Scott of the Antarctic

By Walter Meade
'September 9th, 1904,
'on board the Discovery,
homeward bound from the Antarctic.
'I've added a little, I hope,
to the knowledge gleaned
'by Captain Cook, Sir James Ross
and other explorers before me.
'But I have only touched
the fringe of things.
'I leave behind a whole continent,
'vast, mysterious, inhospitable,
'and still, to all intents
and purposes, unknown.'
- Well, good night, Scott.
- Good night, sir.
I'm sorry, but that's how the land lies.
- Thank you. Good night.
- Good luck to you.
- Sit up a little, Con.
- Hm?
- Sit up.
- Hm, sorry.
Something's gone wrong, hasn't it?
You can't go ahead.
Oh, we can go ahead, all right.
The Treasury won't let us
have the money, that's all.
- Is that very bad?
- Yes.
It means I get the men
but not the backing.
- I should have to make a public appeal.
- Well, why don't you?
You see, if I do go ahead with this show,
I might lose my chance in the Navy.
That would mean
looking for some other job,
and that would mean discomfort
and unpleasantness for you.
As far as I'm concerned,
I'd take it on any day.
As far as we're concerned, Con, any day.
You knew the Antarctic
long before you knew me.
I always knew you'd go back.
And I'm not the least jealous.
As a matter of fact, I don't think
I'd love you so much if you didn't.
Don't move, Con.
Do you remember walking along the sands
just after the tide had gone out?
I asked you what exploration
really meant to you.
The sands were still wet,
and you said, "The fascination
of making the first footmarks."
I'm a very, very lucky man.
Now, what shall it be?
"I appeal with confidence"
or "I confidently appeal"?
"It is with confidence that we appeal..."
Lunch!
Lunch is ready, dear.
Just in time, Oriana.
- What is it?
- A flea, a rare one.
Just hold him while I get some spirit
to preserve him.
No ordinary flea, Oriana.
I'll send him to Rothschild
for his collection.
You might as well send him my soufflé too.
- Is that done now?
- Yes, quite done.
Never mind.
Oh, how's the drawing going?
Natterer's Bat. Lovely name.
Oh, isn't it heavenly here?
All on our own.
- Except for dead bats.
- And very dead grouse.
I wish they wouldn't keep
sending them to you on your holiday.
I'll go and see.
Natterer's Bat.
Did you hear me, Mrs Wilson?
I suppose you couldn't help it.
I came here by motor car.
I've left it exhausted alongside the gate.
- How far have you come?
- The last lap was nearly a mile.
- Bill about?
- Yes. Do you want him?
Er, yes, I do rather.
- Well, he's working, you know.
- Yes, I know.
- He's...
- Working.
Come along.
- That noise was Captain Scott.
- Hello, Con.
- Hello, Bill.
- Haven't seen you lately.
You forget, Captain Scott's
been on his honeymoon.
Well, as a matter of fact,
I've been rather busy,
but we hope to have a honeymoon
someday, somewhere.
Well, Con?
What's up?
Shackleton hasn't done it, Bill.
He nearly did but not quite.
I'm going back.
Shall we go in?
- Mind if I kick it up a bit?
- No, carry on. They're your boots.
How far did Shackleton get?
He got to within 90 miles of the Pole.
- Isn't 90 miles near enough?
- No.
Because it isn't it.
It's not the South Pole.
That's still there, waiting.
And, er, I think an Englishman
should get there first.
Well, Bill? What do you say?
There's my work for the Grouse Commission.
That's no obstacle.
We shan't be leaving for at least a year.
I think my exploring days are over.
I don't want to get somewhere first
just for the sake of doing it.
Now, if it had been
a rather different proposition,
if the idea was to go back
and carry on all the jobs we started
on the Discovery expedition...
But that is the idea, Bill. That's it.
We'll do better.
We'll work on the Barrier,
on the mountains, right up to the Pole.
Ours will be the best equipped expedition.
Dozens of scientists under that most
eminent of all scientists: Dr Wilson.
Yes, that is different!
Come with me, Bill.
I couldn't let him go without me,
could I, Oriana?
No.
Thank you.
Well, I wonder if the motor will start.
Yes, I wonder. You can't possibly go
without having something to eat.
No, of course not.
That's the fly you caught
the two-pounder on,
in the burn at Clachen.
- Remember?
- Yes.
It's a long time ago now.
Look, the gut's all perished.
So it is.
Oh, darling!
Darling!
- Morning, Teddy.
- Oh, good morning, sir.
What have you got there?
Well, it's a... It's a sort of cash chart.
That's the target, there's the date, sir,
and the contributions coming in.
Hm. Long way to go yet.
Anything in the post?
Not much money but plenty of people.
"Dear and honoured sir,
"if I could be allowed
to join your expedition
"I would even become a British subject."
Here's one from a Bluecoat boy. He says,
"It's frightfully cold in my dormitory
so I'm sure I should be all right."
Let him down lightly. Anything else?
No big cheque, I'm afraid.
Oh, some details
about your lecture tour, sir.
Excuse me, sir.
There's a young lady here about a dog.
A dog?
Oh, show her in, Caroline.
Name, please, Miss?
Helen Field.
- Chair, Teddy.
- Yes, sir.
Please sit down, Miss Field.
Thank you.
I've brought you the money
for a sledge dog.
You said we might.
Anyone, I mean. In your appeal.
How very kind of you, Miss Field.
- My name is Scott.
