

ANTARCTICA QUOTATIONS

SELECTED BY

CAPTAIN PETER W . DAMISCH

for

Lesley J. Friedsam

in honour of their first, true meeting 24 December, 2003

and their wedding 19 February, 2006

at the grave site of Sir Ernest Shackleton, Grytviken, South Georgia Island

The First Wedding in History at this Wondrously Beautiful & Peaceful Location

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“That this congress record its opinion that the exploration of the Antarctic Regions is the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken. That in view of the additions to knowledge in almost every branch of science which would result from such a scientific exploration the Congress recommends that the scientific societies throughout the world should urge in whatever way seems to them most effective, that this work should be undertaken before the close of the century.”

Sixth International Geographical Congress
1895

“The land looks like a fairytale.”

Roald Amundsen (1872-1928)

“Victory awaits those who have everything in order --

– People call that luck.

Defeat is certain for those who have forgotten to take the necessary precautions in time --

– That is called bad luck.”

Roald Amundson "14 Dec 1911"

“Adventure is just bad planning.”

Roald Amundsen (1872-1928)

“So we arrived, and planted our flag at the geographical South Pole. Thanks be to God!”

Roald Amundsen

“Southwards, a magnificent Alpine country, illuminated by the rising sun, rose slowly from the sea; there were mighty fells with snowy crowns and with sharp, uncovered teeth, around the valleys through which enormous, broad rivers of ice came flowing to the sea.”

J. Gunnar Andersson

Describing South Georgia Island, 1902

“The first time you come down for the adventure. The second time for the money.
And the third time because you can't function anywhere else anymore.”

also

“The first time you come down for the adventure. The second time for the camaraderie.
And the third time because no one else will have you.”

Anonymous

“The Alps of the South Atlantic” “Galapagos of the South” “Diamond in the Scotia Necklace”
“a saw-tooth thrust through the tortured upheaval of mountain and glacier that falls in chaos to the sea.”

Anonymous

Descriptions of South Georgia Island

“To our Wives and Sweethearts . . . May they never meet!”

Anonymous Toast

“Many are cold, but few are frozen.”

Anonymous

“For Worsley, navigating had ceased to be a science and had turned into a kind of sorcery. To get a sight of the sun meant Worsley had to kneel on the thwart, where Vincent and McCarthy would hug him around the waist to keep him from pitching out of the boat as it bucked and leaped over the waves. Then, while Shackleton stood by with the chronometer, Worsley would wait until the boat reached the top of the wave and the horizon came into sight, then shout “Now!” as he shot the sun. His books were fast turning into useless pulp. His sun sights were the crudest of guesses, and to look up positions in the tables he had to peel apart the wet pages one by one. Making his calculations with a pencil became laughably impossible. The pitched and rolled so badly that he could barely read his own scribbles. The weather was so foul that in the whole journey he managed to take a sight of the sun only four times.”

Jennifer Armstrong

Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World

“Right here is where I wish to tell about the only unfair deal that happened on the expedition. There were not enough fur bags for all hands, so some of the wool bags were used to make up the deficiency. We drew lots to see which kind of a bag each would get. There was some crooked work in the drawing as Sir Ernest, Mr. Wild (second in command), Captain Worsley, and some of the other officers all drew wool bags. The fine warm fur bags all went to the men under them. I think that action was enough to show what wonderful men were in charge. They always took the brunt of things and when there was any danger they were first to go ahead. The safety of his men was Sir Ernest’s first thought, his own last.”

William L. Bakewell

The American on The Endurance

“You're going uphill, chasing the horizon. Sometimes it's above your head, at your midsection, or beneath your feet, but you never catch it. At times you can see blue sky above you and yet there's a ground blizzard around your feet. The wind swirls particles of ice and snow, and the sun catches them and you see reds and turquoises and purples. Each day is remarkable in and of itself.”

Ann Bancroft

“O, how glorious would it be to set my heel upon the Pole and turn myself 360° in a second!”

Joseph Banks

Botanist on James Cook's voyage, 1769-71

“Shackleton found in polar exploration an outlet for his restless energy, love of adventure, and zest for life. In the more orderly walks of civilization his lack of convention, his intolerance of shams, and his impetuous candor made him less easy to satisfy. His success as an explore lay in the boldness of his conceptions, his resourcefulness, and his good leadership.”

