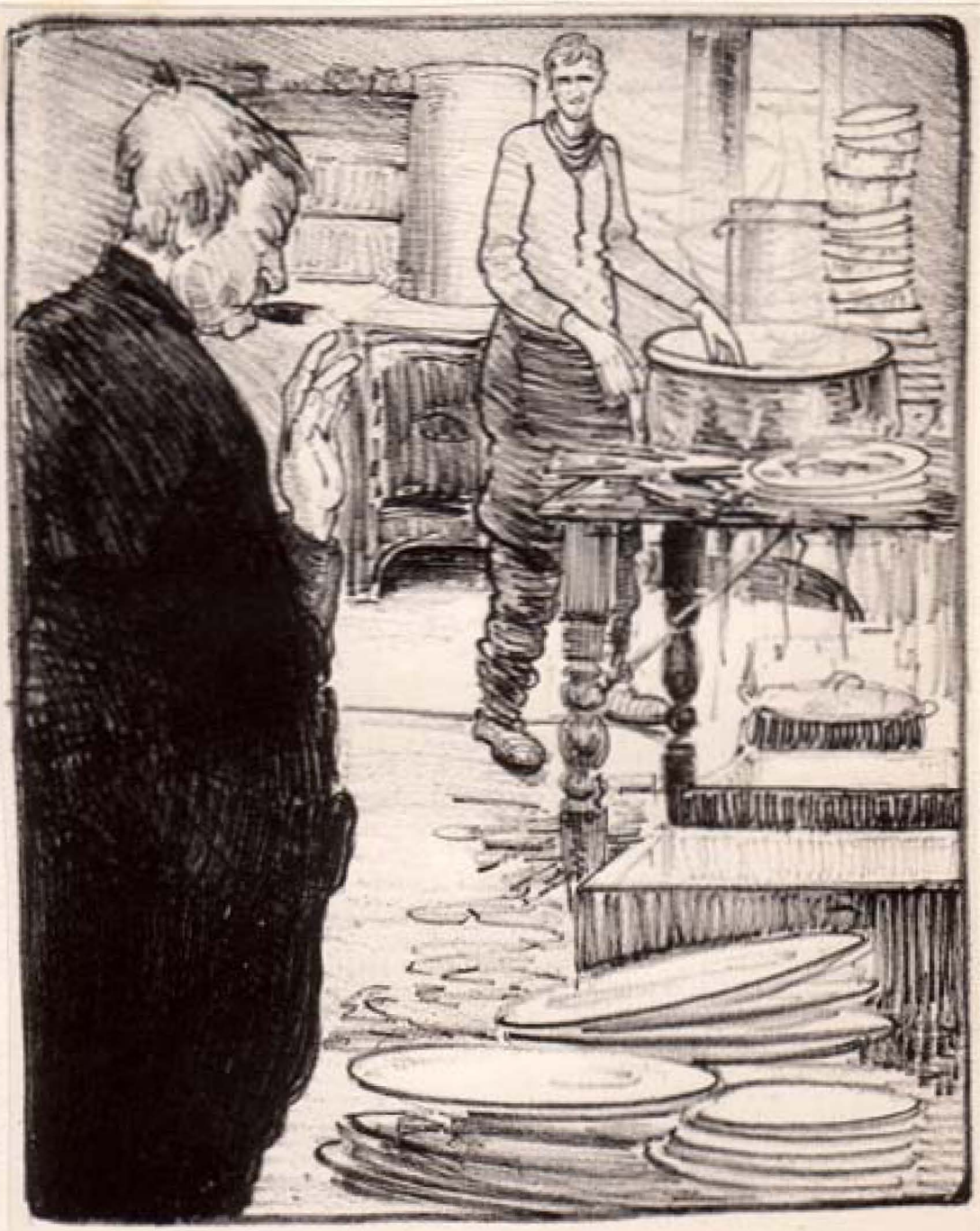
THE MESSMAN.



TRIALS OF A MESSMAN.

RISE and shine! Rise and shine! All hands lash up and stow hammocks! Show a leg there, you're the man of the moment;" followed by a few remarks on my personal appearance and habits, as I try to lie and seem to be asleep, and I awake to the realisation that I am "Messman."

Until a few weeks ago I didn't even know what the name meant, except that he was not a man who was expected to make messes, and that unpleasant personal remarks were made to him if he did. Now, however, I have learnt by experience that he is expected to do everything and to do it all at the same time. Finding it impossible to impress on the night-watchman the fact that, having a delicate constitution, I ought not to be expected to turn out with the temperature at 20° Fahr., I gave him my candid opinion of his powers of stoking, and said I was pretty sure that in a future sphere, he was likely to give dissatisfaction.

Having turned out and donned a fair supply of clothes, I reported myself to my chief, and was told in very concise terms to go to a warmer clime; it afterwards turned out that he expected me to do my duty as messman first, and I laid the table for breakfast.

A meal in the Antarctic is a very different affair from one at home, and a description will come better from the messman than from anyone else, for as the saying is, "The onlooker sees most of the game," and as far as my experience goes, the messman at a meal is very much in the position of a spectator.

At a quarter to nine he gives the order, "Boats crew," and four men proceed to unsling and let down the table, which between meals is kept slung above our heads, occupying much the same position in our imaginations as the sword did in that of Damocles. I have not liked to walk underneath it since the supports gave way, and landed the majority of the tin-ware on the heads of one or two members of the party.

The table in itself is a curiosity; it is built rather ingeniously of the lids of cases, and in one place a legend informs the diner that the table contains a theodolite, some ranging poles and other surveying apparatus, while another legend remarks that it is only "To be opened on Christmas Day," etc..

TRIALS OF A MESSMAN.

Laying the table is an art in itself. The tastes of all members have to be catered for, and that means that it is necessary to have two or three different kinds of jam, marmalade, honey and golden syrup, dripping and butter. I have seen men spreading chutney on their bread, and putting honey in their porridge, and from the way it has disappeared, I have reason to believe that they take worcestershire sauce with their fruit.

At nine o'clock I serve the porridge, distributing it about equally between the inside and outside of the bowls, and at five or ten minutes past, the company condescend to turn out of bed, and the first thing they do is to find fault with the laying of the table.

On one never-to-be-forgotten occasion I forgot the pepper. Now the menu for the morning was porridge, fruit and preserves; what use anyone could find for pepper in that breakfast, I do not know, but within ten seconds of their arrival at the table, every other man had asked for it, and told his neighbour what he thought of me for not putting it on the table. If it happens to be a fruit day, i. e. a day when for second course fruit takes the place of meat, the next order given is, "Bowls up and lick spoons," there being only about fifteen of each article on the Continent, and

the bowls and spoons which have been used for porridge, are cleaned in this alfresco way and used for fruit.

