(March 30, 1914.)

Antarctic Exploration.

By Commander Evans, R.N., C.B., of London, England.*

At a regular luncheon of the Club, held on the 30th March, Commander Evans, R.N., C.B., said:

Mr. President, Members of the Canadian Club, and Fellow Guests,—It goes straight to my heart to feel that fresh from the Antarctic we are welcomed in this fashion. I think in England perhaps we are a little bit slow in showing our feelings—at least the English are—I am half Welsh and half Irish. (Laughter.) But the whole lot of us are quick and keen to appreciate real hospitality and also absolute patriotism, and that is what we get over here.

Well, gentlemen, I am not here to talk on the Home Rule question, or Canadian railways, or anything of that sort. I have only one subject, my association with Captain Scott. You were perhaps present at the lecture the other night and heard what was connected with the history of the expedition. I will try to-day to give some of the more human touches.

First of all, in an Antarctic expedition, one gets men of all sorts, but after working together you shortly discover that your view point has been exaggerated. You have Canadian, Australian, English, Irish, Isaac, Jacob, all sorts—(Laughter)—the only difference is a little difference due to training, making some fit in in one direction, others in another. An engineering training makes a man a better mechanic, whereas Charles Wright was a better practical man. The training of a Canadian makes him better as a sledger, perhaps a better pioneer than those brought up in other parts of the Empire.

While particular differences are bound to obtain, the selection was a very difficult thing. The selection of sixty men out of eight thousand volunteers was a great responsibility on those who were trying to perfect arrangements for the expedition. The scientific selection was in the hands of Captain Scott and Dr. Wilson. They were very broad-minded, and it turned out well. As many men came from the Dominions as those from home universities; there was no difference

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among them. It was very interesting. We picked up some in Australia and they wished to go and say good-bye, so they met us later going by another route—the "Terra Nova" took a hundred and twenty days to reach New Zealand,—some people can get there more quickly than the rest. To me as Commander of the "Terra Nova" it was very interesting to see how each new man who joined the party was received; it always reminded me of a little bit of fish handed to a sea anemone—all hands were out to receive him, he was assimilated at once, and became part of the party. The view point of course of some men was quite peculiar. Cheetham, the boatswain of Capt. Scott's relief expedition, had also been on Shackleton's; he told us he was starting on his seventh voyage to the Antarctic, and was on the last southern voyage of the "Terra Nova." He was allowed certain privileges a man of his rank was not usually entitled to, by virtue of his long and faithful services. He used to talk to the Captain and express his opinions fairly freely. (Laughter.) One of his opinions expressed to me as Captain of the "Terra Nova," was this: "You know, Sir, Antarctic expeditions ain't what they used to was." (Laughter.) Asked what he meant, he said: "In the old days of Captain Cook"—I don't mean Dr. Cook—(Laughter)—"Men went out and never knew when they were coming back; now you know to a month, almost, when you will come back home—it takes half the excitement out of it." (Laughter.) When you get men of that kind, you don't feel afraid of going anywhere or doing anything. The principal factors making an expedition a success are immense good will and sense, unselfishness, and I think a sense of humor. Setbacks are inevitable, and after all, all expeditions are governed tremendously by luck.

One setback we had was on a sledging journey. Wright and I with two Irish seamen left a depot on the great ice barrier. It was St. Patrick's Day, and we had put aside a little for a celebration. Observing that there were two and a half Irishmen in the party of four (Laughter), we gave it to Wright to prepare the feast. We put in all the pemmican, and chopped up biscuits—those of us who had better teeth—we bit them up and dropped them into the aluminum mugs, after which they were turned into the soup. No one ever thought of asking whether you had cleaned your teeth, for as a matter of fact you had not for five months. We didn't mind that at all. What was jealously guarded was the possibility of a crumb being swallowed, so the people with good teeth were made to open their mouths, to see that no crumb

was left there. When we had the soup all ready, one of the men was suddenly seized with a cramp in the leg, and upset the dish, so that it very quickly disappeared into the snow. The one remark made was that by Charles Wright, "I have never known anything so funny in my life." (Laughter.) Of course when men look on life in such a bright easy way, you can't be angry, and you always do your best. We certainly did pull well together on this expedition. (Applause.)

