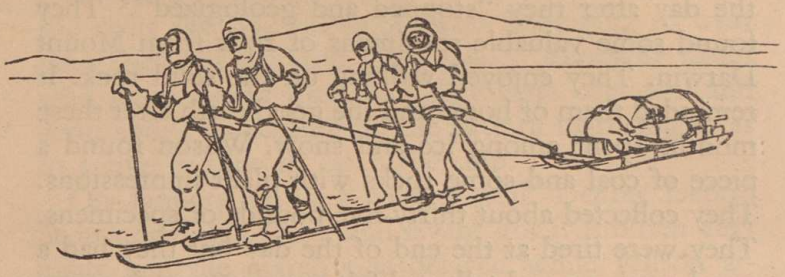
On February 7 they found the Upper Glacier Depot without difficulty and rejoiced that the seven weeks journey over the plateau was ended. The next day and the day after they "stopped and geologized".[1] They found some valuable specimens of rock from Mount Darwin. They enjoyed walking on the solid rock. It reminded them of home and the good earth after these months spent among ice and snow. Wilson found a piece of coal and some rocks with plant impressions. They collected about thirty-five pounds of specimens. They were tired at the end of the day but they had a good meal, a good talk and felt very content. It was a pleasant, warm night and they all slept well.

Evans, however, was getting worse every day and on February 13 he was quite unable to help with camping work and Bowers and Wilson had bad attacks of snow-blindness. Saturday, February 17, was a very terrible day. Evans helped to pull the sledge for about half an hour. After that he kept dropping behind and several times they waited for him. He was behind when they camped for lunch. They ate their food but still he did not arrive so the four men went back for him. He could hardly speak or move. Oates stayed with him,

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

while the others went for the sledge. They got him to the tent and did all they could for him, but he died during the night. They were all terribly sad at losing a well-tried and faithful companion. Early the next morning they found the Lower Glacier Depot.

Two stages of the journey were now finished. There were only four to feed, but also only four to pull the



Nearing the Mid-Barrier Depot

sledge and do all the camp work. Every day was bringing them nearer to the winter and the cold was already intense.

On this day Scott began to use his third and last notebook. He wrote in pencil and at lunch time, for they dared not use much oil at night. The entries were shorter than before. His poor, cold, tired fingers could with difficulty hold a pencil in temperatures that went down to −41.5°.

Every day now dragging the sledge in wind and cold was very wearisome, and pitching and striking tent a misery. Only when they were in the tent and eating a good meal could they forget their troubles and at night they still slept well.

On March 2 they arrived at the Mid-Barrier Depot to find a shortage of oil which was their only source of warmth. Some had leaked through the stoppers and it would hardly last them to the next depot seventy-one miles away. Oates had been suffering for some time from badly frostbitten feet and could no longer hide this from his companions. Wilson did his best to help. Oates often asked the others for advice, but they could only beg him to tramp on.

Day by day conditions grew worse and sometimes they took more than an hour to drag the sledge a mile. Scott wrote on March 4, "Things looking VERY black, I don't know what I should do if Wilson and Bowers weren't so determinedly cheerful over things."[1]

On March 9 they got to the Mount Hooper Depot but found a shortage all round. They had hoped against hope that they would meet Meares and a dog team. "Meares had a bad trip home, I suppose,"[1] was all Scott remarked. The tragic truth was that for the past six days Cherry and Demetri had been waiting at One Ton Camp. Cherry had not been able to proceed farther owing to a four days' blizzard. There remained enough dog food for the journey home. He was forced to return.

Eight days later they camped at a place about forty miles from their next depot and Oates felt he could go no farther. He begged the others to leave him in his

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

sleeping bag and go forward, but they persuaded him to march on. After a few miles they camped again and all slept well that night. Oates had hoped to die in his sleep, but he woke and looked outside. A blizzard was blowing. He said to his companions, "I am going outside and may be some time." "He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since. . . . It was the act of a brave man. . . . We all hope to meet the end with the same spirit, and surely the end is not far."[1]

On Sunday, March 18, Scott wrote, "Ill-fortune presses, but better may come."[1] His right foot was badly frostbitten. They had only a half fill of oil in their primus stove and a little spirit for their spirit stove. Yet Scott wrote, "The others are still confident of getting through—or pretend to be—I don't know."[1]

On Monday, March 19, they made their sixtieth camp from the Pole. Their tent was as well and truly pitched as ever, though they camped with difficulty. The temperature was −40° and they were dreadfully cold, but after eating some pemmican and biscuit and drinking a little cocoa warmed over the spirit stove they got warm and slept well. They were only eleven miles from One Ton Depot.