For about a quarter of an hour everybody is too busily engaged to be captious, but about the time tea or coffee are being passed round, they begin to find their tongues, and I sit down to my breakfast, which is stone-cold, beneath a fire of criticisms as to my fitness, or rather my lack of fitness for the post.

After breakfast I wash the crockery and tinnery, being allowed a pint of water and a couple of lumps of soda to do it with. Volunteers have been known to assist in getting the grease off the plates and in drying them, and it is possible to get through the work in about an hour.

It is a sight for the gods to see a well-known F. R. S, drying a wet plate with a wetter cloth, and looking ruefully at the islands of grease remaining, after he has spent five minutes hard work on it. I suppose that nowhere else in the world is it a common sight to see two geologists and a meteorologist washing up dishes as if they had been used to nothing else.

The above programme is repeated three times in the day, with slight variations at lunch, tea, and dinner, and is in itself, in my opinion, sufficient work to

last three men and a boy for a week.

The messman also enjoys quite a number of other privileges. He is allowed to go out into the cold, and obtain enough ice to fill both the boiler from which we ourselves drink, and the eighteen gallon melting pot which provides the fresh water for the Cavalry Commissariat Department, and he may do this as often as he likes. He is allowed to fetch bags of coal and strips of frozen blubber for the fire, while on Sundays as a great treat, he may dig out the frozen mutton from the snowdrift on the roof.

With everything apparently united to afford him plenty of employment and make him happy, yet, strange to say, he has his moments of despondency. No other occupation could cause a man to have such a low opinion of his own powers.

To a casual observer stoning raisins appears to be easy enough, and until my first day as messman I had been a very casual observer, and when the autocrat at the head of the Food Department gave me some raisins after lunch, and told me to stone them, I looked forward to a restful interlude in what had so far been a strenuous day. I washed my hands until they were of a colour which I thought could not show on the raisins, even if it did come off, took a tin of raisins and

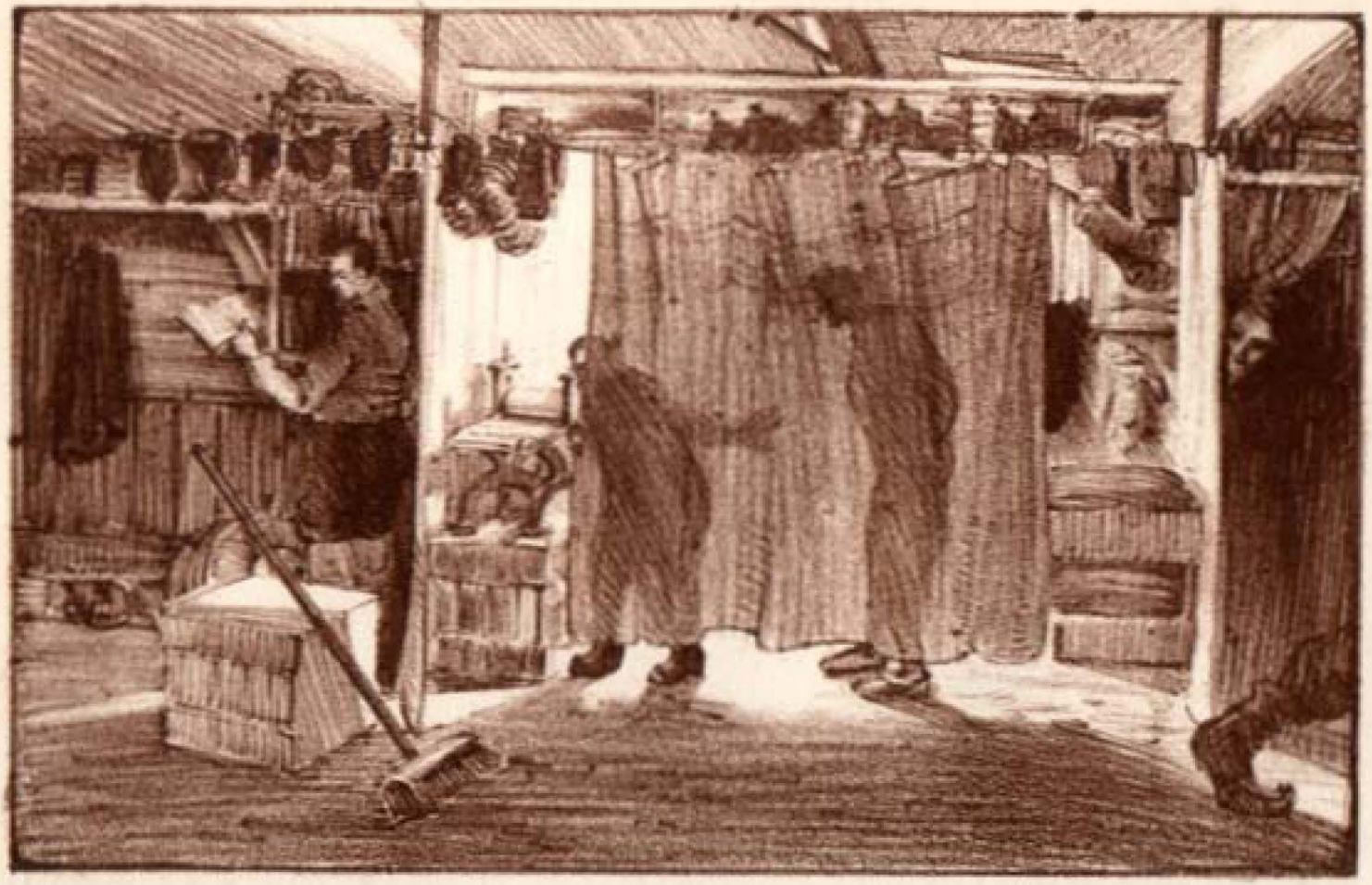
a basin, settled myself in a comfortable position and started.

At the end of half an hour there were seven whole raisins and forty-nine pieces in the basin, stones scattered all over the hut and myself, raisin in my hair and in everything else within reach, and about two hundred raisins inside various members of the Expedition. There was raisin in everything at dinner from the soup to the tea, and I meet raisin stones in my bed, on all my clothes and in all my books.

Last but not least I retired from the fray, with my respect for all people who make cakes and puddings greatly enhanced. In the words of a prominent scientist on the Expedition, "To a man of my refined and sensitive nature, it is singularly repulsive to be beaten by a fruit."