- Yes, I know that.
And this is Lieutenant Evans,
my second in command.
I didn't know that.
How are you? I hope you're well.
- How are you, Teddy?
- Oh, very well, thank you, indeed.
Look, here's the envelope
with the money from the school.
And...
You know, Miss Field,
when business firms send us cheques,
we're pleased enough,
but somehow this means more.
Please thank them tremendously.
- Tell me, how many are there?
- 300, nearly.
Well, please thank them all.
We intend to call the dogs by the names
of any schools that give them.
Rugby, Fettes, that sort of thing.
What's the name of your school?
South Hampstead High School for Girls.
Yes. I think we'd better
just call him Hampstead.
Thank you for having turned out
on such a dirty night to hear this talk.
During the past few days
I have had the pleasure,
or rather, I should say,
the great pleasure
of addressing meetings like this
all over the country.
And knowing, as I do,
the rivalry that exists
among our towns and cities
I am hoping that,
as the result of this rivalry,
I shall be able to report
to my committee in London
that your city has gone one,
if not a great deal, better
than your fellow cities.
Um, thank you.
Well, I'm sure we're all very grateful
to Captain Scott
for coming and giving us
this illuminating account of the Antarctic
and I'm sure that if anyone wants
to ask any questions
Captain Scott will be only too pleased
to answer them.
Mr Chairman, I'm not averse
to subscribing to anything
that might be in the national interest,
but it does occur to me to ask,
why must this country
send another expedition?
What about the Norwegians?
What about Nansen?
Nansen has given up polar exploration.
He's getting on, you know.
What about that other fellow?
Amundsen? He's making
for the North Pole, not the South.
What's the difference?
What's the prospect of trade
between this city and the South Pole?
Is there any coal down there,
anything I can buy or sell?
I'm sorry we didn't raise more for you,
but I suppose every penny counts.
Better luck somewhere else.
Are you sure I can't give you a lift?
It's not far out of my way.
No, please don't bother.
Well, then, I'll just wish you
a good night and good luck.
Thank you. Good night.
Captain Scott?
Yes?
Glad I've caught you.
I've come from India.
Want to join your show, if you'll have me.
Good with horses.
Do you mean to tell me
you've come 6,000 miles
- to join my expedition?
- Yes. Landed this morning.
- Who are you?
- My name's Oates.
- I'm with the Inniskillings.
- Hmm.
No sense in getting soaked, is there?
That's better.
- Cavalryman, eh?
- Yes, sir, dragoons.
- Know anything about the Antarctic?
- Only what I've read.
When I saw you were taking ponies,
I thought perhaps I'd come in handy.
- Fit?
- As a fiddle.
- Age?
- 29.
- Married?
- No.
- It will be tough.
- I know.
- As Hades.
- But not so warm, eh?
But I think we can manage it.
- We?
- That's what I said.
- Do you mean you'll take me?
- Glad to.
- You're on the strength.
- I say.
- Here's a tram. Come on.
- I say, just a moment.
This any good?
- This is for 1,000.
- Yes. Any good?
'Instead of sitting waiting for the money to come in, 'I'm taking the opportunity of trying out my motor sledges.'
You see the idea, Dr Nansen?
The wheels make their own road as it goes along.
- What do you think of it?
- Yes, what do you think?
I'm afraid Dr Nansen doesn't like motors, dear.
That is so.
I like dogs.
I can't help feeling that we should use every modern invention that comes along. Somebody's got to try these things out. I even thought of taking a wireless telegraph apparatus, but it's too heavy.
You are right, Captain, but I like dogs. Yes, yes, that's what Amundsen says too. I've been hearing about his plans for the North Pole. Amundsen's a pupil of mine, as you might say, so of course he believes in dogs. Well, perhaps I'm prejudiced, but I should hate to repeat the experience I had
on the Discovery expedition.
You see, we look on dogs
rather differently,
more as...
well, more as friends.
Captain, a friend in need
is a friend indeed.
This Antarctic of yours
is a cold and cruel place.
Even worse than the North.
A dog is an animal.
When a dog is finished,
he is still some use to other dogs,
and even to man if need be.
That machine of yours,
when it is finished,
it's just a heap of metal in the snow.
You cannot eat it.
That's true,
and I am not forgetting
the lessons of the past,
but I want to take the new things as well.
I shall take dogs, ponies and motors.
Well, I would take dogs, dogs and dogs.
Hello, Bill. Morning, Cherry.
  - Morning.
  - Good to see you.
  - How's Kathleen?
  - Splendid. Come along in.
  - Morning, Atch.
  - And the baby?
Peter? Wonderful, bald as a coot.
Morning, sir.
I'd know that mug anywhere.
Come out of it, Taff Evans.
I was rather surprised you didn't apply
to come with me again this time, Evans.
Didn't have to, sir.
I knew you'd send for me sooner or later.
My release is through at last.
I'm afraid there's no hurry, Bill.
  - Good morning, sir.
  - Good morning, Teddy.
Have a look at that.
At the rate the money's coming in, you could go on carving up grouse till Christmas. Rather depressing. Time's getting on. And none of us are getting any younger.

