

AS HEROES DIE

THROUGH the untrodden paths of the silent places, Britain's sons have led the way to freedom and to the hidden knowledge that gives us power. Far from the land of their birth, in a frozen tomb in the great Ice Barrier which keeps lonely watch over the South Pole, a band of British explorers sleep under the Southern Cross. They died as heroes die, these men who gave their lives for the glory of their country. Their task was to place the Union Jack at the South Pole. For eight hundred miles over the Great Ice Barrier they fought their way against famine, blizzard and frost straight to the end of the earth. Then with failing strength they retraced their weary steps homeward, and when only eleven miles from safety were caught in a blinding blizzard. It was fated that these heroes should never pass from the bounds of the ice kingdom which they had so daringly invaded.

The leader of the British South Polar Expedition of 1910 was Captain Robert Scott of the Royal Navy. His good ship was the *Terra Nova*, the largest and strongest of the old Scottish whalers. His company of thirty-two men was selected from over eight hundred volunteers.

Although this was Scott's second voyage to the mantle of ice which separates the Southern Sea from the South Pole, it was necessary to spend a year in choosing a route and in establishing a chain of posts where supplies of food could be stored for the overland journey to and from the Pole.

Leaving the ship at Ross Island, on November 1st, 1911, Scott, with motor sledges, dog teams and pony teams, began his famous journey over the frozen waste to the utmost south. His plan was to send back the men, in bands of three or four, after they had established posts farther and farther south where they left supplies of food for the return of the five best men who would make the final dash to the goal. In that grinding toil over the drifting snow and through the piercing cold only the stout heart could carry on and only the will of iron could endure.

The motor sledges soon broke down, the ponies and dogs floundered in the soft snow and wore themselves out in climbing the Beardmore Glacier, over nine thousand feet high, and, for the last hundred and seventy miles men, in harness, replaced the ponies. It was distressing to sacrifice these plucky little animals which were taken as far as their fodder lasted, and were then shot that their flesh might save the lives of the men on the homeward trail.

The last dog team turned back and then the men were divided into two parties. All were to return except the four hardiest who remained to follow their brave leader. These were Dr. Wilson, a seasoned explorer, Lieut. Bowers, Captain Oates, and Petty Officer **Evans**.

The weather was far worse than they had expected, but the weary men, on skis, pressed on in the heart-breaking toil, harnessed to the