Another duty new to me is making tea, and it is by no means a light one. The capacity of this Expedition for tea is simply marvellous; some of the members take it in a bath, and among the many things I have learnt is that some Scotchmen take more tea than 'whuskie', (though that may be because they can get no 'whuskie',) and that they are more particular about it than even Australians. It is either too hot or too cold, boiled too much or not boiled at all, too

STRUGGLE? FOR THE BROOM.



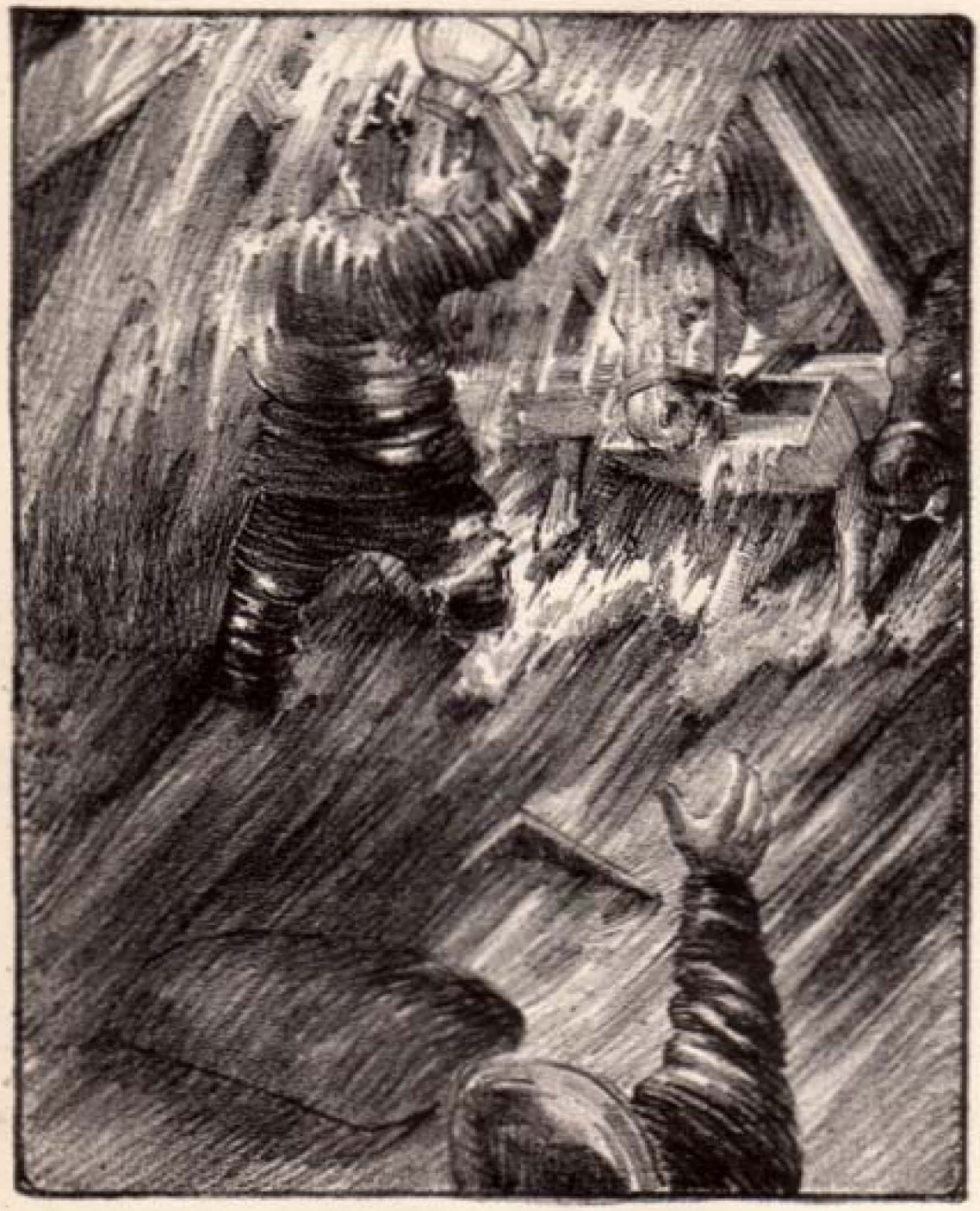
sweet or not sweet enough, and whether it is good, bad, or indifferent, there is never enough of it. Like most other messmen, I have decided now to make it to suit myself, and have ceased to pay any attention to criticism.

I should not like to finish without expressing my gratitude for one thing. To a lover of human nature it is very gratifying to see artists, geologists, biologists, meteorologists and other 'ologists' and 'ists' fighting in vast numbers and with earnest purpose, for the privilege of sweeping out the hut after dinner, and relieving the messman of this exercise. I have not liked to thank them to their faces, but thought they might blush unseen when they saw in print my appreciation of their eagerness.

MESSMAN.

A PONY WATCH.

In the stables.



A PONY WATCH.

AFTER watching the man painting the lamp post with a brush fixed on a breast drill, for some time in silence, I say to the boy with green hair, 'I believe I could do it better myself.' The brush catches me a blow in the ribs, and the man rushes at me with a chopper in one hand and a hammer in the other, when realising that I can fly I take huge leaps without any effort, a most delightful sensation.

To my horror I find that though the leaps are high yet they do not carry me far; and on the fourth or fifth the man is waiting for me with the hammer. I give myself up for lost, and come down receiving a fearful blow on the head. A voice says, "Come on, this is your pony watch and it has gone two."

By the dim light of the oil lamp, I see standing by the side of my bunk, a figure clothed in oilskins streaming water. Joyce is sitting on his bunk growling out in a voice hoarse with sleep, "Now then

Chucks, you've been called twice". The first time must have been the paint-brush in the ribs.

I realise that I have to stand my two hours watch in the stables, so struggling out of my blankets, I grope sleepily for the socks I have been sleeping on, in the vain hope of drying them; stepping on the spot where a box should be, I land with a bump on the deck.

Down "Oyster Alley" I am thrown by a roll of the ship, 'Sorry', I say to the bunk into which I am thrown, before I notice it is empty. Clutching everywhere I return to where my clothes should be, only to find that the box has returned, and I stub my toe against it. I don't say 'sorry,' but make a grab at my trousers and gingerly push one leg into their damp cold recesses. I wish I had not taken them off, but before I can settle in my mind which would have been the better plan, I am thrown violently against a moving box, and together we roll and slide until the deck is fairly level; then as Joyce runs up the ladder with practised steps, I struggle into the rest of my clothes and follow as best I can.

The watch we are relieving come along muttering, "Rough night, pony still down," and literally dive below. I am deafened by the roaring wind,

blinded by the driving spray, but struggle past the black motionless figure of the helmsman, and get safely under the shelter of the deck house. We seem to be sliding into a gigantic bowl of water, I shudder, but continue to fight my way stableward.

