'The Finding of the Dead' E.L. Atkinson - published in John Murray's 'cheap' edition of Scott's Journals in 1923. Reprinted in this Oxford World's Classics Edition (2006)

Practically no attempt was made to serve meals, and the few so-called stewards were themselves mostly out of action from drink or sea-sickness.

'Nearly all the male passengers who were able to be about spent their time drinking and quarrelling. The deck cargo and some of our top hamper were washed away and the cabins got their share of the waves that were washing the deck.

'Then it was I first knew that Con Scott was no ordinary human being. Though at that time still only a boy he practically took command of the passengers and was at once accepted by them as their Boss during the rest of the trip. With a small body of volunteers he led an attack on the saloon—dressed the mothers, washed the children, fed the babies, swabbed down the floors and nursed the sick, and performed every imaginable service for all hands. On deck he settled the quarrels and established order either by his personality, or, if necessary, by his fists. Practically by day and night he worked for the common good, never sparing himself, and with his infectious smile gradually made us all feel the whole thing was jolly good fun.

'I daresay there are still some of the passengers like myself who, after a quarter of a century, have imprinted on their minds the vision of this fair-haired English sailor boy with the laughing blue eyes, who at that early age knew how to sacrifice himself for the welfare and happiness of others.'*

EDITOR'S APPENDIX II

THE FINDING OF THE DEAD

BY E. L. ATKINSON

[E. L. Atkinson's account of 'The Finding of the Dead' was first published in John Murray's 'cheap edition' of Scott's journals in 1923.]

EIGHT months afterwards we found the tent. It was an object partially snowed up and looking like a cairn. Before it were the ski sticks and in front of them a bamboo which probably was the mast of the sledge. The tent was practically on the line of cairns which we had built in the previous season. It was within a quarter of a mile of the remains of the cairn, which showed as a small hummock beneath the snow.

Inside the tent were the bodies of Captain Scott, Doctor Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers. Wilson and Bowers were found in the attitude of sleep, their sleeping-bags closed over their heads as they would naturally close them.

Scott died later. He had thrown back the flaps of his sleeping-bag and opened his coat. The little wallet containing the three notebooks was under his shoulders, and his arm flung across Wilson. They had pitched their tent well, and it had withstood all the blizzards of an exceptionally hard winter. Each man of the Expedition recognised the bodies. From Captain Scott's diary I found his reasons for this disaster. When the men had been assembled I read to them these reasons, the place of death of Petty Officer Evans, and the story of Captain Oates' heroic end.

We recovered all their gear and dug out the sledge with their belongings on it. Amongst these were 35 lbs. of very important geological specimens which had been collected on the moraines of the Beardmore Glacier; at Doctor Wilson's request they had stuck to these up to the very end, even when disaster stared them in the face and they knew that the specimens were so much weight added to what they had to pull.

When everything had been gathered up, we covered them with the outer tent and read the Burial Service. From this time until well into the next day we started to build a mighty cairn above them. This cairn was finished the next morning, and upon it a rough cross was placed, made from the greater portion of two skis, and on either side were up-ended two sledges, and they were fixed firmly in the snow, to be an added mark. Between the eastern sledge and the cairn a bamboo was placed, containing a metal cylinder, and in this the following record was left:—

'November 12, 1912, lat. 79 degrees, 50 mins. South. This cross and cairn are erected over the bodies of Captain Scott, C.V.O., R.N., Doctor E. A. Wilson, M.B., B.C. Cantab., and Lieutenant H. R. Bowers, Royal Indian Marine—a slight token to perpetuate their successful and gallant attempt to reach the Pole. This they did on January 17, 1912, after the Norwegian Expedition had already done so. Inclement weather with lack of fuel was the cause of their death. Also to commemorate their two gallant comrades, Captain L. E. G. Oates of the Inniskilling Dragoons, who walked to his death in a blizzard to save his comrades about eighteen miles south of this position; also of Seaman Edgar Evans, who died at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier. "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." '

This was signed by all the members of the party. I decided then to march twenty miles south with the whole of the Expedition and try to find the body of Captain Oates.

For half that day we proceeded south, as far as possible along the line of the previous season's march. On one of the old pony walls, which was simply marked by a ridge of the surface of the snow, we found Oates' sleeping-bag, which they had brought along with them after he had left.

