

AN ARTIST IN THE ANTARCTIC¹

BY FRANK WILBERT STOKES

WITH PICTURES BY THE WRITER, THE FIRST ARTIST TO BRING
PAINTINGS FROM THE ANTARCTIC

FAR down at the nether side of the globe the little black, bark-rigged *Antarctic*² rolled over lovely seas of cobalt blues and greens, bound for that dread Niflheim where

“Death-dealing vapors rise
From a black mist-world full of sighs.”

It was January 11, 1902. The temperature of the water gave unmistakable signs. At twelve minutes past 1 P.M. we sighted what seemed to be an iceberg. Gradually through the silver mist of nimbus a mountainous, snow-clad island appeared in delicate pink tones. It proved to be King George Island of the South Shetlands. Again curtained in mystery until 4:30 P.M., the golden sunlight pushed the mist aside, disclosing the island surrounded by a flotilla of majestic icebergs. It was completely snow-clad down to the edge of the dark cobalt-blue sea, where it terminated in an ice-wall two hundred feet high. This snow mantle was of a delicate white-yellow chrome, with faint cobalt-blue cloud-silhouettes creeping over its rounded surface. A few bare rocks added a deep touch of reddish-brown purple. The bergs were glistening in marvelous pink purity under the sun's rays, with rich, deep shadows of turquoise-cobalt blue. Penguins sported swiftly in the waters round the ship.

This *coup d'oeil* demonstrated a radical difference in the character of the far-South land compared with the far North. We were upon the threshold of the last great region of geographical mystery. At 5 P.M. we had approached near enough for an initial color-sketch. Landing-parties the following day found a considerable area of rock free from snow, and obtained seals and birds, some green snow,—caused by a minute plant of the same order as that of red snow,—lichen in abundance, and a new beetle.

Rapidly gathering clouds obscured the sun with heavy forms and deep, cold blue-grays, and interspersings of pale, chilly yellow. A damp, penetrating wind from the northeast, with a counter ocean current, produced a choppy sea, and the spray flew over us, while the barometer fell suddenly. Passing through Nelson Strait, we rode out a gale in the cold gray-green waters of Bramfield Strait. All night the gale continued, and a heavy sea was still running on the morning of January 12. About 8 A.M. I went on deck. There, partly veiled by a drifting silvery mist, were Trinity Islands and the lofty mountains of Terre Louis Philippe, or Palmer Land. The captain, ensconced in the “crow's-nest,” scanned the horizon for an opening into Weddell Sea, as we hoped to place the winter station on the eastern coast of King Oscar II Land. Cloud-mists

¹ For Mr. Stokes's pictures in color of “The Aurora Borealis,” see this magazine for last February.

² The Swedish South Polar Expedition, under the leadership of Dr. Otto Nordenskjöld, a nephew of the famous Arctic explorer Baron Nordenskjöld, was equipped by private means. This expedition sailed from Gottenburg, Sweden, October 8, 1901, touched at Falmouth, England, for coal, leaving that port October 16, for Buenos Aires, Argentina, where it arrived December 16. At this port a young ensign of the Argentine navy joined the expedition, together with the writer. On December 21 the steam-sealer *Antarctic*, with the full complement of the expedition on board, left for the south, stopping at the Falkland Islands for a day, and then at the Staten Islands, off the southernmost extremity of South America, in order to correct the magnetic instruments at the meteorological station of Argentina.

NOTE: This article appeared in the August 1903 issue of *The Century Magazine*, pages 521-528. Not included here are the decorative map entitled ‘Course of *The Antarctic* in 1902’ and four color reproductions of Stokes' paintings, entitled: “An Antarctic Afterglow, Sidney Herbert Bay, February 10, 1902, About 9 P.M.”, “The Sun's Rays, Sidney Herbert Bay and Joinville Land, February 10, 1902, 7 P.M.”, “An Antarctic Sunset, Admiralty Inlet, Joinville Land, February 13, 1902, About 7 P.M.” and “The Approach of a Storm, Joinville Land, Evening of February 23, 1902, About 9 P.M.”

obscured the land, and a raw wind and a cold gray-green sea, with hurtling masses of gray overhead, ensued.

After a succession of squalls we sought the welcome shelter under the land, and, as if by the touch of a giant, Boreas fled, leaving a calm, deep-blue sea, in the waters of which whales were spouting, and dazzling ice-palaces floated in delicate tones of lilac-pink, chrome-green half-tones, and turquoise-cobalt shadows. Beyond, in imposing grandeur and beauty, was a strange mountainous land—a land of the gods—wrapped completely in an ice-mantle eons old. There were long vistas of gleaming, winding, tortuous glacier valleys, in blinding coruscations of silvery pink and green reflections, and jagged peaks, softened by cyclopean snow fingers, over which the magic of translucent light and shade rushed with lightning speed, obscuring and revealing in bewildering succession.