Watching for what I think to be a favourable moment I release my frantic hold of the motor car stays and dash forward; I am caught by a sea which fills my boots but does not upset me, then as I walk confidently past the galley, the lee rail is buried under water; I am more than ever convinced that it is a rough night and long for daylight.

A wild struggle through the stable entrance, and I am greeted by a pained silence from Joyce. The ship is fairly level but the ponies have obviously had a bad time; one is down and all efforts to raise it having been useless, we wait for daylight to decide its fate. We stare ahead listening to the gale screaming overhead, and feel the ship giving sudden plunges as the cable strains at her bows.

The timbers of the stable groan and creak, and we doubt their ability to carry the weight of boats and gear resting on them. Gaining confidence we seat ourselves on a sack of wet bran and fall to talking fitfully, the lamp splutters, goes out, and is lit with

difficulty; the ponies snort, stamp, kick and keep us anxious.

Crash! a sea aboard and the sack on which we are sitting is swept from under us, we are rolled into the smother of sea, mixed up with trusses of hay, sacks of oats, food-boxes etc.. The ponies on the weather side kick frantically, one has his fore legs over the bar; Joyce is up and pushing him back before I can extricate myself from the tangle, when I do I only hold on to a rope and render what assistance I can.

This is followed by a succession of seas aboard, and we heap curses on the helmsman for letting us fall off our course. Occasionaly we are swept off our feet, and can only hold on and do little to soothe the ponies. They suffer continually and we pity them, hoping for finer weather. The mats are slipping from under their feet, we replace them with difficulty and repeat the performance at intervals.

Another period of comparative calm follows; I volunteer to raid the galley and make some cocoa. Here there is a scene of wild confusion; the floor is flooded, littered with coal, and slippery with grease; after many mishaps, "Scottie" coming along gives valuable assistance.

A PONY WATCH.

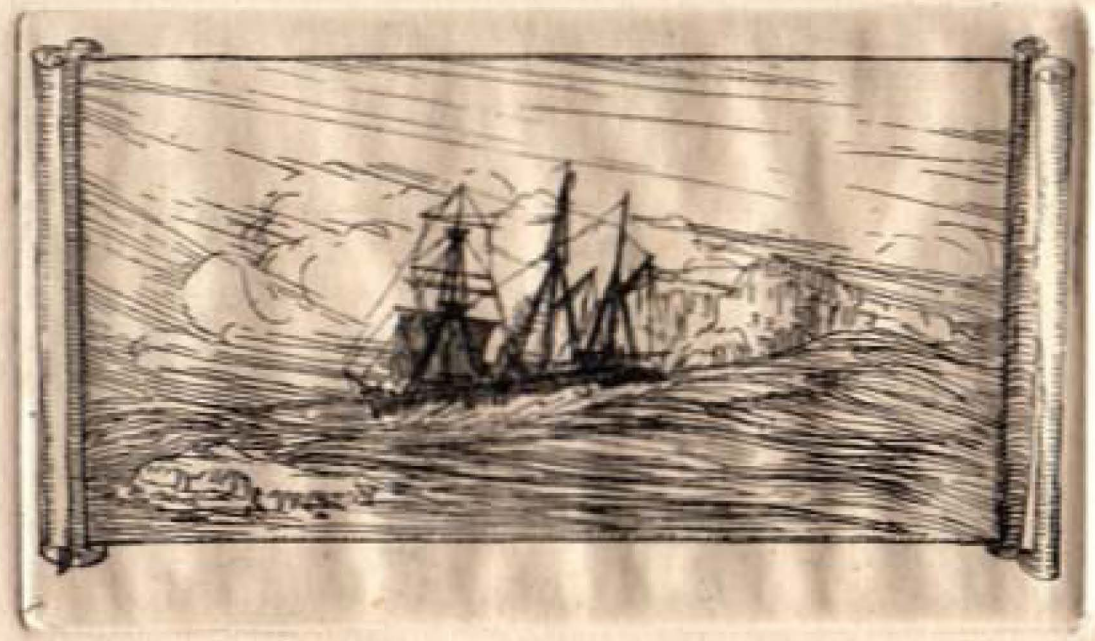
Crash! a huge sea strikes us, and the ship literally staggers with the weight of it; water pours through the door, roof, and every available crevice; the fire is smothered and the galley fills with steam; another rush of water and I am carried through the door into the scuppers, clinging to everything within reach, then as the water pours off, "Scottie," soaked but quite unconcerned, says he is afraid that there is some sea water in the cocoa, but I abandon the idea of cocoa and rush for the stables.

Joyce is having a rough time, the bulwarks are stove in and we are now constantly awash. The rest of the watch consists of fierce inrushes of water, which terrify the ponies and send every loose article, regardless of weight, swinging about the confined space. The grey dawn at length appearing, we begin to have faith in the coming day.

At four o'clock I go aft, report to the officer on watch, then dive into the fearsome depths of 'Oyster Alley;' rouse the watch, and when they are up, tumble into my blankets with a sigh of relief; despite a wild medley of scientific snores, sleeping on until "Rouse and shine, rouse and shine," from Wild brings me out to a welcome breakfast, and I learn with regret that the pony has been shot; and so another day begins.

PUTTY.

SOUTHWARD BOUND.



SOUTHWARD BOUND.

The Nimrod sailed for the Southern Seas,
On her voyage of venture bent;
She left the Heads with a westerly breeze
As the Flagship's cheers grew faint.

She was taken in tow by the "Koonya",
With seven score fathoms of wire,
And for twelve long days and nights she strove
With a southerly buster's ire.

Watch by watch for two hours at a stretch
To the pony stalls we clung,
With the water knee-deep on the for'ard hatch,
And the decks a'swimming with dung.

"Doctor" was down on the third night out,
And eight hours later was dead;
For the efforts of man in a gale were 'nowt,'
So his end was an ounce of lead.

We slept in our sodden bunks by night,
Abaft the after hold;
And wished for the day to bring in the light
And the tale that was yet to be told.

AURORA AUSTRALIS.

On the fifteenth day we sighted the ice;
So the "Koonya" cast us free;
With ten of Boyle's sheep aboard in a trice,
And another ten lost in the sea.

With all sail set and a following breeze
Toward that distant land we sped;
And crept through a field of a thousand bergs
Which guarded a virgin bed.

To the Great Ice Barrier's edge we come
And search on that lonely shore,
For the spot we should make our winter home,
Which was known to be there of yore.

Not a sign was there of the Bight we sought,
But ten miles south sailed we
Of a place that was marked by a skipper named Scott,
In a ship called "Discovery".