Nature was cruel to them and the weather gave them no chance. On Wednesday Bowers and Wilson-hoped to start for the Depot and return with food and fuel, but the blizzard still raged and it was useless to walk out into the blinding, drifting snow. They had no fuel left and food for a day or two only.

On March 29, Scott wrote:

Every day we have been ready to start for Depot 11 miles

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far.

It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more. . . .

R. SCOTT.

Last entry.

For God's sake look after our people.[1]

So ended the diary that this brave man kept almost to the day of his death. In spite of the freezing cold and by the light of only a tiny spirit lamp, he wrote farewell letters to his people, his friends and to the public whose servant he felt himself to be. As had been his way throughout his life, his sorrow was for the grief of others, not for himself. He knew that it was quite possible that their tent would never be found in that vast desert of ice and snow and that his diary and letters might never be read; still he did what he thought to be his duty.

His message to the public explained the reasons for their failure to reach One Ton Depot, and ended:

Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions that would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale, but surely, surely, a great rich country like ours will see that those who are dependent on us are properly provided for.[1]

To Mrs. Wilson he wrote:

. . . I can do no more to comfort you than to tell you that Bill died as he lived, a brave, true man—the best of comrades and staunchest (firmest) of friends. My whole heart goes out to you in pity.[1]

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*

To Mrs. Bowers:

. . . I write when we are very near the end of our journey, and I am finishing it in company with two gallant, noble gentlemen. One of these is your son. . . . He remains, unselfish, self-reliant and splendidly hopeful to the end.[1]

From the letters to friends and relations:

We could have come through had we neglected the sick.[1]

We are in a desperate state, feet frozen, etc. No fuel and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and the cheery conversation as to what we will do when we get to Hut Point.[1]

Take comfort in that I die at peace with the world and myself—not afraid.[1]

What lots and lots I could tell you of this journey. How much better it has been than lounging (living lazily) in too great comfort at home. What tales you would have for the boy. But what a price to pay![1]

If I knew the wife and boy were in safe keeping, I should have little regret in leaving the world. . . . Our journey has been the biggest on record, and nothing but the most exceptional hard luck at the end would have caused us to fail to return.[1]

Here is a short extract from a beautiful letter written by Birdie Bowers to his mother about March 22 (exact date uncertain):

Although the end will be painless enough for myself, I should like to come through for your dear sake. It is splendid to pass however with such companions as I have and as all five of us have mothers and wives you will not be alone. . . You will know that for me the end was peaceful as it is only sleep in the cold. . . .[2]

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition.*
[2] *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic.*

Wilson's last letter to his wife reads:

We have struggled to the end and we have nothing to regret. Our whole journey record is clean. . . . I feel so happy now in having got time to write to you. . . . All is well. . . .[1]

## Chapter XXV

## HOW THEY WERE FOUND

ATKINSON was in charge at the base. No anxiety was felt for the Polar party until after March 16 when Cherry-Garrard returned from One Ton Camp without having met them. It was clear that they were somewhere on the Barrier still.

On March 26 Atkinson left Cape Evans and got, with difficulty, as far as Corner Camp. The terrible weather and intense cold made it impossible to go farther. He left food there and returned to Hut Point. It was now almost a certainty that the five men had perished. He eventually reached Cape Evans completely exhausted. He had proved that to travel south under winter conditions was impossible.

On October 29, 1912, Atkinson, with a large party, set off in search of Scott and his companions. They reached One Ton Camp on November 10. Two days later they found Scott's tent almost buried in snow. It was on the line of cairns that had been built to mark the way and was well and truly pitched. They dug it out and inside were the three bodies. Wilson and Bowers were in their sleeping bags which were closed

[1] *Wilson of the Antarctic.*

over their heads. They appeared to have died in their sleep. Scott had died last. He had opened his bag and one of his arms was thrown across the body of Wilson.

Atkinson and his companions never forgot the tragic sight. He read aloud to them the Message to the Public giving the reasons for the tragedy. They collected the diaries, letters, geological specimens and all the other belongings of the three dead men. They took away the support of the tent and let it fall gently on the three bodies, and over it they built a huge cairn with a cross at the top. On either side they fixed a sledge on end further to mark the spot. In a metal container they left a record of Scott's journey to the Pole with his four companions.

They journeyed farther south searching for the body of Oates, but "the kind snow had covered his body, giving it fitting burial".[1] They raised a small cairn to the memory of "a very gallant gentleman".

Before leaving for home on the *Terra Nova*, the party who had found the bodies of Scott and his two friends sledged to Hut Point to put up a cross to the men who had died on their return from the Pole. It was a simple cross made of Australian wood with the names of the five men carved upon it and under their names a line of a poem by Tennyson:

To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.

The six lines below are from "The Barrier Silence", a lovely poem written by Dr. Wilson for the *South Polar Times*. They seem to foreshadow the fate of him and his companions.