11:
not to make any more appointments. He turned up from the Persian Gulf this morning, sir. I couldn't say you wouldn't see him. Indian Marine Lieutenant. Doesn't say how old he is. 26, sir. Today as a matter of fact.
- May I come in, sir?
- Well, you are in, aren't you?
There's more to come, sir, with permission.
- The door was open, sir.
- True.
I heard my name and I think I did mention my age, sir. There, sir, 26. Is that real or something you stuffed inside your coat? Quite real, sir. Hm. Bill, how's this? Well, I'd rather he hit Teddy than me.
- May he hit Teddy?
- Mm, I don't see why not.
Excuse me, sir, but I'm a good deal senior to Bowers. Pity.
- Sit down, Bowers.
- Thank you, sir. Why do you want to join this show? I suppose you want to be among the first to reach the Pole. Is that it?
- Out for a bit of white ribbon, eh?
- No, sir. I know it sounds stupid to say I want adventure, but, er... What do you mean by adventure?
Well, sir, to get some extra knowledge
of the stars and land and weather and...
And?
Other men's jobs.
Well, Bowers, to date
we've had 6,042 applications.
I'm afraid I've made up my mind
we can't take anybody else.
Hello? Oh, good morning, Sir Clements.
What?
The grant is through.
How much?
I see. Yes, yes, of course.
Well, thank you very much
for letting us know at once.
Yes. Goodbye, sir.
- How much?
- 20,000.
- A lot short of what we wanted.
- Yes, but it makes it just possible.
We shall have to cut down a bit,
that's all.
- How about my side of things?
- Don't worry.
I won't cut a penny on your side.
I promised you the greatest scientific
expedition that ever left England.
- How on earth will we do it?
- One ship instead of two. There she is.
We can go, Bill. We're going.
What do you want?
Oh, yes, I was just going
to kick you out, wasn't I?
- Yes, sir.
- Yes.
Well, I'll tell you what I'll do.
I'll take you. How's that?
- Thank you, sir.
- Right.
- Oh, Bowers.
- Yes, sir?
- Many happy returns.
- Thank you very much, sir.
'The first leg of our journey,
halfway round the world.'

Cherry.

Just a minute, son. Just a minute.

Excuse me, sir.

Oi, Jehu, stop it!

Could you tell me

where Captain Scott is, please?

That's right, sonny. You come to Uncle.

He's a Russian, he don't understand.

Ah, this is for the owner. Up there.

Not on the bridge, on the poop deck.

Telegram, Captain Scott.

Oh? Oh, thank you.

Thanks.

- Any message for Peter?
- Tell him I'll bring him a penguin.

Excuse me.

Good bye.

God bless and keep you, my dearest,

until...

All visitors ashore! Come along, please!

Think of me when you make those footmarks.

Every step of the way.

Up gangway!

Hold on!

All right, carry on.

This is a bit thick, thousands of miles

from the nearest bookie.

- What's up?
- Red-hot tip for the National.
- Is that a race?
- A race? Why...

Hook, line and sinker!

- Hard luck, Titus.
- Thank you.

The Grouse Commission are thinking of us.

- Splendid.
- They don't say what, of course.

Here's a good one, sir.

"Love to Hampstead

and kind regards to the rest of you,

"Helen Fields."

Oh, wait a minute.