The next day we proceeded thirteen more miles south, hoping and searching to find his body. When we arrived at the place where he had left them, we saw that there was no chance of doing so The kindly snow had covered his body, giving him a fitting burial. Here, again, as near to the site of the death as we could judge, we built another cairn to his memory, and placed thereon a small cross and the following record:—

'Hereabouts died a very gallant gentleman, Captain L. E. G. Oates of the Inniskilling Dragoons. In March 1912, returning from the Pole, he walked willingly to his death in a blizzard, to try and save his comrades, beset by hardships. This note is left by the Relief Expedition of 1912.'

It was signed by Cherry and myself.

From here I decided to turn back and to take, as far as possible, all the stores to Hut Point. I then thought that by any means that lay within our power we would try to reach Lieutenant Campbell and his party. As the sea ice would in all likelihood be impossible, we should probably have to take the route along the plateau, ascending the first Ferrar Glacier and making our way along the plateau as far as we were able.

On the second day we came again to the resting-place of the three and bade them a final farewell. There alone in their greatness they will lie without change or bodily decay, with the most fitting tomb in the world above them.

In the following January when the *Terra Nova* returned for the last time to bring the survivors home, those who had taken part in the search for

17. The grave of Scott, Wilson, and Bowers

Captain Scott sledged out to Hut Point to erect a cross in memory of him and his companions.

This cross, 9 feet in height, which was made by Davies of Australian jarrah wood, now stands on the summit of Observation Hill, overlooking the Great Ice Barrier and in full view of the *Discovery* winter quarters.

The line chosen from Tennyson's 'Ulysses' was suggested by Cherry-Garrard.*

IN
MEMORIAM
CAPT. R. F. SCOTT, R.N.
DR. E. A. WILSON, CAPT. L. E. G. OATES, INS. DRGS., LT. H. R. BOWERS, R.I.M.
PETTY OFFICER E. EVANS, R.N.
WHO DIED ON THEIR
RETURN FROM THE
POLE. MARCH
1912
TO STRIVE, TO SEEK,
TO FIND,
AND NOT TO
YIELD.*

EDITOR'S APPENDIX III

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO SCOTT'S ORIGINAL BASE AND SLEDGING JOURNALS

(18 OCTOBER 1910–29 MARCH 1912)

The note on *Composition and Publication History* discusses the preparation of Scott's journals for publication. Reginald Pound's 1966 biography, *Scott of the Antarctic*, first advertised the omission or alteration of a number of entries, after Peter Scott allowed Pound access to the originals. A facsimile of Scott's notebooks was subsequently published in 1968. But this appendix publishes the first list of all the significant changes made to Scott's original in *Scott's Last Expedition Vol. I Being the Journals of Captain R. F. Scott, R.N., C.V.O.* (London: Smith, Elder, 1913).

Alterations which did not significantly change the meaning of the published text have not been included in this appendix. The editors tidied up Scott's prose, correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation quite heavily on occasion, but not consistently. Some changes were habitual, e.g. the replacement of Scott's 'etc.' with '&c.', and his '&' with 'and'. Some of Scott's headings were incorporated in the published text, some not. Marginal notes, or notes on the page facing the entry in his base journals, were usually included.

The deletion of critical comments about colleagues and competitors is now well known, prettifying Scott's public image. But the collation of all his acerbic asides highlights Scott's censoriousness. His priggish comments about the scientific research of others also betray the insecurity of an amateur amongst professionals. Some of the alterations exhibit a distinctively Edwardian prudishness (e.g. 17 March 1911), while Scott's pedestrian midwinter speech (22 June 1911), reproduced here for the first time, lacks the inspiration which some of his polar rivals could generate.

Over 175 of the temperatures which Scott recorded during the polar journey were published in *Scott's Last Expedition*. Thirteen of these were reduced, exaggerating the severity of the conditions faced. Yet the rationale behind the changes is confusing. The editors limited themselves to switching '+' to '-', hesitating perhaps to tamper with a sacred text. On some occasions the changes were negligible (e.g. 14 February 1912: '+1' changed to '-1'), and on others confusing (e.g. 19 December 1911: '+11 & Min. +5' changed to '-11 & Min. -5', which makes no sense, as the minimum temperature becomes warmer than the average). The arbitrary nature of the changes suggests they may even have been genuine

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CAPTAIN SCOTT'S LAST EXPEDITION