

## Adventuring in the Antarctic

MEMORIES OF AN EXPLORER  
WHO WENT SOUTH WITH  
SCOTT.

Chief Petty-Officer WIL-  
LIAMSON.

The Lock-keeper at Shepperton.)  
Finding a lock in one of the quiet  
parts of the Thames is a great  
discovery from the sort of thing I am  
accustomed to! But let me tell you  
the story.

I don't remember anything about  
my parents. My earliest recollections  
are of kicks and blows, with my body  
lashed and starved, and my home the  
cumbrous attic. When I was  
ten years old I ran away to  
sea and found I had fallen out of the  
boat into the fire. Not only  
was I treated just as badly as before,  
but I was the risk of getting drowned  
in the bargain!

However, I got through it, and eventually  
joined the Navy. Here I met  
my only real friend I ever had in my  
life—the late Captain Scott. He was  
very kind to me, right down from  
the beginning, and when he asked for  
me for his expedition to the  
South Pole, in 1901, I was one of the  
first to offer and was lucky enough to  
be accepted.

I served through that expedition,  
and also through the later one that  
set out in 1910, during which Captain  
Scott met his death. In fact, I was  
a member of the party that found the  
body of Captain Scott and his com-  
rades, and it was the most terrible  
thing I ever had.

One of my most treasured posses-  
sions to-day is a leather thong which  
was used to repair the sledges  
of the party. It is only a bit of a thing,  
but it is worth more  
to me than gold.

Another thing I value greatly is  
the ribbon of the Silver Antarctic Med-  
al. The ribbon is pure white, and  
naturally don't see many of them  
about. There are only three other  
men living besides myself who have  
a medal with two bars—that is, one  
each expedition in which we have  
been part.

My little house by the lock is de-  
corated with many relics of those ex-  
peditions. To save cargo space on  
my journeys the crew have to make  
as many as possible of the things  
they want when they get somewhere  
near the Pole.

One coat, overshoots, and such  
things are fashioned from the skins  
of seals which are caught and killed.  
Sledges and skis are made from wood  
found on the ship, and so on. When  
the expedition returns to civilization  
the members of the crew are allowed  
to keep many of these things, and  
when made them, they are valued  
highly.

By the way, it's impossible to shave  
on a Polar expedition, as, of course,  
no water would freeze on your face!  
For the same reason you can't wash,  
except at one particular time, when  
you settle down late, winter  
quarters. Each man takes a turn at  
turning up at night to guard the  
camp, look to the fire, and do such  
things.

It is a duty that is always looked  
forward to, because it is then night  
and you have the place to yourself, and  
while your comrades are asleep, you  
can get as much water as you want,  
bathe down the snow to obtain it,  
and have a glorious scrub!

The narrowest escape that I ever  
had happened during the war. I was  
in a torpedo-boat when it struck a  
mine right under where I was stand-  
ing. There were eleven men with  
me and they were all killed. I was  
thrown into the sea with my ribs  
broken, and floated about for an hour  
before I was picked up and nursed  
back to health.

## Papyrus

Papyrus was manufactured by the  
ancient Egyptians by taking a sheet of  
bark from a tree which it seems  
grew only in Egypt, and laying it flat  
on a board, and then laying a cross  
over it, the materials having  
been previously moistened with water,  
made slightly glutinous. The sheet  
then formed was pressed and dried in  
the sun. The placing of two layers of  
bark in this manner across each  
other was intended to strengthen the  
texture of the sheet, for the fibres, it  
was found, were very easily separated  
and torn so long as they lay wholly in  
one direction. The sheet, when dry,  
was finished by smoothing the sur-  
face, and prepared to receive inscrip-  
tions made by means of a pen fashion-  
ed from a reed or a quill.  
The rolls of paper and parchment  
were only used for important writings  
which it was intended permanently to  
preserve. For ordinary occasions ta-  
bles of wax and other similar materi-  
als were used, upon which the writer  
scored the characters with the point of  
a steel instrument. The head of this  
instrument was smooth and rounded,  
so that any words which the writer  
wished to erase might be obliterated  
by smoothing over again, with it, the  
text on which they had been written.

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