A breathless silence pervaded the scene. I was busy with camera, pencil, and brush, fearful that these grandiose themes would escape, and succeeded in finishing five sketches. Charts were consulted and positions measured as we bowled along, enjoying the transition from storm to calm and comparative warmth. Some of us took boat and landed on a rocky islet as the westering sun disappeared behind gray-turquoise cloud-strata and shot a path of gleaming salmon gold across the sea.

Myriads of penguins waddled about in their solemnly comical fashion, and were not in the least disturbed by our presence until we walked among them, when they tried to bite our boots and struck at us with their little wings. Two penguins would waddle close to each other, and then, stretching their necks, with bills pointing upward, would sway to and fro, making a strange rasping sound, as if condoling with each other over our invasion of their territory. Cormorants sat round demurely, with beautiful snow-petrels, watching us in a leisurely, fearless manner. When one of the men shot a few for specimens, the noise made them fly a few yards, only to return and crane their necks with fearless curiosity over their comrades, and toward the tall, strange human animals who had such a loud cry.

Presently, with the wash of a wave, in

rolled a large Ross seal, which stopped a moment, and raising its small head, gave us a half-fearful, grave, questioning look from its stupid, bloodshot eyes; then it awkwardly humped and wriggled over the rocks a few yards past our feet, where it lay down and slept. The seals were entirely unaware of the presence of deadly enemies. The sensation that such a scene produces upon the mind is indeed very strange; the pathos of it is disquieting.

We returned to the *Antarctic* at 1 P.M., with specimens of lichen, stones, and a species of moss covered with mussels.

January 13. There was only a temporary setting of the sun, and the ship passed under the silent gaze of sentinel after sentinel of rock giants, hoary with age, calm and immovable amid a region of raging storms and bitter cold. The rocks of these stupendous heights, which pierced whirling cloud-masses of dark smoky blue, were varied shades of gray-blues and deep maddered purple-gray, the glaciers' brilliance of pale, pure gold eclipsing the light of the clouds. Below, the sea was calm, with only a ripple over its surface of deep-toned gray madder of an ocherish tinge. Then distant, strange murmurings were borne through the air, and the black bodies and flukes of cetaceans moved into view, then dived down into the silence of the deep.

It was with some effort that I found energy enough to paint a large sketch of a bold unknown headland, as our little vessel turned northward. There was much discussion as to where we were. The captain believed we were in a large fiord east of Danco Land, but later it was discovered that we had been in Belgica Strait, opposite Schlautter Channel and Antwerp Island, the northeast promontory of which I had sketched.

The night came as a very bright twilight. After landing upon Danco Land, we succeeded in passing eastward through a strait between Capes Donbuzet and Kimnes, of Terre Louis Philippe on the north, and Danco Land on the south. The sky was blue and the sea was blue, and the sun shimmered gold all around. The land was mountainous on each hand, and from 1500 to 2000 feet in height, covered by a snowmantle of brilliant pale yellow and pinkish lilac. The sea was flecked with a few large tabular bergs of pale lilac. Ahead, to starboard, giant cliffs of reddish-purple basalt appeared

almost denuded of ice and snow, with glittering glaciers of purest creams and turquoise blue winding their way to the sea. It was a reminder of Greenland.

January 15. Soon we were plowing the treacherous waters of the Erebus and Terror Gulf (well named) of Ross, gruesome in spirit, notwithstanding a clear, sunlit day. At 3 P.M. we were within a mile of Paulet Island. This island was discovered by Sir James Clark Ross on December 30, 1842. It is volcanic, with an extinct crater, and must have changed measurably since Ross saw it, for the rocks are only 200 feet in height, while he says that they seem 750 feet, and from the distance to "rise so abruptly as to render it quite inaccessible." Nevertheless, two boatloads of sailors put off to the island for seals, and we rowed between huge iceblocks, threading the way without much difficulty, and hauled up the boat upon a large level beach of rounded stones of a grayish-blue color.

Immediately the air was filled with the strange cries of millions of penguins that covered the shore and hillsides up to their summits.