I've got another one here somewhere.
"I'm going south, Amundsen."
- South?
- But I thought it was understood.
- Everyone thought it was understood.
- I can't believe it.
It's perfectly true. Read it yourself.
From Madeira. That means he's started.
- Why didn't he tell anyone?
- Not very sporting.
He's changed his mind.
Anyone's allowed to change his mind.
He was going north, now he's going south.
That's all.
It means a lot to you, doesn't it,
getting there first?
Of course it does.
You know damn well it does.
The Antarctic's a big enough thing to be
up against without this fellow butting in.
Why has he suddenly changed his mind?
He's trying to make a race of it
and we're not rigged for racing.
Quite, Con, quite.
What on earth would you do
with all us scientists?
We'd be falling over each other.
You're right, Bill. You're right.
This is a scientific expedition.
I am not going to be stampeded
and I am not going to take any risks.
In fact, I'm not going to race.
I wonder what route the blighter's taking.
'Wonderful to be free at last
from problems so difficult to handle.
'Whatever lies ahead,
I am now on my own ground.'
There you are, sir. The Great Ice Barrier.
400 miles long and 100 foot high.
'This is obviously the best place,
'a sloping shore
and a good stretch of bay ice.'
Steady, keep her straight on the lines.
Mush! Mush!
'With ponies, motor sledges,
dogs and men parties,
'we've done an excellent job
of transporting.
'Bowers proves a perfect treasure.
'There's not a single case he doesn't know
'or a single article
which he cannot find at once.
'So, we are landed and the hut is up
eight days after our arrival.
'A very good record.'
Sir.
- What is it, McKenzie?
- Beg pardon, sir.
We were wondering if you'd take
old puss with you to the Pole, sir.
- Sure to show up well against the snow.
- Yes, sir.
Hear, hear, sir.
He'd show up well anywhere.
No, no, it's very good
of you fellows to suggest it,
but I mustn't take the luck from the ship.
- Great minds think alike, eh?
- Yes, sir.
- Goodbye, Pennell.
- Goodbye, sir.
- Best of luck to you all.
- And to you.
Thanks. See you in about...
well, a year's time.
Yes, sir.
'The ship will drop Campbell's party
up the coast
'on her way back to New Zealand.
'What news shall we have for her
when she returns next summer, I wonder.
'There is much for us all to do
while the daylight lasts.
'When the sun does go,
we shan't see him for half a year.'
Oi, oi, oi!
Hello.
Oi, don't go away.
Come back. There's nothing to worry about.
Well, the winter's almost on us now, and that means sitting tight here for the next six months. Seems a good moment to run over what's ahead when the sun comes back. This chart makes things pretty easy to understand, I think.

- Can you see all right at the back?
- Yes, thank you, sir.

We're here, just above the sea ice. The first stage is the Great Ice Barrier. About 400 miles to cross. Then come mountains 9,000 feet high. We get up them by the Beardmore Glacier. There's over 100 miles of that. Lastly, the plateau. Another 350 miles along that to the Pole.

Now, about ways and means. The secret of travel in the Antarctic is food and fuel. Hot food will take a man further than cold food. And remember, there's no such thing as living off the country. Every ounce will have to be carried and depot'd all the way along the route to supply us on the way home. Give me a hand with the other one, Bill, will you?

Now, you see these depots marked here? Up to the last, One Ton. These are the ones we put down this summer in order to save weight next summer. Beyond, on the outward journey, the southern party will put down more depots every so often. The whole resources of the entire party will be devoted to getting four men into a position from which they can make their final bid for the Pole. Outward to the foot of the glacier, tractors, ponies and dogs will haul as much as they can as far as they can. From then on, we'll ask no more
of machines and animals.
It'll be up to us.
From the glacier to the Pole
and all the way back, man-hauling.
Now, the time margin is very small.
We've found already that our ponies
can't stand the lowest temperatures.
So it will mean starting
later than I'd hoped.
And we shall have to move
faster than Shackleton did
to have any chance of reaching
the Pole and getting back.
Getting back, mark you,
before the darkness
and winter blizzards set in again.
Now, is that all clear? Any questions?