So east we turned to the land of our King,
For there we would plant our flag;
But the heavy ice pack on our starboard tack
Prevented us landing our swag.

SOUTHWARD BOUND.

Then westward toward the setting sun
Along the Barrier's edge.
As a last resource, to land our force
On a place from which we could sledge.

In a solitary hut on a lonely isle
Beneath a smoke capped height,
Hemmed in by the ice that grips us awhile
We wait in the long dark night.

When the sun returns from his tropical home,
And smiles on these desolate quarters,
May the ice hold fast till sledging is past,
Then 'What Ho'! for our wives and daughters.

LAPSUS LINGUÆ.

AN INTERVIEW WITH AN EMPEROR.

AN INTERVIEW WITH AN EMPEROR.

IT was a perfect Antarctic winter night. A — and I were trudging merrily along over the sea-ice, under the cliffs to the north of Erebus, for in such weather it seemed a crime to remain indoors.

The moon shone full, dimming the stars and paling the sky in the zenith, though round the horizon its colour deepened into a rich ultramarine. On our right towered the mighty volcano, swelling up at first in long glittering snow slopes, which formed a noble pedestal to the beetling rocky spurs which buttressed the summit cone and ice-cap.

From the active crater jetted a delicate pure white stream of curling vapour, clear-cut against the sky, like a cameo tracery. It was a scene in whites and blues, only relieved by the rich brown of the rocks.

But such whites and blues! They were livid, ethereal, electric. Artists speak, I believe, of a dead

white, but such an adjective could never be applied to the whites of the Antarctic snows by moonlight.

It would be a platitude to compare the whole to a vista of fairyland, and perhaps an anticlimax to say that it was like some lovely transformation scene, viewed by the wrapt gaze of childhood.

One thing is certain, that the whole effect seemed almost supernatural, and it did not require an impressionable mind to be uplifted by it to a height almost more than mortal.

So we swung along; it seemed as if fatigue were one of those earthly ills left far behind us in prosaic temporate climes.

The creaking snow, blown down and packed hard by the southerly blizzard from the slopes above us, made the most perfect going. The ever-changing views of the broken ice-cliffs and mountain slopes drew us on. We felt as if we could have gone on for a week.

Yet it was strange, and almost uncanny to think that in all the miles and miles of land over which our eyes ranged there was not one living, breathing creature, — no, not one!

The Adélie penguins, those cheery summer visitors, had gone far north with the sun, ten degrees

below the horizon. The seals were away out on the edge of the sea ice, and that was farther away, at any rate, than we could see.

True, the Emperors, most majestic of living birds, are said to conduct their royal accouchements in this region in July, that is, the depth of our winter, and it was June as yet.

But we were going in the direction of the Emperors' rookery at Cape Crozier, and in this wonderland anything might happen.

Trudge, trudge, trudge we went, saying very little. It was no time for conversation. Those who don't know what a polar climate is like, might think we felt cold, but no such discomfort dashed our elated spirits.

This goodly portion of the Earth's fair surface was ours. No polluting foot save ours defaced its virgin solitudes. We might fare where we list; none could say us nay.

No "TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED." here —

No "PRIVATE GROUNDS, NO THOROUGHFARE."

No uniformed park-ranger, or corduroyed game-keeper could bar our way, with horrid threats, and

perhaps still more horrid action.

But stay!— What form is that emerging from the shade of yonder ice-berg? It strides towards us with swinging gait, recalling to my mind unpleasant memories of my bird-nesting days.

I cannot control a strange flutter of apprehension in the slack of my trousers, a sort of prophetic sensation of tenderness behind.

That is strangely like a knotted cudgel carried, with ill-concealed menace, under the left arm. "No Gamekeepers" did I say? It must be a gamekeeper.

But he is upon us! All doubt is banished. He is the most enormous Emperor Penguin I have ever met. Full six feet high, and broad quite out of proportion, his appearance is so extraordinary that I must describe it minutely.

The large, angry eyes, glaring from beneath a close-fitting cap, drawn down over the ears, flank a prodigious black bill, a foot long and curved like a scythe-blade. He wears a black velveteen coat with long skirts, and underneath this a white moleskin waistcoat with brass buttons, and baggy trousers of the same colour. The delicate creamy tinge which I have observed on the throats of common emperors is developed into a gorgeous red and gold collar or stock.

Under his arm, or flipper, he carries a heavy truncheon, fashioned from the backbone of a seal. As he stood before us, all this could be taken in at a glance.

I have had many a painful interview with game-keepers, and people of that kidney, but this one would take all my diplomacy to meet. But a bland smile and a voluble tongue might pull us through.

"If you please game-keeper, park-officer, I mean," I began:–

But he interrupted me in a harsh voice, and with an accent strongly reminiscent of the land of cakes:–

"Noo then, you twa," he cried, "what the deevil are ye daein' here? Ye ken vara weel this is private property. Let me see what ye hae got in your pockets."

When I had first seen him I had instinctively plunged my hands into these receptacles, with the idea of dropping anything of a compromising nature into the nearest ditch. But my fingers came in contact with something of a different nature.

I seldom go for a long walk without that vade-mecum, universal panacea, and open sesame, a pocket-flask.

I grasped it, and my courage revived. If "wi' usquebaugh" I could face the deevil, why not an

Emperor Penguin. I was in case to jostle a constable.

Our enemy, however was in an aggressive mood. We hesitated at the idea of turning out our pockets to this truculent fowl, so he without more ado, passed his stick over my clothes. It struck my flask with a full sound. At once his worst suspicions were redoubled.

"Come away, noo, oot wi' it," he cried. "Yon's an egg, ye young rascal, if I'm no vera much mistaken."

"Indeed it is not," I replied, with new found confidence. "That's my pocket flask, by the way have a dram, will you?" For I thought this was the psychical moment for the introduction of this delicate, but at the same time not disagreeable subject.

"Na, na, laddie," he said, "no sae fast as a' that. I'll jeest take your names and addresses and what's your business here."

Now there are many ways of revealing one's identity and asserting one's position on an occasion like this, but there is none so dignified, not to say majestic, as the display of a clean visiting-card. A lightning thought struck me, and plunging my hand into my breast pocket, I produced the required piece of pasteboard, with an austere flourish and a general air of

hauteur. True, it was curled up at the corners, and rather soiled with tobacco ash, and, in place of my own august cognomen, it bore that of an enterprising washerwoman, who had sent it on board at our last port of call.

But it fixed our friend the enemy. He scratched his head, looked at it upside down then backside foremost, and finally pulled off his cap, stuck the card in the lining and replaced the cap on his head.