[1] *Scott's Last Expedition*

We might be the men God meant should know
The heart of the Barrier snow,
In the heat of the sun, and the glow
And the glare from the glistening floe,
As it scorched and froze us through and through
With the bite of the drifting snow.

The cross is on the top of Observation Hill and "overlooks their last resting place, The Great Ice Barrier".[1]

## Chapter XXVI

## HOW THE TRAGIC NEWS WAS RECEIVED

ON March 23, 1912, the *Terra Nova* reached Cape Evans and took on board Lieut. Evans who was very ill, and a few members of the expedition who were returning home. You will remember that no anxiety was, as yet, felt about the Polar party. The ship carried nothing but cheerful news for those in New Zealand or at home. She delivered her mail and did some surveying work for the Admiralty. Later, under Commander Evans, who had made a complete recovery, the ship sailed for the Antarctic arriving in McMurdo Sound on January 18, 1913. The ship was cleaned, decorated and beflagged. Packets of letters were made ready for each member of the expedition. Drinks, cigarettes, chocolates and all kinds of nice things were arranged on the tables.

Men could be seen running about the beach as ex-

[1] *South with Scott.*

cited as could be. As the ship came nearer, the men on shore gave three cheers and the commander called out to Campbell, "Is everyone well?" He answered sadly, "The Southern party reached the South Pole on January 17, last year, but were all lost on the return journey. . . . We have their records."

"There was a deep silence, the flags were lowered and Scott's little *Terra Nova* stood bareheaded at the Gate of the Great Ice Barrier."[1]

Sadly the letters for the dead were sealed up to be returned to the wives, mothers and friends who had written them and who had still no idea of their tragic fate. The *Terra Nova* left the cruel continent on January 26 and arrived in New Zealand in February. The New Zealanders had prepared a great welcome for the expedition, but gladness was changed to deep sorrow when it was learnt that the Polar party had perished.

The terrible news was cabled throughout the world and filled all hearts with sadness, but as the full story was learnt, pride at the astonishing gallantry and selflessness of the men mingled with the sadness.

Scott's Message to the Public did not fall on deaf ears. They at once contributed £75,999. The state gave pensions to the relations of those who had died and further money was brought in from the publication of the scientific results of the expedition, and by the showing of pictures, photographs and cinematograph films (moving pictures). No better reward than this care for their loved ones could have been given to these men who had died in serving their country.

The living members of the expedition were all decorated by King George. Many of them distinguished

[1] *South with Scott* (slightly simplified).

themselves in the first World War and several were killed.

In the first part of the war Scott's widow received numbers of letters from soldiers at the front who had read Scott's diaries. They were grateful for his fine example, without which, they said, they could never have borne the difficulties and dangers which confronted them.

So their sacrifices were not in vain.

# GLOSSARY

This book is written within a vocabulary of about 2,000 words. The less common words below are defined within the prescribed vocabulary.

The definitions cover only the particular meanings of the words as used in the book.

Ability = cleverness; skill.
Admiralty = the office which controls the Navy; Admiral = the highest rank of officer in the Navy.
Advance = to go forward; in advance = ahead of.
Allot = to apportion to each person.
Ancestor = forefather; a person from whom one has descended.
Anchor = to fix (moor) a ship to the bottom of the sea with an anchor; anchor = the heavy instrument used to moor the ship.
Apparatus = instruments and machines, especially those used by scientists.
Appoint = to name to a post.
Appreciate = to set a high value on a person or thing.

Balloon = a large bag filled with gas to make it lighter than air, especially one with a car attached to carry a person or persons.
Brilliant = very bright; very clever.
Bunk = a narrow bed fixed to the wall.

Cable = a strong wire under sea or over the land to carry electric messages.
Cadet = a youth learning to be an officer in the Navy.
Canvas = strong cloth used for tents, ships' sails, etc.

Career = way of making one's living; one's way through life.
Cargo = goods carried on a ship.
Chatter = to make a noise with the teeth when cold.
Cinematograph = used in making or showing pictures.
Comrade = friend; fellow-worker.
Confirmed = made firmer (opinion).
Cruise = a journey by sea.
Crystal = the regular shape which snow, salt, etc., take when they become solid.

Debate = a meeting at which a question is talked over (discussed) by two people or two parties, each party taking one side.
Design = a plan or drawing of a building, ship, etc.
Details = the different parts, items, making up a whole.
Devote = to give up oneself, one's efforts, to a person, purpose, etc.; devoted = very loyal or loving.
Diary = a daily record of events or thoughts; book intended for such use.
Dim = not bright; not clear.
Disinfect = to make clean and free from the germs (seeds) of disease.
Dismay = a temporary (lasting for a time) loss of courage and strength through fear.
Distribute = to give out stores, etc.
Dredge = to take up mud, etc., from the bottom of the sea.