- I know one I'd like to ask him.
- Which four, eh?
It's the ship. She's back.
- What's the trouble, Pennell?
- Came across Amundsen.
- Where?
- Bay of Whales.
The Bay of Whales, eh?
400 miles away.
That's practically next door out here.
- How many men has he got with him?
- Only 19 all told, sir.
He has more than 100 dogs.
Never seen so many dogs.
He's got some cheek.
We found this place first.
Fellow has a million miles of ice
to choose from and he has to pick ours.
Ah, well, the Antarctic's big enough.
Right, Pennell. Thanks for the news.
Now, you'd better get out again
before the sea freezes over.
I shall be glad
when we've finished with the Pole
and we can get down
to some real work, won't you, Bill?
- Hot char anywhere?
- Oh, shut that door, Birdie!
- Giving tongue all right, aren't they?
- Mm.
Well, good night, all.
Good night, Ponko.
Brrrr!
Good night, Uncle Bill.
Good night, Atch.
Abide with me
Upon the eventide
The darkness deepens
Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail
And comforts flee
Help of the helpless
Oh, abide with me
I need Thy presence
Every passing hour
What but Thy grace...
Good night, sir.
Good night, Lashly.
Who like Thyself
My guide and stay can be
Through cloud and sunshine
Lord
Abide with me
Gentlemen, one more toast.
- Sweethearts and wives.
- Sweethearts and wives.
"Here's to myself and another
"and may that other be she
"who drinks to herself and another
"and may that other be me."
- Jolly good.
- I'll drink to that.
"Other be I," surely?
Gentlemen, the famous Russian dancers,
Dimitri and Oatesikowski.
Very good indeed. Very good, sir.
Gentlemen?
Mr Ponting will now recite.
All right, then.
Give us the doings, someone.
The Sleeping Bag, a poem.
Hurray!
On the outside grows the fur side
On the inside grows the skin side
So the fur side is the outside
and the skin side is the inside
One side likes the skin side inside
and the fur side on the outside
Others like the skin side outside
and the fur side on the inside
If you turn the skin side outside,
thinking you will side with that side
Then the soft side, fur side's inside,
which, some argue, is the wrong side
If you turn the fur side outside
as you say it grows on that side
Then your outside's next to the skin side
which for comfort's not the right side
For the skin side is the cold side
and your outside's not your warm side
And two cold sides side by side
are not right sides, one side decides
If you decide to side with that side,
turn the top side fur side inside
Then the cold side, hard side, skin side
is beyond all question inside out
Well done that man! Well done that man!
Well done, Bowers!
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even
Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel
When a poor man came in sight
Gathering winter fuel
Christopher, you're a toad.
Well, you're in good form, Soldier.
How about these fellows?
Not too dusty, considering.
Will they get us
across the Barrier in the spring?
Can't say yet.
There's one or two
I'm a bit worried about.
Nobby's all right.
And so is James Pigg.
Old Jehu, I'm not so sure.
This fellow Amundsen,
can he do it, do you think,
just with dogs?
Can't say, Soldier, can't say.
These Norwegians are better
with dogs than we are and...
our using these chaps
means making a later start.
His base is 80 miles nearer the Pole,
but he'll be crossing unknown country.
Seems to me it all depends on whether
he finds another way up to the plateau.
It's just a matter of luck.
But they're tough people, Soldier.
No doubt about that.
'It's glorious to stand bathed
in brilliant sunshine once more.
'The future is in the lap of the gods.
'I can think of nothing left undone
to deserve success.'
- Come along, Crean.
- Just a minute, sir.
Hurry up, Ponko.
- Hurry up, Teddy.
- Aye, aye, sir.
Right, Lashly. Let's have another go.
Right-oh, Teddy.
Good luck. Right-oh, Day.
Come on, the Baltic Fleet.
'The slowest ponies first
'with Atkinson, Wright, Keohane.'
Birdie!
'Bowers, Crean, Cherry-Garrard.
'Evans with Snatcher.
'Evans is a tower of strength,
as sound and as hard as ever.
'Wilson with Nobby.
'Oates with Christopher,
'the biggest handful of the lot.
'And myself with Snippetts.'
Good luck!
'16 men all told.
'Four days out, all ponies going well.'
Mush! Mush!
Mush! Mush!
'There's nothing like Antarctic air
for sharpening the appetite.
'We're always ready
for our mug of pemmican hoosh,
'followed by tea or cocoa.'
Here you are, Stareek.

