

Lieut. Shackleton's dash to the South Pole

LAST month a small sailing vessel, gaily tricked out with flags, which lay in the Thames opposite the Temple, was visited by no fewer than 30,000 persons, each of whom paid a shilling to go on board. The ship was small; the quarters of the men were infinitesimal. Excepting a couple of half-grown Eskimau dogs, an old sled, and a pair of ice-boots, there was little or nothing to be seen on board. But the ship drew as a magnet all those in whose veins coursed the life-blood of our Viking ancestors. For its name was the Nimrod, and it was in this vessel Lieutenant Shackleton and his brave companions had sailed across desolate seas to the Antarctic continent. This month the weather-beaten hull will exert the same magnetic attraction in Liverpool, in Manchester, and in Glasgow. For the Nimrod has become a kind of pilgrim shrine, consecrated by the bravery, the devotion, and the loyal good comradeship of those whom she landed on the doorstep of the South Pole.

If the ship attracted so many thousands, how much vaster will be the multitude which will listen to Lieutenant Shackleton's lectures, and vaster still the myriads who will follow the expedition day by day in the pages of Lieutenant Shackleton's book, which this month has been published. Lieutenant Shackleton's eagerly expected work is, above everything else, an intensely human document. There are no strivings after effect, no gorgeous descriptions or too lurid details of the desperate plights in which the explorers were constantly finding themselves. It is a simple, unvarnished tale of the doings of intrepid men in the Antarctic solitudes, a tale which strikes the pulses of every manly soul and sends a thrill of pride through every Briton. It is a narrative of the heroism of men who risked their lives day after day as they crossed ghastly crevasses and struggled forward against howling blizzards, on quarter rations, without a full meal for months, suffering from snow-blindness, dysentery, and bruises innumerable. As we read of how they staggered along, starving, half-frozen, gasping for breath in the rarefied atmosphere of the gigantic plateau on which they were the only living things, we marvel that such superhuman exertions should be made merely in order to carry the Union Jack a few miles nearer the South Pole.

The book divides itself into several sections. It deals with the preparations for departure and the arrival at the permanent ice. Another tells of the life at the winter quarters and the conquest of Mount Erebus, on the summit of which man for the first time planted his foot. Another gives Professor David's account of his successful expedition in search of the Magnetic Pole. There are 150 pages of appendices devoted to the scientific results of the expedition, and contributed by its scientific members. It is, however, to the section giving an account of the dash to the South Pole that readers will probably first turn. It takes the form of a simple diary, where from day to day Lieutenant Shackleton set down the story of the wonderful march. This diary, terse, to the point, must take its place as the epic of Antarctic Exploration.

How calmly the determination to return is set down; but between the lines we can see the awful disappointment, so bravely borne—

"January 6th.—This must be our last outward march with the sledges and camp equipment. Tomorrow we must leave camp with some food, and push as far south as possible and plant the flag. We are at 88 degrees 7 minutes south tonight. It is blowing hard, and I would fail to explain my feelings if I had to write them down now that the end has come. There is only one thing that I like in this appointment, and that is the feeling that we have done all we could. It is the force of nature that have prevented us from going right through. I cannot write more."

The party who made the famous dash consisted of Lieutenant Shackleton, the leader of the whole expedition; J. B. Adams, his second in command; E. S. Marshall, the surgeon, and F. Wild, who had been with Lieutenant Shackleton in the Discovery expedition. Instead of dogs being relied upon, Siberian ponies for hauling the sledges were used, and were found to work splendidly. Had the fourth and last pony not vanished down a crevasse, and thus deprived the expedition of its food supply for many days, the South Pole would probably have been reached.

We are accustomed to think of the Polar explorer as encased in furs and laden with much clothing. It is surprising to find that Lieutenant Shackleton and his companions were only habited in thick Jaeger underclothing, woolen shirt, singlet and trousers, the main protection against the cold and wind a blouse and trousers made of Burberry, a very light wind and water-proof material. They dispensed entirely with the usual pilot-cloth garments and furs. On their hands they wore woollen gloves, and over their mitts, which were the only fur covering they had, in their feet they had several pairs of heavy woollen socks and gaiters, and nesco boots made of reindeer skin. Not only was their clothing very light, but they frequently dragged the sledges clad only in their singlets and pyjama trousers. At night they slept in fur sleeping-bags in their pyjamas.