"Weel Gentlemen," he said, "I'll jeest show ye aff the estate if ye'll tell me whaur ye come frae, and what's yer beesiness?"

"Well! come now my man," I replied, "have a dram, and I'm sure we're very sorry to have caused you any trouble."

With that I again brought forth the flask. He took a long gurgling swig, coughed and threw back his head, shutting his eyes and smacking his bill in a way half human, half galline.

"Man, yon's the richt stuff," he murmured, handing it back. "It's gey scarce aboot here."

"And pray," I went on, thinking it well to avoid an answer to his last question. "Whose estate do we happen to have trespassed upon? I was not aware that there were any private grounds in this district."

"Oo jeest Mr Forsteri, Aptenodytes Forsteri, a cousin o' the M. P., I'm surprised ye didna ken, man! Its a vera auld family."

"No doubt" I replied, "but you see we are strangers here. But does all the ground about here belong to Mr Forsteri?"

"Oo aye, sir, ye'll see the march burn ahint ye there, by the laich side o' yon big scaur? The Maister's vera parteeklar about this time o' year. Ye see a' the gentry will be comin' for the nestin' in June, and if he was tae see ye here then I dinna ken what he would say."

"But we're very inoffensive people, you know. We're geologists, we just go about collecting stones for our own amusement."

"Wha-at, gatherin' stanes, are ye? Ye're surely no nestin' tae? Ye canna possibly dae it about here. The maister wouldna hear o' it!

I should explain that the penguin builds his nest of stones only, so I hastened to explain.

"Oh! no no," I said, "we merely collect the stones to take home, and show to people who are interested in them."

"Besides," said A— in a tone of deep melancholy, "we've no hens with us."

"Aye, aye," he replied, nodding his head thoughtfully, "ye'll be frae yin o' they expedeetions, are ye no?"

"Yes," I said boldly, seeing that the cat must come out of the bag. "We are from the British Antarctic Expedition of 1907."

"Mphm! are ye though? Ye're queer folk, man! I often wonder what brings ye here. I mind the last yin that was here, somewhere about seven years syne."

"A pack o' them cam' ower tae the rookery, after the maist o' us was gane. We thought they were sea-leopards at first, and some o' the weans was gey scared."

"But as far as I ken, they ta'en naething but a wheen auld rotten eggs. What in a' the world they were gaun tae dae wi' them is a pairfect meestery tae me."

"The Maister was no at hame at the time, but he was awfu' vexed when he heard tell o' it. He said he would ha'e the law o' them if they ever came again."

"Well! I hope we will get on better with you," I said. "We'll try not to annoy you in any way."

I wondered at the time if he would object to

being stewed, for we were all growing rather tired of Adélies.

All this time we had been walking slowly back towards the hut. I kept hoping that our new acquaintance would leave us, for I dreaded what might happen if we met any of our dogs.

The sight of this majestic bird, pursued by half a dozen yelping curs, tobogganning along on his stomach, and tearing all his brass buttons off on the ice, would have been most painful to me.

But my mind was soon relieved. Our friend stopped and looked round him, squawked thoughtfully, and, extending a flipper to me he said:—

"Weel! here we are at the march. I'll jeest say good-bye tae ye."

"I would advise ye no tae come ower here again till the Maister's gane."

"It's no that I care much mysel', but he's vera parteeklar."

We shook hands with him, and started away for home.

"Quite a civil bird," I said to A—.

"Yes," he replied, "and I thought, rather intelligent." But his voice 'far, far away did seem.'

I pinched myself surreptitiously, glanced at my

companion and then over my shoulder. Not a sign of our late acquaintance was to be seen, and there was hardly an ice-hummock about that could have concealed him.

Was it all a dream then?

At any rate, we have obeyed his orders.

A. F. M.

EREBUS.

EREBUS

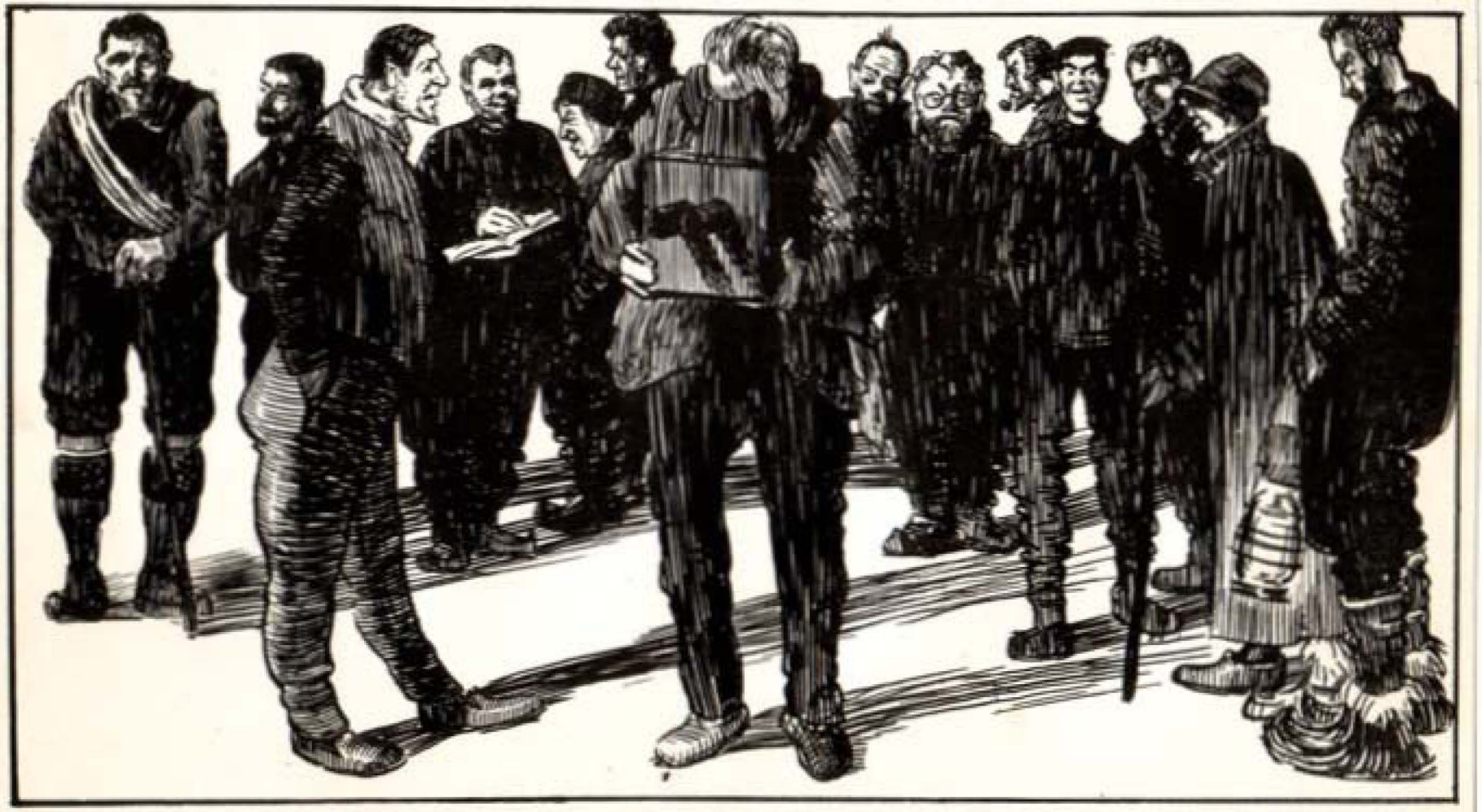
Keeper of the Southern Gateway, grim, rugged, gloomy
and grand;
Warden of these wastes uncharted, as the years sweep
on, you stand.
At your head the swinging smoke-cloud; at your feet
the grinding floes;
Racked and seared by the inner fires, gripped close by
the outer snows.
Proud, unconquered and unyielding, whilst the untold
æons passed,
Inviolate through the ages, your ramparts spurning
the blast,
Till men impelled by a strong desire, broke through
your icy bars;
Fierce was the fight to gain that height where your
stern peak dares the stars.
You called your vassals to aid you, and the leaping
blizzard rose,
Driving in furious eddies, blinding, stifling, cruel
snows.
The grasp of the numbing frost clutched hard at their
hands and faces,
And the weird gloom made darker still dim seen
perilous places.