Hampstead!
"Just a heap of metal in the snow."
There's still the other one.
I hope so, Bill. I certainly hope so.
I'm afraid that's it, sir.

Well, we'll just have to man-haul
our load till the others catch us up.
'Both motors have fallen out.
'Now all depends on the ponies.'

Whoa, back!
Whoa, Christopher! Whoa, back!
'We've taken to marching
by the midnight sun,
'so that the ponies get rested
at the warmest time of the day.'

Sir, I've been totting up
on the hay we have aboard.
Is none of them ponies coming back?
Afraid not, Crean.

Soon meat, Stareek.
Much meat.
Fresh meat.
'We are now more than halfway
to the glacier,
'but it's still rather touch and go
with the ponies.'

There it is.
Hey, Teddy!
Teddy!

Sir.

Congratulations.
150 miles since the motors let you down.
- Well done, the lot of you.
- Thank you.

Will they manage it, Soldier?
Shall we get them as far as the glacier?
Old Jehu's about done, I'm afraid.
Still, he's paid his way.
It's strange, but when I write to Oriana,
I can see so clearly
the place the letter's going to.
I mean, where she is.
But her face itself is always misty.
Yes.
Yes, I know what you mean.
When I try to see Kathleen
there's always some feature
I can't quite get.
Very odd that. I feel just the same
about an old horse of mine.
I can see the paddock all right,
but can't get the old chap's muzzle.
Well, this is as far as we go together.
- Thank you, Day. Thank you, Hooper.
- Thank you, sir.
- Goodbye.
- Good luck, sir.
- Good luck.
- Thank you, sir.
- Don't forget the letters, Day.
- No, sir.
- Ready?
- Right.
- Goodbye, you fellows.
- Goodbye.
Jehu.
Atch.
'The blizzard has lost us
five days already
'and we are now
well behind Shackleton's time.
'We must get the ponies on
a little further.'
We can't be far from the glacier now,
but wherever we are, this is the finish.
Crean.
Birdie!
Now, Christopher, old man.
Look!
Well, they did it.
I congratulate you, Titus.
And I thank you, Titus.
The glacier tomorrow, Bill.
- Dimitri?
- Sir?
Here's the mail.
Goodbye and good luck.
Goodbye, sir.
Good luck.
- Goodbye, Dimitri.
- Goodbye, Ruski.
- Good luck, boy.
- Dos vedanya!
Mush! Mush!
Well, goodbye, Meares.
Have a good run home.
Thank you, sir,
and the best of luck to you.
Thanks.
Mush!
Goodbye, sir.
Goodbye, Mother Meares.
'12 men with three sledges, man-hauling.'
Brandy, Uncle Bill? What's this for?
The use of that, my dear Titus,
is purely medicinal.
Kindly hand it to me.
'We've climbed 4,000 feet.
'We've been toiling for five days
but are barely halfway up.
'Surely we were right
not to bring the dogs on.'
Halt.
That way.
Aye, aye, sir.
Ready? Heave.
Ready?
Heave.
Birdie?
Better leave a flag here.
Seems to be a good way up.
Aye, aye, sir.
See that nunatak?
That's what Shackleton called
Buckley Island.
Top of the glacier, sir?
Yes, that's right. Our last big climb.
At this rate, sir, we should be at the top
in time for our Christmas dinner.
That's right, Lashly.
Merry Christmas is the word.
Take the strain, Crean.
Toss him a line, Birdie.
- You all right, Lashly?
- Yes, sir.
Sure to be. It's my birthday too.
Many happy returns, Lashly.
Right, Birdie.
Right, Crean. Bowline.
Heave.
Bowline.
Taff, caramel?
Thank you, sir.
- Con?
- Thank you, Bill.
- Atch?
- Thank you, Uncle Bill.
Soldier, you're a marvel.
Well, Christmas comes but once a year.
Christmas comes and Atch goes, eh?
Yes, worst luck.
Thank you.
Pemmican and pony?
How do you do it, Titus?
Perfectly simple.
Been giving you short rations all week.
Oh!
- Well, it was worth it.
- Thank you, sir.
Atch.
Yes?
What do you have to have
to be given brandy?
Leprosy.
Plague.
Or just an ordinary fit.
- Fit, eh?
- Hm.
Er, more, sir?
- Oh, thanks.
- Oh, sorry, sir.
- That's all right, Atch.
We are a bit crowded in here tonight.
We ought to eat by numbers.
- Don't put too much faith in numbers.
- Carry on, Evans.
- Story coming.
- Well, hardly a story exactly, sir.
But I remember
when we was at Whale Island,
we had a PO gunnery instructor.
He was on one of them guns
with the new-fangled breech action.
Good, but tricky.
You had to press the button
near the breech with your left thumb
and then whang in the block
with your right hand.
Trouble was,
some on the course gets so excited,
they gets the movements
too close together.
In goes the block
and off comes the top of their thumb.
This PO gets tired of seeing
a lot of people wandering about
with no tops to their thumbs
and he calls the class together
and he says, "Now, listen,
you flat-footed soldiers.
"Let's have no more of this.
"I'll demonstrate the drill
to you slowly, by numbers.
"One, I opens the breech.
"Two, I presses the button
with my left thumb.
"And three, I sends home the block
with my right hand.
"And that's how you lose the top
of your bloody thumb."
Keep back! Keep back!
Oh! Brandy!
Brandy! Brandy!
- That's out of date, Titus.
- Brandy.
This is the modern treatment.
No, Uncle Bill! Uncle Bill, stop it!
No, stop it!
No!
'9,000 feet up,
'the Barrier and the glacier behind us.
'It should be level-going now,
all the way to our goal.'
- Goodbye, Atch.
- Goodbye, sir.
- Look out for us in March.
- Right.
With any luck, we'll be back
before the ship has to go.
- I hope I haven't disappointed you.
- No, no, Cherry.
It was a sheer toss-up
whether you or Titus went on from here.
- Was it really?
- Mm.
- Who's going to go on the last lap?
- I don't suppose it's settled yet.
Four out of the eight of us.
We're all hoping.
Ready?
Heave.
- Goodbye, boys.
- Goodbye, Ted.
- Goodbye, boys.
- Goodbye, you fellows.
- Goodbye.
- Goodbye, Atch.
'Eight men with two sledges, man-hauling.'
- This wind!
- Help us on the way back, though.
Hardest decision of the lot, Bill.
And the one where you can't help me.
Can we depot our skis here, sir?
Help lighten our sledge.
Yes, all right.
Leave your lot here.
The return party can pick them up. Whoever they are.
We'll make our lunch camp here, let you get ahead a bit. 'Is my team the best? 'Is it? 'Are we all at our best? 'Bill and I? Yes, all right, that's two. 'And Taff Evans, of course. 'Soldier? Soldier too, then. All right. 'Our four. 'Our four. 'What about Teddy's?'

Halt.

Carry on, Bill. Ready?

Heave.

'The best four men. 'The best... Who are the best four? Teddy? 'Birdie? 'Lashly? 'Crean?'

Last letters home go tomorrow. You're too big, both of you. What the Captain wants is a middler, about 5' 8". - And what might you be? - 5' 8".

Oh!

Here comes the Captain. Well done, lads. First-class job.