The influence of the sun on the icy plateau is well illustrated by the description of the ponies dripping with perspiration on the sunny days, whilst their hair was a mass of ice on the other. As the sun went round, the ice area on the ponies changed its position but not its size. The ponies were killed at stated intervals in the order of exhaustion. The absence of carnivora of any sort made it possible to leave the carcasses and use them for food on the return journey.

On the way south they struggled up to a great plateau 10,000 feet high, fighting the last few days against a fearful blizzard. The ascent to this plateau was made over a glacier, and how the explorers escaped without broken limbs or sprained ankles is a marvel which Lieutenant Shackleton rightly attributes to a higher Power. Having passed this glacier, he writes—

"We have now traversed nearly a hundred miles of crevassed ice and risen 6,000 feet on the largest glacier in the world. One more crevassed slope and we will be on the plateau, please God. We are all fit and well."

The going amongst the crevasses must have been terrible. Wild describes the sensation of walking over the fearful glacier, half ice and half snow, as like walking over the glass roof of a station—

"One gets somewhat cautions as regards the immediate danger, although we are always glad to meet crevasses with their coats off; that is, not hidden by the snow covering."

They were constantly falling into these hidden cracks, being saved from death by the heavy sledge and stout harness which attached them to it. On one occasion, hearing a cry of "Help!" from Wild, the others rushed back to his assistance, and saw the pony sledge with the forward end down a crevasse, and Wild reaching out from the side of the rift, gripping the edge. No sign of the pony. They soon helped Wild out of his dangerous position, but poor Socks had gone!

"Wild had had a miraculous escape. He was following up our tracks, and we had passed over a crevasse which was entirely covered with snow, but the weight of the pony broke through the snow crust, and in a second all was over. We lay down and looked over the gulf, but no sound or sign came to us; a black, bottomless pit it seemed to be."

On their return, following their former tracks, they constantly came to yawning crevasses across which when going south they had dragged the sledges, little knowing what a thin crust of snow and ice was between them and destruction. The longest day's march was twenty-nine miles, when the wind was behind—rushing the sledge, under sail, down icefalls and through crevasses—and the shortest some three miles. The actual distance covered on that day being, however, three times as much as after Socks disappeared down the crevasse, the men had to pull one sledge along first, and then go back again and draw the other one up to it. A laborious process indeed!

The explorers discovered a new mountain range, and we find the following entry in the diary—

"These mountains are not beautiful in the ordinary acceptance of the term, but they are magnificent in their stern and rugged grandeur. No foot has ever trod on their mighty sides, and until we reached this frozen land no human eyes had seen their forms."

On the journey south there was little chance of talking, but on the return, with the wind behind, conversation could be indulged in, and the principal and most earnest subject of discussion was food. Lieutenant Shackleton writes—

"The glory of the great mountains that towered high on either side, the majesty of the enormous glacier up which we travelled so painfully, did not appeal to our emotions to any great extent. Man becomes very primitive when he is hungry and short of food, and we learned to know what it

is to be desperately hungry. I used to wonder sometimes whether the people who suffer from hunger in the big cities of civilization felt as we were feeling, and I arrived at the conclusion that they did not, for no barrier of law and order would have been allowed to stand between us and any food that had been available. The man who starves in a city is weakened, hopeless, spiritless, and we were vigorous and keen."

Heated discussions took place about dishes invented by the explorers as they struggled forward, and their fancies wandered, depicting gigantic meals when once they reached winter quarters. "I daresay," says Lieutenant Shackleton, "that all this sounds very greedy and uncivilized to the reader who has never been on the verge of starvation, but, as I have said before, hunger makes a man very primitive. We did not smile at ourselves or at each other as we planned wonderful feasts of over-eating. We were perfectly serious about the matter, and we noted down in the back pages of our diaries details of the meals that we had decided to have as soon as we got back to the places where food was plentiful."

Obviously, after so many weeks of semi-starvation, the nerves of the travellers got very much on edge. This appeared in the way in which the food was divided. Lieutenant Shackleton says—

"We would make the biscuits last as long as possible, and sometimes we tried to save a bit to eat in the sleeping bag later on, but it was hard to do this. If one of us dropped a crumb the others would point it out, and the owner would wet his finger in his mouth and pick up the morsel. Not the smallest fragment was allowed to escape."

