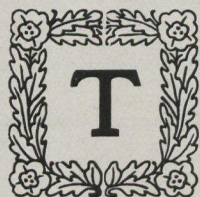


# WOMAN AND HER INTERESTS

## The Explorer's Wife



THE tragic experience of Lady Scott, who sailed hopefully for New Zealand to meet her brave husband on his return from completing his investigations in the Antarctic Circle, and who, instead of the re-union, met the news that Captain Scott had been dead for almost a year, stirs one's profoundest sympathy. It was in the summer of 1910 that Captain Robert F. Scott sailed with his party for the South Seas, and once within the Antarctic Circle communication with his home, a matter of months at best, was for a period entirely cut off. At home, Mrs. Scott and their little son, Peter, with a map followed the route of the husband and father, and looked forward to his return, his work finished.

The wife of an explorer occupies a position which appeals to the imagination. If her husband hears and answers the call into the unknown regions to make discoveries for his country or to pursue investigations in the interests of science, she must not stand in his way. She must help in his preparations and encourage him with her interest, keeping her own feelings in the background until she has bravely said good-bye and seen him sail away. Then for her comes the weary waiting, without even the prospect of a letter for months at a time. One can picture her some winter evening sitting in her warm apartment and contrasting her own comfort with the hardship endured by her husband in the midst of polar snows and the deprivations of the traveller's camp. She may fill her days with useful work and the interests of others, but there must be many times when the feeling of uncertainty and separation grows intense.

The fate of Captain Scott in the Antarctic recalls that of other explorers, notably Sir John Franklin, who perished in the Arctic Circle in 1847. It was Lady Franklin herself who was instrumental in having the mystery surrounding the fate of her husband and his expedition cleared up. The first wife of Sir John (then Lieutenant) Franklin was a young poetess, Eleanor Purden, who promised him before their marriage that she would "never under any circumstances seek to turn her husband aside from the duty he owed to his country and his profession." She kept her word, and when, two years after their marriage, Franklin sailed with an expedition for North America, he left at her earnest request that he should not let home ties and his anxiety for her detain him. Six days after he sailed, his wife died.

After his return from America, Franklin married a Miss Jane Griffin, who accompanied him to Tasmania, where he was sent as governor. It is on record how she endeavored to improve the conditions of the female convicts sent out from England to that colony. Interest in Arctic exploration was revived after a few years, and Sir John Franklin (who had been knighted in 1829 for his services), was offered command of an expedition of two ships, the "Erebus" and the "Terror," which sailed in 1845, to try to discover the North West Passage. They were last seen in Baffin Bay. Two years passed without any tidings, and public anxiety as to their fate became acute. In 1848 a relief expedition, urged on by Lady Franklin, was sent out, and two years later she herself dispatched a couple of vessels to supplement the efforts of the former expedition. In 1850 the Admiralty offered a large reward to anyone who should discover and relieve the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror," or should succeed in ascertaining their fate. The reward was claimed by a traveller who brought home some relics and tidings gleaned from the Esquimaux. But Lady Franklin was not satisfied. She got up a petition to the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, signed by some of the leaders in past expeditions. "Surely," wrote

Lady Franklin, "I may plead for such men, that a careful search be made for any possible survivor, that the bones of the dead be sought for and gathered together, that their buried records be unearthed or recovered from the hands of the Esquimaux, and, above all, that their last written words, so precious to their bereaved families and friends, be saved from destruction." Finally, by using a large part of her private fortune and with the assistance of sympathizers, Lady Franklin was able to commission Captain McClintock in the "Fox" to make a last attempt. After a persevering search, Captain McClintock returned in 1859, bringing with him indisputable proof of the death of Sir John Franklin and the loss of the crew. The grim story of a decade before was brought to light—the failure of provisions, the mistakes from erroneous charts, and the straying apart of the survivors in their quest for assistance. At

Point Victory a record was discovered, by which it was known that Sir John Franklin had died on June 11, 1847. It was also ascertained that Sir John Franklin had succeeded in demonstrating the fact of a passage to the northwest of America. In the various expeditions sent out to find Franklin, thousands of miles of coast line were explored, adding much to geographical knowledge. In his work on the subject, Sir Clement Markham says: "The story includes great names, but foremost among them was Lady Franklin. She was revered for her self-abnegation and for her generous appreciation of the work of those who eagerly sought to help in the search. She gained her noble objects by arousing the chivalrous feelings of the devoted men who gathered round her. Only a woman could have achieved this. She introduced into the ex-

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**Thinking of the Absent** Lady Scott and her little son Peter following Captain Scott's route, on the map. The explorer's widow has been granted by the King the title she would have had if Captain Scott had been knighted, as he would have been, if he had lived to return to England.

—Underwood and Underwood, photo.