Each one of us went about his special work, and our meteorologist proceeded to take some magnetic observations. Brownish-gray albatrosses flew and strutted about regardless of the newcomers. There were also beautiful white pigeons, gray and white gulls, and black-headed shags. But the penguins were a perfect wonder. Upon this densely populated island we heard everywhere the queer voices of these creatures as they scolded and growled, disputing our passage, with the body swelled and the feathers at the back of the head raised in anger. In the deep-blue water countless penguins disported, rising and diving in porpoise-fashion with incredible swiftness. The roar of the surf, the distant thunder of huge ice-masses breaking from glaciers, glistening in the brilliant, crisp sunlight, in delicate alabaster, turquoise, and cobalt blue, and the blowing sound of huge finback whales, added charm to a scene of wondrous beauty and weirdness.

A few rods inland there was a good-sized pond the shores of which were seamed with well-trodden paths which wound up the sides of the hills. Along these paths or roads long lines of sober penguins

waddled, hopped, and sprawled, in their black-backed, white-breasted coats, their little wings extended, resembling ill-made flowing sleeves to a swallow-tailed coat. Solemn swallow-tailed guards were posted upon rocks and lumps of ice, and there seemed to be a well-organized system of government. The skua-gulls are their enemies, robbing the nests of eggs and young. Family groups, when invaded by a penguin from another group, set upon the invader and either send him about his business or kill him. As it was late in the season, the young were almost as large as their parents, and covered with a soft, mauve-colored down. They stood helpless, close to their mothers, while the fathers protested at our presence. The nests were formed of a ring of stones, which the males pilfered, each for his own particular family. The whole island was redolent of guano of a pink color; the odor was almost nauseating.

When we embarked it was about 8:30 P.M. We sped toward the ship, that, toy-like, lay several miles distant, a little black atom in this great space of azure and lilac-pink and gold. Again on deck, I repaired to the cabin and groped in its darkness for a match, and lighting a candle, found the sketch-box. Then hurrying above, I climbed upon the poop-deck over empty barrels, rusty chains, and various debris, and placing the box on a coil of rope, finished a sketch in about twenty minutes, when the welcome call of *spieza* from our pale-faced steward brought me back to practical things. We had no fire for heating purposes in the cabins other than that furnished by a lamp in the gun-room, and everything was very damp.

We moved through gloomy weather over Erebus and Terror Gulf, toward Cape Seymour, a tawny-colored island entirely free from ice and snow, but full of penguins. After delays from fog and ice we landed and left a record-cairn. At 11 A.M., January 18, we were in sight of King Oscar II Land, with Mount Jason towering high into the clouds, covered with the everlasting snow, in lilac-turquoise-gray. It was some thirty miles away, over a vast level sheet of ice-floe. Overhead the sky was a soft blackish blue, deepening into a band of mellow gray gendarme-blue.

We had reached the Antarctic Circle. A cry from one of the sailors drew our attention to a strange

upright object standing motionless upon the sea-ice. It resembled an uncouth, uncanny human being. The dark creature moved its head, but without uttering a sound. This strange being turned its small dark head upon a close, short neck attached to a heavy but graceful black-and-white feathered body, as if in doubt and somewhat uneasy at the approach of the ship. All was silence save the smothered beat of the propeller, the soft lapping of the waves against the ice, and the swish and creak of the floes as they jammed against one another. The propeller ceased its revolutions, a boat was swung over the side, and the crack of a rifle broke the stillness. We were soon rowing over the blackish-gray purple waters of the floe, where the wounded creature reclined on cream-white snow. It uttered no cry of alarm or pain, but mutely suffered, eying us with a strange indifference. When we were within several feet of it, the creature seemed to recognize that we were enemies, and made a few weak movements to escape; but the sailors strangled it easily, and were soon dragging the body of an emperor penguin through the snow. The bird is well named, for there is a certain melancholy majesty about it. It measured three and a half feet in height and weighed seventy-six pounds.

January 20. During the approach to this beautiful snowland I was painting one effect after another without a moment's pause, until I had added four sketches to my color-record. Enormous tabular-shaped bergs were everywhere, and were many miles in extent, covered with a crisp snow. Where this was wanting, there were ravishing gleams of turquoise and cobalt blues. The malachite-green hues prevalent in the Arctic were rare.

It was found impracticable to transport stores over the ice-floes thirty miles to land, and at 10 P.M., as the barometer was falling, we sped eastward to find, if possible, a break in the ice. Far, far away, in the distant west, under a burst of pale yellow-ocherish gold light and misty gray-blue clouds, a new cordillera appeared, with serrated peaks and glaciers, bathed by the waning light. I painted while they gradually faded behind a veil of pale pearlish gold.