"We used to 'turn backs' in order to ensure equitable division of the food. The cook would pour the hoosh into the pannikins and arrange the biscuits in four heaps. Perhaps some one would suggest that one pannikin had rather less in it than another, and if this view was endorsed by the others there would be a readjustment. Then when we were all satisfied that the food had been divided as fairly as possible, one man would turn his back, and another, pointing at one pannikin or group of biscuits, would say, 'whose?' The man who had his back turned, and therefore could not see the food, would give a name, and so the distribution would proceed, each of us always feeling sure that the smallest share had fallen to our lot."

The difficulty of the cook's work can readily be imagined. It was still more trying when pony meat was being used. No one had much relish for the little dice of tough and

I kept the control of all arrangements in my own hands, and thus avoided delays." John Angell James once declared that if Noss had been hampered with a committee the ark would never have built! Lieutenant Shackleton evidently agrees with him.

The victualling of the expedition was a heavy task. He says—

"It is now recognized that scurvy may be avoided if the closest attention is given to the preparation and selection of foodstuffs along scientific lines, and I may say at once that our efforts in this direction were successful, for during the whole course of the expedition we had not one case of sickness attributable directly or indirectly to the foods we had brought with us. Indeed, beyond a few colds, apparently due to germs from a bale of blankets, we experienced no sickness at all at the winter quarters."

Lieutenant Shackleton gives a most interesting list of everything taken for human consumption. Other articles of equipment ranged from "needles and nails to a Remington typewriter and two Singer sewing-machines. There was a gramophone to provide us with music, and a printing-press, with type, rollers, paper and other necessities, for the production of a book during the winter night. We even had hockey sticks and a football."

Lieutenant Shackleton was able to borrow certain costly instruments and charts from the Admiralty, but it was in the scientific equipment that he felt most sorely the pinch of necessary economy—

"I approached the Royal Society with a view to securing the loan of the Eschen-Hagen magnetic instruments that had been used by the Discovery, but that body was unable to lend them, a prior claim having been conceded to some gentleman who was doing magnetic work in Surrey."

Although public fancy has been caught by the Nimrod, she actually had little to do with the success of the expedition. In fact, she was little more than a ferry boat which transported the explorers from New Zealand to their winter quarters. For Lieutenant Shackleton had decided to live on land and send the boat home again. The Nimrod was actually purchased from de Meux, Lieutenant Shackleton not being able to afford the Bjorn, a new vessel of about 700 tons burthen and with powerful triple-expansion engines, better equipped in every way than the forty-year-old Nimrod. Of the Nimrod he says—

"The ship was small and old, and her maximum speed under steam was hardly more than six knots, but on the other hand she was strongly built, and quite able to face



SOCIETIES WE ADMIRE (BUT DO NOT BELONG TO)
The Society For Securing Undisturbed Meals For The Wee Birdies of London

The party had an adventurous journey back again to the depot, where they had arranged to wait for the Nimrod. The total distance traveled from the winter quarters to the Magnetic Pole and back again to the depot, where they picked up the Nimrod, was about 1,260 miles. Seven hundred and forty miles of this was relay work, and the party dragged a weight of about half a ton the whole distance. They were absent on the journey for one hundred and twenty-two days; five of these were spent in the tent during heavy blizzards, and five in experimenting in cooking with blubber and preparing supplies of seal ready for the journey.

It was only on the high plateau that they felt the intense cold we associate with those regions. Professor David says that had they had an efficient team of dogs they could have completed the journey in half the time it actually occupied. Mount Erebus was in full view from the winter quarters, and "a strong glow on Erebus" was constantly reported. A huge steam column shot up at times to a height of 3,000 to 4,000 feet. The exploring party had an adventurous time, nearly losing Brocklehurst on the way in a blizzard. At length they reached the top of the crater, which they thus describe—

"We stood on the verge of a vast abyss, and at first could see neither to the bottom nor across it on account of the huge mass of steam filling the crater and soaring aloft in a column 500 or 1,000 feet high. After a continuous loud hissing sound, lasting for some minutes, there would come from below a big dull boom, and immediately great globular masses of steam would rush upwards to swell the volume of the snow-white cloud which ever sways over the crater. This phenomenon recurred at intervals during the whole of our stay at the crater. Meanwhile, the air around us was a tremor of burning sulphur. Presently a pleasant northerly breeze fanned away the steam cloud, and at once the whole crater stood revealed to us in all its vast extent and depth. Mawson's measurement made the depth 900 feet and the greatest width about half a mile."