Robert Neil Rudmose Brown

“I hold that a man should strive to the uttermost for his life's set prize”

Robert Browning

Reverse Side of Shackleton's Grave Site Headstone

“Sir Ernest Shackleton synthesized every splendid quality; courage, always quiet and modest; limitless abnegation; fine tenacity . . . all applied to the conquest of universal science, with a life-long devotion. Explorer of unknown regions, a famous geographer, interested in everything that tends to give a man a full knowledge of this planet on which he lives. Shackleton is not only one of the great glories of England, but is also a magnificent type of humanity. In an age of war-like heroism, he was the hero, calm and strong, who left behind him neither death nor grief.”

Baltasar Brum, 1922

Eulogy by President of Uruguay

“I don’t know how they did it, except that they had to – three men of the heroic age of Antarctic exploration with 50 feet of rope between them, and a carpenters’ adze.”

Duncan Carse

1956 British survey expedition report

First recreation of Shackleton crossing of

South Georgia (40 years later)

“Polar exploration is at once the cleanest and most isolated way of having a bad time which has been devised.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

Opening sentence, Introduction to
The Worst Journey in the World

“There are many reasons which send men to the Poles, and the Intellectual Force uses them all. But the desire for knowledge for its own sake is the one which really counts and there is no field for the collection of knowledge which at the present time can be compared to the Antarctic.

Exploration is the physical expression of the Intellectual Passion.

And I tell you, if you have the desire for knowledge and the power to give it physical expression, go out and explore. If you are a brave man you will do nothing: if you are fearful you may do much, for none but cowards have need to prove their bravery. Some will tell you that you are mad, and nearly all will say, 'What is the use ?' For we are a nation of shopkeepers, and no shopkeeper will look at research which does not promise him a financial return within a year. And so you will sledge nearly alone, but those with whom you sledge will not be shopkeepers: that is worth a good deal. If you march your Winter Journeys you will have your reward, so long as all you want is a penguin's egg."

Apsley Cherry-Garrard, 1921

Closing Sentence, Final Chapter
The Worst Journey in the World

“They are extraordinarily like children, these little people of the Antarctic world, either like children, or like old men, full of their own importance and late for dinner, in their black tail-coats and white shirt-fronts — and rather portly withal.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard about penguins

“All the world loves a penguin: I think it is because in many respects they are like ourselves, and in some respects what we should like to be. Had we but half their physical courage none could stand against us . . . Their little bodies are so full of curiosity that they have no room for fear. They like mountaineering, and joy-riding on ice-floes: they even like to drill.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard, 1921

The Worst Journey in the World

“Take it all in all, I do not believe anybody on earth has a worse time than an Emperor penguin.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

“The life of an Adelie penguin is one of the most unchristian and successful in the world. The penguin which went in for being a true believer would never stand the ghost of a chance. Watch them got to bathe. Some fifty or sixty agitated birds are gathered upon the ice-foot, peering over the edge, telling one another how nice it will be, and what a good dinner they are going to have. But this is all swank: they are really worried by a horrid suspicion that a sea-leopard is waiting to eat the first to dive. The really noble bird, according to our theories, would say, “I will go first and if I am killed I shall at any rate have died unselfishly, sacrificing my life for my companions”; and in time all the most noble birds would be dead. What they really do is to try and persuade a companion of weaker mind to plunge: failing this, they hastily pass a conscription act and push him over. And then – bang, helter-skelter, in go all the rest.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

The Worst Journey in the World

“It is clear then that the Adélie penguin will show a certain spirit of selfishness in tackling his hereditary enemies. But when it comes to the danger of which he is ignorant his courage betrays want of caution. Meares and Dimitri exercised the dog-teams out upon the larger floes when we were held up for any length of time. One day a team was tethered by the side of the ship, and a penguin sighted them and hurried from afar off. The dogs became frantic with excitement as he neared them: he supposed it was a greeting, and the louder they barked and the more they strained at their ropes, the faster he bustled to meet them. He was extremely angry with a man who went and saved him from a very sudden end, clinging to his trousers with his beak, and furiously beating his shins with his flippers. It was not an uncommon sight to see a little Adélie penguin standing within a few inches of the nose of a dog which was almost frantic with desire and passion.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