AURORA AUSTRALIS.

They, weary, wayworn, and sleepless, through the long
withering night,
Grimly clung to your iron sides till with laggard Dawn
came the light:
Both heart and brain upheld them, till the long-drawn
strain was o'er,
Victors then on your crown they stood and gazed at
the Western Shore;
The distant glory of that land in broad splendour lay
unrolled,
With icefield, cape, and mountain height, flame rose
in a sea of gold.
Oh! Herald of returning Suns to the waiting lands
below;
Beacon to their home-seeking feet, far across the
Southern snow.
In the Northland in the years to be, pale Winter's first
white sign
Will turn again their thoughts to thee, and the glamour
that is thine.

NEMO.

FOURTEEN GOOD AND TRUE.



AN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.

AN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.

NOW it is written in the 21st chapter of the 2nd book of the chronicles of the Great King, how that he did in the first year of his reign, and six moons after the Good Queen his Mother had been taken to her fathers, send forth the ship which was called Discovery;

And did say unto the captain, who was a captain of one of the King's own ships, even a fighting ship;

Go thou unto the uttermost ends of the Earth, to that place where no man has yet trod, and which the wise men of the land do call Antarctica, and spy it out, and come back to me with tidings thereof.

And also it is written that the captain whose name was called Scott, did go with his ship and a goodly company of officers and men, and did diligently seek for that land until he found it.

And all the great works they did accomplish, and the trials and tribulations which did beset them, are they not also inscribed therein, and it is not of

these things I would speak unto you.

¶ Now it came to pass that one of the officers of the ship, who was possessed of a spirit which did make him restless, so that he soon did weary of abiding in one place;

And who had wandered over nearly the whole face of the Earth, both on land and on the sea, in small ships and in great, did commune with himself in this wise.

Lo! this many years have I been like unto an outcast, and have spent my substance in travel; now will I take unto myself a wife, and abide henceforth in the land of my fathers.

¶ But! Behold! the spirit which did possess him was not yet dead, but only scotched, which is to say being interpreted, spificated, and at the end of the third year it did again awaken, and began to bestir itself forthwith, saying unto the man whose name was Shackleton;

Lo! much of the land which ye went forth to spy out in the ship Discovery is yet undiscovered, and has not therefore been added to the dominions of the Great King.

Now I say unto ye, great shall be the benefit to the people of thy country, when the way to this land

has been opened up, and the ships of the King shall be able to travel in safety thereto, and trade with the peoples who dwell therein.

Also, do not the wise men say unto us, that in that land there is set up a great pole of value, which all the nations of the Earth do strive to possess.

Go thou therefore, dwell in this land, travel over the face of the same, tear out its secrets, and should it also be that thy hand shall uproot the great pole which the wise men do call the South Pole; then do I say unto thee that it shall not be forgotten of thee in the years which are to come.

¶ And it came to pass that these words did sink deep into the heart of him who was called Shackleton, so that he did say unto the wife of his bosom;

Behold! though it grieveth me sore to leave thee, yet am I about to gather together my goods and my chattels, and sell them for monies, so that I may buy me a ship, and with men whom I shall myself choose, go again to that land of ice and snow, and of burning mountains;

And there sojourn until I come to the place where is set up that pole which the wise men call the South Pole, and with that and many other things of value in my ship, will I return to the land of my

fathers, and great will be the joy of the Great King and of his people.

¶ And because that his wife did see that his heart was set on this thing, she sayeth unto him;

My Lord, not because I would see thee gone from me, but because I would fain see thee accomplish this thing for which thy soul yearneth, I say unto thee; go and sell thy house and thy cattle and all that is thine and take also the gold and silver that is in my privy purse and do with it what thou wilt.

¶ Thus was made light the heart of the man Shackleton, but many were to be his sorrows;

For when he had gathered in all the monies for which he had sold his lands and all his goods, he did yet require many talents of gold wherewith to furnish his ship, which was not yet bought.

Then in his trouble did he say, Lo! are there not many men in the country of the Great King who possess many thousands of talents of gold and of silver, now will I betake myself unto them, and they will gladly give me of their shekels.

¶ Nevertheless it was not so, for one who owned many million pieces of gold did say unto him,

Nay, for I know naught of the land of which ye speak, nor of the pole of value which ye say is set up

therein.

And it came to pass that though many of the rich men gave unto him of their gold, yet had he still need of many more shekels before he could say, Now can I buy and furnish me a ship for my journey.