Edit = to prepare matter for printing or reproducing in some way.
Endure = suffer bravely.
Engineer = a man in charge of engines; bridge builder, etc.
Equipment = outfit; instruments necessary for special work.
Eventually = finally; lastly.
Exhaust = to use up completely; to make very weak.
Experiment = test or trial; something done to prove an idea or to discover something new.

Explode=burst with a loud noise.
Explore=travel through and examine a strange country.

Fascinating=charming; attractive.
Favourite=specially loved person or thing.
Fleet=ships sailing in company; the Navy.
Fog=thick darkness of the air which makes it impossible to see clearly.
Formal=stiff and correct; strictly methodical.
Fuel=material for burning, as wood, coal, oil, spirit.

Gallant=very brave; noble.
Gangway=a movable bridge from ship to shore.
Glare=a strong light that dazzles (confuses) the eyes and helps to cause snow-blindness.
Glimpse=a quick or passing view of something.
Glow=warm, shining light.
Greenhouse=a building made mostly of glass in which plants are grown.

Hammock=a hanging bed made of canvas or string network.
Harness=the ropes, leather or cloth bands, etc., connecting the men or ponies or dogs with the sledges they were hauling.
Hatch=a deep hole in the deck of a ship leading into the part where goods and luggage are kept.
Hobby=favourite employment for one's free time. (Some people make a hobby of their work.)
Hospital=a building used for the care of sick people.
Humble=not proud; modest.

Illustrate=explain or adorn with pictures.
Impress=to press upon the mind and cause to remember.
Inclined=had a tendency towards.

Income=money coming in; the amount of money one receives yearly.
Inherit=derive (take) something material, or some quality, from parents, etc.
Injury=wound; harm or damage of some kind.

Kidney=internal organ of the body.

Laboratory=a room used for scientific experiments.
Liable=likely to get.
Liver=internal organ of the body.

Magnetic=having the properties of the magnet; magnet=a piece of iron which draws to it other pieces of iron and which, if hung up, always points north and south. Magnetic huts were so called because all the necessary instruments and apparatus for magnetic observations were kept in them.
Marine=of the sea.

Navigate=to steer or manage a ship.

Organize=make orderly arrangements for something; bring into working order.

Partner=sharer (with a person, in or of a thing).
Pasture=grass land for cattle.
Peak=the pointed top of a mountain.
Pension=money paid to an officer, worker, etc., from the time he gives up work till his death, or the money paid to his family after his death.
Popular=liked by everyone.
Previous=happening before.
Profession=employment needing a certain amount of learning or artistic ability.
Promote=to move up to a higher rank or place.

Ration(s)=a fixed daily allowance of food.
Ray=a small beam of light.
Rely on=trust; depend on.
Rescue=save from danger.
Respectively=in the place proper to each.
Responsible=in charge of; trusted to do; trustworthy.
Reward=something given in return for service.
Ridge=joining line of two sloping surfaces; sharp edge.
Rookery=the nesting place of Penguins or other birds.
Routine=regular order of work.

Saloon=the sitting-room in a ship.
Scorch=burn surface with dry heat.
Sculptor=one who cuts figures in wood or stone.
Sketch=a drawing, often a rough, unfinished one.
Smart=neat, clean and dressed in the latest fashion.
Solution=the finding of an answer to a question or problem.
Specimen=a part of something to show the kind and quality of the whole.
Spiked=furnished with large nails or small pointed rods.
Squadron=number of warships grouped together for a special purpose.
Stoke=to put coal on engine fire.
Stove=an apparatus with a fire for warming or cooking.
Strike (tent)=to take down.
Sturdy=well-grown and strong.
Subscribe=to pay money for some good purpose; subscription=the money paid.
Suggest=to put forward an idea.
Summary=short account of something, giving the chief points only.
Supervise=to watch the carrying on of work to see that all is well done.
Supreme=highest; greatest; most excellent.
Survey=to measure land and to make a plan of it.

Tact=power of understanding other people's feelings and of doing or saying the right thing at the right moment.
Tank=a big steel car, with guns and a crew, used in warfare.
Telescope=an instrument for examining distant objects.
Theoretical=concerned with ideas the opposite of practical.
Tobacco=the plant used for smoking.
Toddle=walk like a baby learning to walk.
Tragedy=a sad and dreadful event; tragic=sad, terrible.
Triangle=a figure with three angles and three sides.
Tuberculosis=a disease of the lungs; lungs=the two organs in the chest used in breathing.
Tug=a small steamer used to pull larger ones.

Unaware=not knowing.
Uniform=a special dress worn by all members of a group.

Volcano=a mountain with a deep hole in the top from which fire and smoke come out.