The Worst Journey in the World

“This was the first sight we had of a rookery of the little Adélie penguin. Hundreds of thousands of birds dotted the shore, and there were many thousands in the sea round the ship. As we came to know these rookeries better we came to look upon these quaint creatures more as familiar friends than as casual acquaintances. Whatever a penguin does has individuality, and he lays bare his whole life for all to see. He cannot fly away. And because he is quaint in all that he does, but still more because he is fighting against bigger odds than any other bird, and fighting always with the most gallant pluck, he comes to be considered as something apart from the ordinary bird—sometimes solemn, sometimes humorous, enterprising, chivalrous, cheeky—and always (unless you are driving a dog-team) a welcome and, in some ways, an almost human friend.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

The Worst Journey in the World

“In Antarctica you get to know people so well that in comparison you do not seem to know the people in civilization at all.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

The Worst Journey in the World

“Talk of ex-soldiers: give me ex-Antarctics, unsoured and with their ideals intact. They could sweep the world.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard

“The ice was here, the ice was there,
the ice was all round:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!”

Coleridge

“The inner parts of the country were not less savage and horrible. The wild rocks raised their lofty summits, till they were lost in the clouds, and the valleys lay covered with everlasting snow. Not a tree was to be seen, nor a shrub even big enough to make a toothpick.”

Captain James Cook

First description & landing on South Georgia Island

17 January 1775

“If Antarctica were music it would be Mozart.

Art, and it would be Michelangelo.

Literature, and it would be Shakespeare.

And yet it is something even greater; the only place on earth that is still as it should be.

May we never tame it.”

Andrew Denton

An interviewer asked 60 years after rescue:

“How were you able to survive, as so many other people perished with expeditions?”

He answered by only one word: “Shackleton”

Lionel Greenstreet

“Hurley is a warrior with his camera and would go anywhere or do anything to get a picture.”

Lionel Greenstreet about Frank Hurley

My name is Frankie Wild-o! and my huts on Elephant Isle,
The most expert of architects could hardly name its style.
But as I sit all snug inside while outside blows the gale,
I think the pride is pardonable with which I tell my tale.

O Frankly Wild-o Wild-o tra-la-la-la

Mr.Franky Wild-o tra-la-la-la-la-la-la.

My name is Franky Wild-o and my hut's on Elephant Isle
The wall' without a single brick, and the roof without a tile,
But nevertheless you must confess, for many and many a mile
It is the most palatial dwelling place you'll find on Elephant Isle.

Our hut is double-storied, with bedrooms twenty-two,
A library and a drawing-room, although indeed 'tis true
We haven't any bathroom, at which perhaps you'll smile;
but we found it warmer not to wash in our hut on Elephant Isle.

Reginald James, 1916 Elephant Island

“Out of whose womb came the ice?, And the hoary frost of Heaven, who hath gathered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.”

Job, Bible

Phrase taken by Shackleton

from Queen Alexandra Bible

“Sir Ernest and I went over the plates together, and as negative was rejected, I would smash it on the ice to obviate all temptation to change my mind. . . About 400 plates were jettisoned and 120 retained. Later I had to preserve them almost with my life; for a time came when we had to choose between having them overboard or throwing away our surplus food – and the food went over . . . I wonder if three spools of film ever went through more exacting experiences before they were developed.”

Frank Hurley

Shackleton’s Argonauts, 1948

“And what a grand tentmate Sir Ernest was. . . He was the very soul of encouragement . . . In spite of his heavy burdens, Sir Ernest retained all that wholesome boyishness of spirit that had endeared him to all. . . Sir Ernest’s memory was inexhaustible. He had a ready phrase or a quotation for everything. A born poet, through all his oppressions he could see glory and beauty in the stern forces which had reduced us to destitution, and against which he was fighting.”

Frank Hurley

Shackleton’s Argonauts, 1948

“We are homeless & adrift on the sea ice.”

Frank Hurley

“Speaking with utmost conviction, Shackleton pointed out that no article was of any value when weighed against their ultimate survival, and he exhorted them to be ruthless in ridding themselves of every unnecessary ounce, regardless of its value. After he had spoken, he reached under his parka and took out a gold cigarette case and several gold sovereigns and threw them into the snow at his feet.”