Lashly, Crean. It's only fair to tell you now that you'll not be coming on with us. I'm very sorry indeed. You've done splendidly and I shall never forget it. - Thank you, sir. - Thank you, sir. And me, sir? - You'll be coming on. - Thank you, sir.

Good for you, Taff.
You're a lucky devil, Taff.
You always were.
Teddy?
Yes, sir?
About tomorrow.
I've given a lot of thought to the matter, and I've decided that my four should go on.
I see, sir.
There's one other thing.
I want to take Bowers.
If you can spare him.
- Five, sir?
- Yes.
Right.
And, Teddy?
Sorry.
Thank you, sir.
I'm taking five, Bill.
- Five?
- Yes, you, me, Bowers, Oates and Taff Evans
as the strongest and biggest.
A scientist, two sailors and a soldier.
What better companions could a man have, eh?
'Dear Kathleen,
'a last note from a hopeful position.
'I think it's going to be all right.'
- Goodbye, Crean.
- Goodbye, Lashly. Best of luck.
- Goodbye, Lashly.
- Goodbye, sir.
Well, Teddy, we couldn't have got this far without you.
Thank you, sir, and good luck.
Thanks. See you sometime in March, eh?
Ready?
Heave.
Let's give them a cheer, lads.
- Hurray!
- Hurray!
'Five men with one sledge, 'man-hauling.
'This surface is horrible.  
'Crystals like sand.  
'Bowers on foot  
has the hardest time of it,  
'but he's an undefeated little sportsman.'  
- Not ready yet, Titus?  
- No, not yet.

**Latitude 88:**
- Farthest south, eh?  
- Good-oh.  
- Beyond Shackleton at last.  
- That's great, sir.  
Something the matter with your hand?  
Only a cut, sir. It's nothing.  
I heals easy.  
At least, I do at home.  
'Cooking for five takes a seriously  
longer time than cooking for four.  
'It's an item I had not considered  
when reorganising.'  
'Can we keep up these marches?  
'It's a critical time.  
'But we ought to do the trick.'  
How far now, sir?  
About 27 miles, two good marches.  
I'm sorry but my sleeping bag  
is not on the sledge.  
Halt.  
It can't have fallen further back  
than our last halt.  
May I go, sir?  
I'm coming with you.  
Can't trust myself to speak, sir.  
Well, don't, then, Taff.  
'We only had to go back a couple of miles,  
'but it cost us two whole hours.'  
Can't be more than five miles now, sir.  
Sir.  
There.  
Amundsen.  
Look.  
Well, I suppose it was meant to be.  
They've left their names.
There were five of them, apparently.
And there's a letter
for the King of Norway
with a note asking Captain Scott
to be so kind as to deliver it.
He's forgotten to stamp it.
Birdie, you'd better check the position.
'The Pole.
'Yes, but under very different
circumstances from those expected.
'It's a bitter disappointment,
'and I am very sorry
for my loyal companions.'
Smile, please.
'The wind is blowing hard,
'and there is that curious damp feeling
in the air which chills one to the bone.
'Great God, this is an awful place.'
'January 18th. All the daydreams must go.
'Now for the run home
and a desperate struggle.
'I wonder if we can do it.'
Cherry asked me
to give you this at the Pole.
Well done that man.
Sorry you chaps don't like chocolate.
- Soldier.
- Thank you, sir.
- Bill.
- Thank you.
- Birdie.
- Thank you, sir.
- Evans.
- Thank you, sir.
That hand still bothering you?
Hardly at all now, sir.
Well, lads, only 900 miles to go.
Ready?
Heave.
Ready?
Heave.
This is better, eh?
Birdie?
Your skis must be round here somewhere.
- Keep an eye open for them.
- Aye, aye, sir.
'The wind is playing strange tricks.
'Instead of blowing steadily northward,
as it did when we came,
'it keeps dropping and leaving us
the full weight of the sledge.'
Land-ho!
'I don't like the easy way
Oates and Evans get frostbitten.'
- Sir?
- Mm?
- You know where Teddy turned back.
- Yes. What about it?
According to that note of his,
we've done the same distance
half a day better.
Half a day. Do you hear that, Soldier?
We're half a day better than Teddy.
Good-oh!
A day's march nearer home, Birdie.
A day's march nearer steaks.
Large, thick, juicy, sizzly ones.
Oh, don't.
With mushrooms.
And beer.
And beer?
Beer of course, gallons of it.
Had an awful nightmare
the other night, Birdie.
Dreamt that Simpson's had been burnt down.
Hello, Bill. What have you got this time?
Quite an interesting day.
This hoosh smells good. Yours, Con?
Birdie reckons we've done
half a day's better time than Teddy did.
Good, good.
What are these, Bill?
Sea plants mostly, and some tree fossils.
Good heavens. This must have been
quite a warm spot once upon a time.
And look at this.
Coal, by Jove.
"What's the prospect of trade
between this city and the Antarctic?"
Coal, Evans. Catch.
Ooh!
- What's the matter, man?
- It's nothing, sir.
Quite all right.
Only a bit awkward, that's all.
'I am indeed glad to think
that we've done with the plateau.
'Another week of those conditions might
have had a very bad effect on Evans.'
See your flag anywhere, Birdie?
No sign of it, sir.
We'll try a bit back and to the right.
Evans, off with your harness.
Take the aft end of the sledge.
Understand?
Aye, aye, sir.
'There is no doubt
Evans is a good deal run down.
'I think Wilson, Bowers and I
are as fit as possible,
'but Oates feels the cold and fatigue
more than we do.'
Look out, steady!
There it is, sir. There's the flag.
A shadow.
'Evans keeps saying,
as he would, that he's quite well.
'How can a man be quite well
with hands like that?'
Halt.
Can't be far now.
Birdie, try up that hill.
See if you can see the cairn.
Right, sir.
What's wrong, Evans?
It's loose, sir. It's come loose, sir.
Have it right in a moment.
Hold on. I'll do it.
You get your harness off.
It's only my old hand, sir.
Makes me a bit slow.
I can't see the cairn,
but I can see the Barrier.