I happened to read the other day something by Rudyard Kipling; he said he was not an explorer but a traveler; but that all travelers bring back memories in the same way, whether travelers or explorers, and that there are a great many things you can't publish. You never think them worth while; sometimes you can't publish them—the printers wouldn't print them. The scents and smells of the places visited are among these. You have vivid memories of these. It is quite true. One smell that always permeated our nostrils was the smell of the cooker, the paraffine stove; and whenever I pass a motor car, the odor I get recalls that stove. In the ship we had the smell of the dogs; that was horrible; but the smell brings one back to the days of sledging,—it is very much the same whether in the north or the south. First of all, you get up about two hours earlier than usual,—if you are accustomed to getting up at 7, you get up at 5, but generally, due to the difference in longitude, you find you are being called at 4 instead of 5. The cook is a privileged man, he remains inside the tent; the others get ready, dig the sled out from its snowed-up condition, which is its usual condition—and the men put on their fur boots. Your fingers are by this time thoroughly cold, and you warm them on the mugs of tea. You have no water unless you cook it, and to do this you would need to carry fuel, which means more weight, and that shortens the rations, so you give up all ideas of washing and cleanliness, but it is extraordinary how clean you remain. (Laughter.) After warming one's hands, and filling—or not filling—one's stomach, one starts at length on the run. Usually the first stage is short. For the first few miles you experience terrific discomfort; but first your feet get warm, then your hands, last of all your face. It takes at least an hour to warm up; then one can open one's coat a little bit. After struggling along for four hours or five, you stop for lunch. Everyone is very glad, but the lunch is very sad, for the best meal is the one at the end of the day; lunch is usually two biscuits and a mug of tea. Those who smoke have a pipe of tobacco, and they have been known to chew all the "dollup" at the

end. After four or five hours' march again one is very tired. This always culminated in one thing—thoughts of food, what you would like to eat; things you would ordinarily refuse as most distasteful, you hunger for, but you seldom or never get enough.

At the end of the sledging day, the tired out men pitch the tent. The ice is frozen very hard,—you here in Canada know something about it, but add a little to your cold temperature, divide it by the same faces that always accompany you—it is really the same company, and instead of fresh faces and new landmarks, you have the great wide bleak plain always the same,—but the faces, the more the men become familiar to you, really become better looking, on any proper kind of expedition the ugliest man becomes handsome before you are done with him; subtract the comforts you are accustomed to, and multiply it by the days you spend, and you get some idea of the hardships of a sledging trip.

I had perhaps the hardest time, as I was the first man smitten with scurvy. As my men got tired they would be replaced. I started to pioneer the way ahead of Captain Scott, but although the spirit was willing—in the end I broke down, as scurvy overcame me. I managed to struggle on, with two men, two splendid men to help me.

It was an enormous sense of relief when the fight was almost over, and at last I found myself strong enough to go on again. We came to the little shack we left some years ago as a magnetic observatory; we had built it in the first expedition in 1904. I shall never forget the first day in that shack, when we experienced actual warmth from a stove! Nor the reception from the bluejackets, and we were put into sleeping bags, the delightful sense of comfort! As Peary said, it was "not a case of sleeping, but sleep, sleep, sleep, then turn over and sleep again." (Applause.)

I made four voyages to the Antarctic regions—I am sorry to talk so much about myself, but one can't quite eliminate self when describing things one has seen—(Applause)—the first voyage south was very much like the others. Before one could get from New Zealand and civilization to the ice-bound Antarctic one had to face gales and long heavy seas washing over the ship. The decks were most slippery with the briny water. Everyone was wet through the oilskins. The dogs were the most pathetic animals, and our best friends. A dog can stand cold, but not salt water. As he loses his hold and slips down the waterways, he looks up almost pathetically, as much as to say, "It is your fault." Of course it is,

for you take them there. We brought those that were left back—we did not kill any dogs—and gave them all homes in various parts of the Empire, and they will never have to pull any more sledges,—and by Jove I don't think they could if they had to, I think they are fatter than the other members of the expedition! (Laughter.)

Then when one gets across this more disturbed ocean, and reaches calmer seas, one sees real beauty, the orange-glinting crystals, and enormous bergs, some many miles in length, before they become disintegrated as they drift farther up north.

When we get into winter quarters, there is the first sadness. There is, however, a spirit of humor, not only amongst the men, but also in the penguins. I think the most humorous things on earth are the penguins, also the most determined. They would follow the ship and try to touch the ship, but directly they would fly off the floes and get near, the kick of the propellors sends them away fifty or sixty feet, and they don't know what's up. They get on the ice, and don't know what to make of the ship at all, so after looking at it a while they collapse like drunken men on the ice floes. Then everyone laughs, and throws coal at them. (Laughter.)

The first sign of a real sense of sadness, when you feel really cut off from civilization, is when the ship turns home, and takes your little messages; then you realize how splendid your companions are, and you get to realize what good comrades they are going to be.

I can only conclude by saying that there is a tendency nowadays—I may be contradicted—to say the young men of the day are not the men their fathers were. Many of our fathers are alive still, and are fine men, splendid fellows; we emulate their example; but Captain Scott and his company show that men are to be found nowadays worthy of holding up that splendid heritage as a nation that our fathers won for them. Thank you. (Long applause, followed by three hearty cheers and a "tiger.")