"They found that the exact height of Mount Erebus is 13,370 feet. This is 448 feet higher than was supposed and than is at present given on the Admiralty charts.

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"I left at the winter quarters on Cape Royds a supply of stores sufficient to last fifteen men for one year. The vicissitudes of life in the Antarctic are such that such a supply might prove of the greatest value to some future expedition. The hut was locked up and the key hung up outside where it would easily be found, and we readjusted the lashing of the hut so that it might be able to withstand the attacks of the blizzards during the years to come. Inside the hut I left a letter stating what had been accomplished by the expedition, and giving some other information that might be useful to a future party of explorers."

Many side expeditions were made for scientific and other purposes, all of them are interesting reading. There is a useful introduction by Dr. Hugh Robert Mill.

The two volumes contain between them 687 pages of letterpress, and in addition some 250 magnificent photographs, which show that the members of the expedition were well able to use the nine cameras they took with them. Several of the illustrations are in colors, enabling the reader to have a good idea of the wonderful light effects in the Antarctic.

SHIPPING AND MARKETING POULTRY

"If I were asked what are the greatest sources of loss in the present handling of poultry for the market," remarked Mr. Harris, of the Harris Abattoir Co., "I would say that they are, first, the improper killing, dressing and salting of birds, and secondly, in the fact that so few realize the great loss there is in the shipment of poultry unfattened, and unfresh for market. In regard to the first I may say that it has been so bad, and so hard to deal with, that we are gradually working out of the business of handling dressed poultry, and endeavoring to get all our customers to ship their poultry alive. We can then, at least, kill it only after it has been starved for a sufficient length of time to ensure its keeping qualities, see that the birds are dry—picked by expert workmen, and put them either on the market or in cold storage in such a way as to be fresh and sound, and look attractive when offered to the customer at the local store."

"In regard to the question of unfresh birds, the following instance will suffice as an illustration. On September 10th last, we had a lot of big, raw spring chickens, too thin to place on the market, so we sent them to a farm outside of Toronto to be fattened. When sent out the lot weighed 384 pounds, and when they returned on November 10th, after two months' feeding, the lot weighed 610 lbs. and were sold at from three cents to four cents per pound more than they would have commanded, if they had been sold in the condition in which they first reached us. This means a gain of about \$45 on an original investment of about \$40 plus cost of feeding, and will serve to show one of the ways in which money is lost in the business of raising poultry."

Success in any line of business depends upon recognizing conditions, and meeting its requirements. That the requirements of the poultry trade have never been met in anything like an adequate way is proverbial. No trade exists in which fastidiousness plays a more important part than in that which handles poultry produce. There is a high premium on getting them to market in the finest state of freshness and preservation. Yet there is none in what has been handling, abominable systems of marketing, with the inevitable accompaniment of low prices and loss have proven such persistent factors.

The careful fattening of all poultry before marketing, the proper killing, dry-picking, and tasteful packing of poultry, are, to be the great majority of poultry raisers, as yet achievements unattained, let alone the finishing off of a nice lot of fancy milk-fed broilers, at 40c per 50c per pound.

By far the greater bulk of the poultry of the country is raised in a small way, every farmer keeping a few hens, some geese, turkeys or ducks. As there are so few for the market in each case, the trouble to market them in a proper way is not considered to be worth while, and the final result is that they are killed and traded to the local store-keeper for some of the household necessities. The latter gentleman handles them just as he handles butter, eggs, vegetables or hides. He makes a common price to all, no discrimination as to quality, and makes it too little to protect himself from loss, even in case of considerable deterioration. When the wholesaler is ready to give him a price for the whole lot which he has collected in this way he sells. The big city dealer does the best he can with the birds when they arrive. But there is a wide margin between poultry killed and traded around in this way, and others which have been handed upon the market in prime and attractive condition.