¶ And the heart of Shackleton was heavy, and was sunk even unto his shoes, when there arose a great and mighty man who did build ships for the Great King;

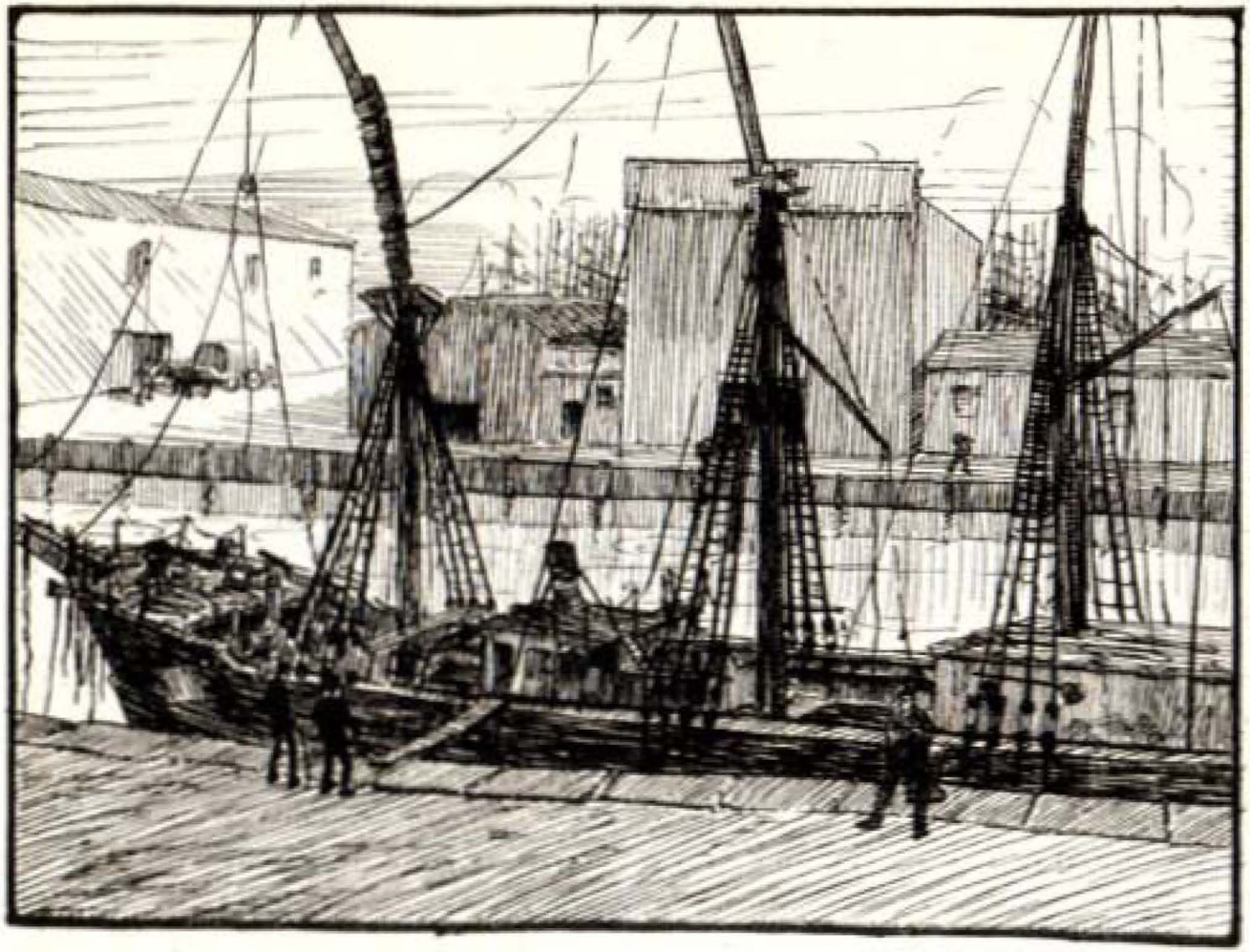
And who wrought cunningly in iron, with which he made the ships so strong that they could not be broken, and he did speak in this wise saying;

My son, though my house in which I do dwell, lieth a long journey to the north of the chief city of the Great King, even the city of London, yet hath it come to my ears of the work which ye would perform, and it seemeth good in mine eyes.

It hath also been told unto me that because thy purse is not too heavy, thy way is not clear before thee.

Behold! I have here great stores of gold and of silver, and because thy design hath found favour with me, take of my wealth sufficient for thy needs.

¶ Then indeed was Shackleton a happy man, and he straightway cast about him for a ship which should



MANY SHEKELS WERE NEEDED FOR THE SHIP TO GO FORTH.

be strong enough for his needs.

And a certain man rose up and spake unto him saying, Behold! I have a ship which is so strongly built that no tempest can do it any hurt, neither can it be crushed by ice.

Give unto me six thousand pieces of gold, and I will deliver the ship unto thee, with all things in good order and ready for thee to start on thy journey.

And because he was in great haste, Shackleton bought the ship which he had not seen, for it was in a far country, but when it had been delivered unto him, he found that many shekels were needed to make the ship fit to go forth.

¶ Now it will of a surety be seen by all men of understanding, that no man could of himself do everything in this great work; so Shackleton took unto himself a portion of one of the great houses in the city, in the street which is called Regent;

And there did he work for many days assisted by his steward, a man who had had much dealings with food and with raiment, and all such things as would be needed.

Now this house was occupied at the lower part by people who sell food and drink, and above by some who did anoint the hair of those inhabitants of the

city who could afford to pay a certain sum of money, so that it would grow strong and it might not be said to them as to the prophet of old, Go up thou bald-head.

¶ And it came to pass that Shackleton, having got together his ship and men to work the ship, and his steward to gather stores of food and raiment, did look round for men tried and trusted whom he might take with him to dwell in that distant land of snow and of darkness.

First did he choose one who was skilled in the arts of reading signs and portents in the clouds and in the stars, and of steering his way on land, or on the waters by means of a wondrous piece of metal marked with divers figures.

Then took he one who had studied at the seats of learning and had knowledge of all kinds of sickness, and who could join together bones which were broken asunder.

And because that they had been in the ship Discovery, and knew of the land and the people and the beasts that dwelt therein, he did take two from the ships of the Great King.

Also one cunning in the art of making pictures in many colours and pleasing to the eye.

And another who was of few years but of great wisdom, in that he could by looking at a stone or a handful of earth, tell whether the land round about had been peopled by man, beast, or creeping things, and could say also if gold, silver, or precious stones might be found, and in how great quantity.

Then was there one who had contrived a chariot of fearsome design, which would travel over the land without horses, even up steep hills and over rocky places, and could also make great noises and noisome stenches to frighten the wild beasts.

Also did he take one greatly skilled in skinning and preserving birds and beasts, and in the art of making dishes to tickle the palate, which he had learned and practised in many lands.

Also chose he one, who though yet a youth was large of muscle and had gained honour at the seats of wisdom, by reason of his knowledge in the art of fisticuffs.

¶ Now! Behold! when all things were made ready, there came unto Shackleton a messenger from the palace of the King, yea, even from the Great King himself, saying nnto him;

Lo! The King, may he live for ever, hath heard from his Councillors of the noble work which thou