Alfred Lansing

Shackleton's Incredible Voyage

“Our dealings were mostly with the Adélie penguin . . . a quaint little chap about 18 inches high, with a jet-black, glossy coat and snow-white waistcoat. As he stands bolt upright his feet just show below the lower feathers and, with his strong little flippers held rigidly to his side, he looks a trim, plump, little gentleman, very conscious of his dignity and social position. Generally speaking, he showed neither curiosity nor fear, and ignored our presence altogether, taking us, no doubt, for emperors or some larger penguins. A mitten thrown into a group would, however attract momentary attention, and the birds would gather round it and, bending their heads, peer at it closely, maybe to peck it gently with their beaks, then, satisfied that it had no particular interest, take no further notice . . . When moving about they walked slowly, but when they desired to hurry leaped from rock to rock with surprising agility, or attained real speed by falling forwards and using their bodies as toboggans, propelling themselves with their legs. In this way they could progress just about as fast as a man could run.”

Charles F. Lason, 1947

South with Mawson

“We were the fools who could not rest in the dull earth we left behind,
and burned with passion for the South, and drank strange frenzy from its wind.
The world where wise men sit at ease fades from our unregretful eyes,
And thus across uncharted seas we stagger on our enterprise.”

St. John Welles Lucas

English novelist and poet (1879 - 1934)

Quoted by Shackleton (with small variation on original)
upon departure from South Georgia Island, 1914
in Valparaiso, Chile, 1916 after self rescue

Original Version:

“We were the fools who could not rest in the dull earth we left behind,
But burned with passion for the South, and drank strange frenzy from its wind.
The world where wise men sit at ease fades, from my unregretful eyes,
And blind across uncharted seas We stagger on our enterprise.”

“The Ship of Fools”

St. John Lucas, Oxford Don

"A more inhospitable place could scarcely be imagined. The gusts increased in violence and became so strong that we could hardly walk against them, and there was not a lee or a scrap of shelter anywhere."

Dr. Alexander Hepburne Macklin

Shackleton's *Endurance* Expedition

Describing 150 yards x 30 yards of

Point Wild, Elephant Island

“In the harshest place on earth, love finds a way.”

March of the Penguins, 2005

Narrated by Morgan Freeman

THE BLIZZARD

A snow-hush brooding o'er the grey rock-hills!
A wold of silence, ominous, that fills
The wide seascape of ice-roofed islands, rolls
To ether-zones that gird the frigid Poles!

Realm of purest alabaster-white,
Wreathed in a vast infinitude of light;
The royal orb swings to thy summer gaze
A glitt'ring azure world of crystal days.

The lorn bird-voices of an unseen land--
No hue of forest, gleam of ocean sand--
Rise in a ceaseless plaint of raucous din,
On northern tides the bergs come floating in.

The wind-sprites murmuring in hinter-snow--
The pent heart-throbbings of the wan plateau--
Wing through the pulsing spell thrown o'er the sea,
In wild and shrieking blizzard minstrelsy.

Swirl of the drift-cloud's shimm'ring sleet;
Race of the spray-smoke's hurtling sheet
Swelling trail of the streaming, sunbright foam,
Wafting sinuous brash to an ice-field home.

Eddy-wraiths o'er the splintered schist--
Torrent spume down the glacier hissed!
Throbbing surge of the ebbing seaward gust,
Raping stillness vast in its madd'ning lust.

Lotus-floe 'neath the Barrier brink,
Starting sheer--a marble blink--
Pelting shafts from the show'ring arrow-blast
Strike--ill the blackened flood seethe riven past.

Glow of the vibrant, yellow west
Pallid fades in the dread unrest.
Low'ring shades through the fury-stricken night
Rack the screaming void in shudd'ring might.

Requiem peace from the hinter-snows
Soft as river music flows.
Dawn in a flushing glamour tints the sea;
Serene her thrill of rhythmic ecstasy.

Dr. A.L. McLean
Editor of the `Adelie Blizzard'
Mawson Expedition 1911 - 1913

“One could not but respond to the idea that here was a new world, flawless and unblemished, into which no human being had ever pried. Here were open secrets to be read for the first time. It was not with the cold eye of science alone that we gazed at these rocks--a tiny spur of the great unseen continent; but it was with an indefinable wonder.”