"When preparing dressed poultry for the market, the great point to be kept in view is what they will look like when opened up by the dealer upon arrival," said Mr. Simpson, of the well known firm of Gunns, Limited. "It is absolutely necessary to starve birds for at least 24 hours before killing them. This empties their crop, and leaves them in a condition so they will keep without the fermentation of grain and food, which forms gas, taints the meat, and makes the skin look black or green at the crop vent. Poultry must be well starved and empty in order to store. After killing it is absolutely necessary to dry-pick the birds. Do not scald them on an account, and pluck off every feather. Chickens and turkeys should be shipped with heads on, ducks and geese with heads off, but the great point is to have the birds looking fresh and attractive. We receive a great many shipments of birds that are badly prepared for killing, and very badly dressed, but there is a constant improvement in this matter, however."

A more satisfactory solution of the matter appears to have been found in the shipping of poultry to market alive. It is then sure to go into storage in first-class condition, and the chances of quick deterioration and partial or total loss, which has in the past proved to be such a handicap to business between the farmer and the commission merchant on the wholesaler direct, would then be eliminated. Poultry shipped alive could not spoil en route, and thus one cause of complaint and dissatisfaction would be removed.

The system of getting in touch with some good, reliable commission house or wholesaler has much to commend it, over that of trading poultry for other goods on a local market. Not only in poultry, but in the handling of eggs, the market for strictly prime, newly laid eggs being always much better than that for the best of country-gathered stock. The shipment of strictly prime goods twice or three times each week directly to the city, instead of taking the price for eggs which have lain around at stores and warehouses for an indefinite period of time will get a premium which will repay the trouble. It pays to get in touch with a good commission or wholesale house. In many lines there are times when prices for goods delivered immediately are high. Then it is the time to have something to sell. The skill and application which produces a high quality of goods is a great thing, but the business ability which realizes the top market price for them when ready, is necessary to highest success.

rough treatment in the ice. I must confess that I was disappointed when I first examined the little ship, to which I was about to commit the hopes and aspirations of many years. . . . I had not then become acquainted with the many good qualities of the Nimrod, and my first impression hardly did justice to the plucky old ship."

It does not require much imagination to guess that the Nimrod was in a frightfully crowded condition when she set out from Lyttelton on January 1st, 1908. The ship was towed to save coal, and so tempestuous was the journey that before the ice was reached it appeared inevitable that she would sink. She often rolled over fifty degrees from the perpendicular on each side. The ponies had a specially hard time of it. But the expedition was soon revelling "in the indescribable freshness of the Antarctic that seems to permeate one's being, and which must be responsible for that longing to go again which assails each explorer from Polar regions."

Landing, finding winter quarters, and transhipping the coal were tremendous tasks, but were safely accomplished at last. One of the difficulties encountered immediately the stores were landed and piled up on shore was a violent blizzard, which buried them with frozen spray; five days' hard work were needed before the cases could be got out again. The hut, which had been brought from England in sections, was soon erected on the site chosen, and was surrounded by a wall made of the provisions. Space was limited, but the hut was warm, and was lit with acetylene. Rather different from the smoking wicks swimming in blubber fat of earlier explorers!

After his experience with dogs on the Discovery Expedition Lieutenant Shackleton had a very poor opinion of them as draft animals, and took ponies instead. Owing to their unfortunate desire to eat everything that came their way four speedily died:

"We established ourselves at the winter quarters with eight ponies, but unfortunately we lost four of them within a month of our arrival. I had neglected to see that the animals had a supply of salt given to them, and as they found a saline flavor in the volcanic sand under their feet, due to the fact that the blizzards had sprayed all the land near the shore with sea water, they ate it at odd moments. All the ponies seem to have done this, but some were more addicted to the habit than the others. Several of them became ill, and we were quite at a loss to account for the trouble until they died. Then a post-mortem examination revealed the fact that his stomach contained many pounds of sand, and the cause of the illness of the other ponies became apparent."

The final dash to the Pole was made without sledges or any other equipment, but as the magnetic needle of the compass was of no use they had to set up all their available impedimenta along the road in order that they might find their way back again.

Having finally arrived at the mean position of the Union Magnetic Pole they bared their heads, hoisted up the Union Jack, and at 3.30 p.m. Saturday, January 16th, Professor David repeated the words of Lieutenant Shackleton's instructions, "I hereby take possession of this area now containing the Magnetic Pole of the British Empire."