How's that?

Try and move your foot.

- Sure you can manage?
- I'll be fine, sir.

That's the man, Taff. Take your time.

We'll be camping soon.

Ready? Heave.

Halt.

What is it, Taff?

I'm all right, sir, quite well. Taff?

'It is a terrible thing
to lose a companion in this way,
'to leave him here after all the miles
we've sledged together.'

Plateau done, glacier done.

400 miles of Barrier and we're home.

We've got to do more miles a day, Bill.

We ought to find it warmer
down here, anyhow.

Sir.

60 degrees of frost.

Can't last.

'Only five miles again yesterday.
'This will never do.'

Ready?

No, no, no.

Tortoise beat the hare in the end.

Right, Soldier?

Ready, sir.

Heave.

'There is no getting away from the fact
that we are not going strong.
'And I'm afraid Soldier's foot is bad.'

When I get home,

I'm never going to walk another step.

- Ride wherever I go.
- Even in London?

London.

- Know the Empire promenade, Birdie?
- Funny thing, I've never been.

First night home, I'll be there.

You must take me with you, Titus.
But you'll have
to leave your horse outside.
I ought to tell you that
we haven't too much fuel in hand.
If we're still short at Mount Hooper,
we'll try going on cold meals.
We may have no choice.
Funny, used to have
what they call a good leg for a boot.
Wouldn't think it now, would you, Bill?
Bill, what chance have I got?
A good one, Titus.
How far is it to Mount Hooper depot now?
Eight and a half miles.
We'll do it in no time, Soldier.
Purely medicinal.
'What shall we find at Mount Hooper depot?
'If oil is short again...'
There she is.
See, old chap?
Managed it all right.
- Wasn't so bad.
- Get the spades, Birdie.
Here it is.
It's not full.
The seal's not broken.
Odd things happen out here.
It must be evaporation.
Yes, but...
Come on, chaps.
No good arguing the whys and wherefores.
Up tent.
'Among ourselves
we are unendingly cheerful.
'But what each man feels in his heart,
I can only guess.'
Letting up a little, I think.
I hope I don't wake tomorrow, Bill.
I'm just going outside.
I may be away some time.
'A brave man and a gallant gentleman.
'This intense cold convinces me
'that the season has broken
far earlier than I expected.'
We'll be all right at One Ton.
It's full of stuff.
I thought for a moment
it might be old Titus.
Stupid of me.
Sorry.
Only 11 miles now, Bill. Two good marches.
One if the snow holds off.
'Captain Scott is now lying
in this tent with a frozen foot.
'I am afraid he will never walk again.
'If the wind drops,
'Birdie and I are going to try
to reach the next depot and return.
'We have come together
'1,800 miles,
'and are now only 11 miles
from stores in plenty.
'Only 11 miles.'
11 miles.
11 miles.
'Think of me
when you make those footmarks.'
'Every step of the way.'
'My own dearest mother,
'I should so like to have 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.
'There will be no shame
'and you will know
I have struggled to the end,
'your ever loving son,
'to the end of this life and the next,
'when God shall wipe away
all tears from our eyes.'
'God knows I am sorry
to be the cause of sorrow
'to anyone in the world.
'But everyone must die.
'All the things I had hoped to do
with you after the expedition
'are as nothing now.
'My only regret is leaving you
to struggle through your life alone.
'All is for the best
to those who love God.
'And, oh, my Ori, we have both
loved him with all our lives.
'All is well.'
'For my own sake,
I do not regret this journey.
'We took risks. We knew we took them.
'Things have come out against us.
'And therefore we have
no cause for complaint.
'Had we lived,
'I should have had a tale to tell
'of the hardihood, endurance
and courage of my companions,
'which would have stirred the heart
of every Englishman.
'It seems a pity,
'but I don't think I can write more.
'These rough notes and our dead bodies
'must tell the tale.
'For God's sake,
'look after our people.'
Halt.