Sir Douglas Mawson

The Home of the Blizzard, 1914

“He (Shakleton) and his men, they were exposed for 17 months in the most difficult part of the world thinkable. And I'm still sure that Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition with the sailing and dramatic going home, was the greatest adventure ever, not only of the last century, it was the greatest adventure ever.”

Reinhold Messner

“Of all the things I would like to do during my life, my greatest dream is to go to Antarctica and shake hands with a penguin!”

Larry Mester

“What I was trying to tell her, and all my friends and family, was that a profound change had taken place inside me. Sailors who cross the oceans call it a “sea change.” It happens days into a voyage, when you lose sight of land and stop feeling seasick. Time no longer exists; nothing matters except the path you're following, the sky, and the rolling water. It doesn't happen to everyone. But those who undergo the sea change are transformed forever, reborn in a new element.”

Dr. Jerri Nielsen Icebound

“I cooked up an extra savoury roast with lots of onions. The whole ship was permeated with the savoury odour. Meanwhile I warmed up four . . . tins of boiled rabbit . . . when the duty man from the fo’c’sle appeared I proceeded to “get busy” with the tinned rabbit. ‘But what’s that we smelt cooking . . .’ he said. ‘On, only some seal . . . for the wardroom’ I replied.

‘Well if the wardroom can have it we can’t we’ he grumbled putting down the unopened tins of rabbit . . . ‘Which would you rather have then, the seal or the rabbit.’ I said in fear and trembling lest he should realise that he was in a trap . . . but the ruse was successful, they had the seal of their own free will in preference to (tinned) rabbit and now they cannot go back to it again.”

Thomas H. Orde-Less diary for 4 March 1915

His solution to British Seaman preference for tinned meats despite the fact that fresh seal meat prevented scurvy

“For scientific discovery, give me Scott; for swift and efficient travel, give me Amundsen; but when you are in a hopeless situation, when there seems to be no way out, get on your knees and pray for Shackleton.

Incomparable in adversity, he was the miracle worker who would save your life against all the odds and long after your number was up. The greatest leader that ever came on God’s earth, bar none.”

Sir Raymond Priestley, 1956

Antarctic Geologist,

Member of Shackleton’s Nimrod Expedition

Alternate Versions:

“Scott for scientific method, Amundsen for speed and efficiency but when disaster strikes (alternately: ‘your are at your wit’s end’ or ‘when you are seeing no way out’) and all hope is gone, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton.”

Attributed to Sir Raymond Priestly

“For a joint scientific and geographical piece of organization, give me Scott; For a winter journey, give me Wilson; For a dash to the Pole and nothing else, Amundsen; and if I am in the devil of a hole and want to get out of it, give me Shackleton every time.”

Apsley Cherry-Garrard, polar explorer; 1922;

Author: Worst Journey in the World

Vol I, Page viii, Preface

“First you fall in love with Antarctica, and then it breaks your heart . . . “

“. . . illuminates very clearly the great ocean of ice rolling to the horizon in all directions, the moonlight glittering on the snow, gleaming on the ice, and all of it tinted the same vivid indigo as the sky; everything still and motionless; the clarity of the light unlike anything you’ve ever seen, like nothing on Earth, and you all alone in it, the only witness, the sole inhabitant of the planet it seems; and the uncanny beauty of the scene rises in you and clamps your chest tight, and your heart breaks then simply because it is squeezed so hard, because the world is so spacious and pure and beautiful, and because moments like this one are so transient – impossible to imagine beforehand, impossible to remember afterward, and never to be returned to, never ever.

That’s heartbreak as well, yes – happening at the very same moment you realize you’ve fallen in love with the place, despite all . . .”

Kim Stanley Robinson, Antarctica, 1998

Book’s First Page

"First you fall in love. Then anything could happen."

Kim Stanley Robinson, Antarctica, 1998

Book’s Last Sentence

“Below the 40th latitude there is no law; below the 50th no god;
below the 60th no common sense and below the 70th no intelligence whatsoever.”

Kim Stanley Robinson

Antarctica, 1998

memorializing a common but anonymous quote

“Never for me the lowered banner, never the last endeavour.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton Family Crest

“*Fortitundinus vincimus* "By endurance, we conquer" Shackleton Family Motto

“Difficulties are just things to overcome, after all.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

Diary entry 11 Dec 1908 after losing pony &
supplies down a crevasse

“No person who has not spent a period of his life in those 'stark and sullen solitudes that sentinel the Pole' will understand fully what trees and flowers, sun-flecked turf and running streams mean to the soul of a man.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

"I thought, dear, that you would rather have a live ass than a dead lion."

Sir Ernest Shackleton to his wife Emily,
after turning back 97 miles short of the Pole, 1909

Also quoted as: “Better a live donkey than a dead lion”

“Men wanted for hazardous journey, small (low) wages, bitter cold, long months (hours) of complete darkness, constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case (event) of success . . .”

Sir Ernest Shackleton’s

alleged or apocryphal advertisement for crew of
Antarctic Expedition

“Put footstep of courage into stirrup of patience.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

Diary entry after abandoning *Endurance*, 19 November 1915

“Life to me is the greatest of all games. The danger lies in treating it as a trivial game...and a game in which the rules don’t matter much. The rules matter a great deal. The game has to be played fairly, or it is no game at all. And even to win the game is not the chief end. The chief end is to win it honorably and splendidly. To this chief end several things are necessary. Loyalty is one. Discipline is another. Unselfishness is another. Courage is another. Optimism is another. And Chivalry is another.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

“The ship can't live in this, Skipper,”

he said at length pausing in his restless march up and down the tiny cabin "You had better make up your mind that it is only a matter of time. It may be a few months, and it may be only a question of weeks, or even days. Wild and I know how you feel about the *Endurance*, but

“what the ice gets,” and I recognized the ring of prophecy in his tone, “the ice keeps.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton, 1915

quoted by F.A. Worsley in *Endurance*

"I have often been asked what one can see in the cold, inhospitable regions of the Antarctic? And confronted by a bold question such as that, it is hard to find an answer . . .

‘Ever since we were last there we have thought and dreamed of the wild stretches of snow and ice, the silence of those places where men never trod before, the wonder of the unknown as it rolled into our ken. Those are the memories that remain, and not the bitter cold, the hard work, the rough and often scanty food, and the constant effort to do just a little more than one should expect.’ "

Sir Ernest Shackleton

‘Go I Must - The Call of the Antarctic’

Daily Mail, 31 December 1913

“... the log book and the cooker wrapped in one of our blouses. That was all, except our wet clothes, that we brought out of the Antarctic, which we had entered a year and a half before with well found ship, full equipment and high hopes. That was all of tangible things; but in memories we were rich. We had pierced the veneer of outside things. We had ‘suffered, starved, and triumphed, grovelled down yet grasped at glory, grown bigger in the bigness of the whole.’¹ We had seen God in His splendors, heard the text that Nature renders. We had reached the naked soul of man.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton, Page 207

Chapter 10, Across South Georgia, South, 1919

¹ Excerpt from the poetry of Robert W. Service, “Call of the Wild” or “Songs of a Sourdough”, page 362

“Courage or ambition may take you to the Antarctic but it won't take you far inside without being found out; it is courage and unselfishness and good temper and helping one another and a willingness to put in every ounce you have.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

“At midnight I was at the tiller and suddenly noticed a line of clear sky between the south and southwest. I called to the other men that the sky was clearing, and then a moment later I realized that what I had seen was not a rift in the clouds but the white crest of an enormous wave. During twenty-six years' experience of the ocean in all its moods I had not encountered a wave so gigantic. It was a mighty upheaval of the ocean, a thing quite apart from the big white-capped seas that had been our tireless enemies for many days. I shouted, "For God's sake, hold on! It's got us!" Then came a moment of suspense that seemed drawn out into hours. White surged the foam of the breaking sea around us. We felt our boat lifted and flung forward like a cork in breaking surf. We were in a seething chaos of tortured water; but somehow the boat lived through it, half- full of water, sagging to the dead weight and shuddering under the blow. We baled with the energy of men fighting for life, flinging the water over the sides with every receptacle that came to our hands, and after ten minutes of uncertainty we felt the boat renew her life beneath us. She floated again and ceased to lurch drunkenly as though dazed by the attack of the sea. Earnestly we hoped that never again would we encounter such a wave.

Sir Ernest Shackleton, South, 1919

"The longing for the Ice, the sadness of departure . . .

it is if I cannot after all bear to leave this bleak waste of ice, glaciers, cold and toil."

Sir Ernest Shackleton

“ . . . It is only by constant thought and care that the leader can lead. There is a delightful sense of freedom from responsibility in all others, and it should be so.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

Diary, 29 November 1921

“I have done it. Damn the Admiralty: I wonder who is responsible for their attitude to me. Not a life lost and we have been through Hell. Soon I will be home and then I will rest.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

Letter to Emily Shackleton

3 September 1916

“Indeed the stark polar lands grip the hearts of the men who have lived them in a manner that can hardly be understood by the people who have never got outside the pale of civilisation.”

Sir Ernest Shackleton

“Dear Sir;

In the event of my not surviving the boat journey to South Georgia you will do your best for the rescue of the party. You are in full command from the time the boat leaves this island, and all hands are under your orders. On your return to England you are to communicate with the Committee. I wish you, Lees and Hurley to write the book. You watch my interests. In another letter you will find the terms as agreed you to do England, Great Britain and Continent. Hurley the USA. I have every confidence in you and always have had. May God prosper your work and your life. You can convey my love to my people and say I tried my best.

yours sincerely

E H Shackleton”

Instructions to Frank Wild

Delegation of Authority

23 April 1916, Elephant Island

“I have often had the impression that, to penguins, man is just another penguin - different, less predictable, occasionally violent, but tolerable company when he sits still and minds his own business.”

Bernard Stonehouse

“To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”

Tennyson's Ulysses

Carved on the cross on Observation Hill to memorialize Scott's polar party.

Also found explorer Lincoln Ellsworth's headstone in Hamilton, Ohio

“In pride, these birds (King Penguins) are perhaps not surpassed even by the peacock.”

James Weddell

1823

“Shackleton privately forced upon me his one breakfast biscuit, and would have given me another tonight had I allowed him. I do not suppose that anyone else in the world can thoroughly realize how much generosity and sympathy was shown by this: I DO, and by GOD I shall never forget it. Thousands of pounds would not have bought that one biscuit.”

Frank Wild(e)

Private Diary

31 January 1909

“Poor S. works away like ten devils.”

Frank Wild

(S. = Shackleton)

“In the evening the manager told Sir Ernest that a number of old captains and sailors wished to speak to and shake hands with him and us. We went into a large, low room, full of captains and mates and sailors, and hazy with tobacco smoke. Three or four white-haired veterans of the sea came forward; one spoke in Norse, and manager translated. He said he had been at sea over forty years; that he knew this stormy Southern Ocean intimately, from South Georgia to Cape Horn, from Elephant Island to the South Orkneys, and that never had he heard of such a wonderful feat of daring seamanship as bringing the twenty-two foot open boat from Elephant Island to South Georgia, and then to crown it, tramping across the ice and snow and rocky heights of the interior, and that he felt it an honour to meet and shake hands with Sir Ernest and his comrades. He finished with a dramatic gesture: ‘These are men!’”

F.A. Worsley

Shackleton’s Boat Journey

Also “Crossing South Georgia”

“Shackleton had a wonderful and rare understanding of the men’s attitudes towards one another and towards the expedition as a whole. He appreciated how deeply one man, or a small group of men, could affect the psychology of the others. Therefore he almost insisted upon cheeriness and optimism; in fact his attitude was, ‘You’ve damn well got to be optimistic.’”

Frank A. Worsley

Endurance: An Epic of Polar Adventure

“I know, I’ll never meet him again. He was not only a great explorer, he was a great man by his genius leadership, he returned us safely to home . . .
only by his strength of personality did he boost our courage . . .
he was a proud and intrepid great thinker . . .
we all would had have followed him anywhere without asking any questions.”

Captain Frank Worsley

“We seemed to shoot into space. For a moment my hair stood on end. Then quite suddenly I felt a glow and knew that I was grinning. I was actually enjoying it. It was most exhilarating. We were shooting down the side of an almost precipitous mountain at nearly a mile a minute. I yelled with excitement and found that Shackleton and Crean were yelling too. It seemed ridiculously safe. To hell with the rocks!”

Frank Worsley

“Rescued! August 30, 1916
All well! At last! All ahead full.”

F.A Worsley
Final journal entry