Weddell Sea, February 2. There were no church

bells for us, but instead the swish and roar of the heavy seas breaking over us, the moanings and groanings of the little vessel's timbers, and the heavy shock, now and then, as we collided with a bit of ice. I had been gradually awakened by the increasing din of the gale. Every large wave brought something down to the floor with a crash, and I wearily peered through the darkness and confusion at the dull glimmer of the bull's-eye, which betokened the dawn. Sleep was impossible, so I arose and dressed with difficulty, and climbing over fallen obstacles, went up on deck. It was 3 A.M. A few dim figures of sailors were hauling away at the sheets, their melancholy cry mingling with the keen, searching wind and seething spray. Dark gray-green waves, almost mountainous, were rolling up against the pale fire of the newly risen sun, the beams of which burst through the cloud-masses. Here was a fine subject, and no time must be lost. Chilled with the cold, but warm with enthusiasm, I soon emerged on deck with sketching-materials. The sketch-box was placed upon the carpenter's tool-chest and secured with twine, and baring my hands in order to work quickly, I placed the colors as rapidly as possible, considering the difficulties of keeping upright, and the hardening of the colors from the cold. In about fifteen minutes the effect had been caught, and, chilled through and aching with cold, I hurriedly closed the sketch-box and groped down the companionway, past the gun-room and its miasmatic odors, into my cabinet, which was a chaos of boxes, books, and wearing-apparel, and soon threw myself between warm blankets and dozed restlessly until breakfast. As the day advanced the gale ceased, and the gray fog hung heavily, through which the soft white snow-petals silently flurried and fell.

Presently the fog disappeared, disclosing great numbers of blue whales spouting far and near, some coming within three fathoms of the *Antarctic*. A large gray-brown mauve-colored albatross, a peculiar species of the stormy petrel, also approached. Blue petrels, with beautiful blue feet, and Cape pigeons hovered astern. This was an eventful day for all, as we turned back after reaching latitude 63° 29' south, longitude 43° 39' west. The sounding-line touched at 3500 meters.

We were making direct for Cape Seymour, and scudded through another gale during the night. The shepherd-dogs were all in mourning, for the ship and the weather did not suit them; but the Eskimo dogs, now old salts, strutted about with their tails curled tight over their backs, as the climate reminded them of old times, but aimlessly, with the ears in a flabby pose, indicating clearly that their brains wanted occupation.

Sunday, February 9. At 4 A.M. Howells Island, and at 6 A.M. Cape Seymour and Cockburn Island, were in sight, and there was a rough sea with a south wind. At 5 P.M. a heavy gale was blowing from the south, with thick fog and snow hiding everything but the stormy seas close at hand. The deck was slippery from seal-blubber and ice and snow. With a wind blowing twenty-one meters per second, it required some agility to cross even the waist of the ship. Returning to the cabin and the sketch I was painting between the lurches and rolls of the vessel, I was called up on deck. After an acrobatic ascent of the companionway, I managed to open and close the door, and holding on to any projection that offered, looked around. Cockburn Island, to the left, was almost hidden in a deep atmospheric gray mauve, inclining to turquoise cobalt, the threatening cloud-masses almost one tone of warm gray underneath, a mountainous mass of purplish-gray cloud-legions of a cumulus character, with a single opening of rich golden mellow ocher light casting a faint glimmer over the iron-like, heavy, storm-swept, gray-green waves rolling in from Erebus and Terror Gulf. The blasts of wind howled through the rigging continually, and the waves struck us heavily. We were heaving to in the lee of Cape Seymour for safety. Now and then a ghost-like iceberg suddenly appeared through the driving fog and spume, calmly, majestically pursuing its course, unaffected by the rage of the elements, like some mighty spirit from another world. All night the vessel labored, and by February 10 we had lost a sail, and the sailors had frostbitten hands, but the storm had flown with its furies. The *Antarctic* was sheathed in ice. I was hard at work on deck sketching Terre Louis Philippe from Erebus and Terror Gulf, the first promontory to the left of Cape Gordon. The night shadows brought the storm, and again we

were lying in the shelter of an iceberg.

Off Sidney Herbert Bay, Tuesday, February 11. The ice blown from the south by the storm separated us from the land. Looking across the comparatively calm waters of dark-mauve black-green-gray, the eye met a cold blue tone of turquoise ice, then a burst of creamy-white light along an undulating billowy mass, with delicate cloud-shapes hurrying over the snow-covered land of Terre Louis Philippe, broken by rock-juttings of deep purple, and, just above, a long, narrow strip of perfect azure, the first we had seen for days. In the empyrean hung a threatening cloud of dark reddish gray-purple, but the sun burst into a crescendo of glory, speeding it to the south. The air became balmy, and color-harmonies were seen on every side. The heavy ice-floes were brilliant in delicate lilac half-tones and purple and madder-pink shadows. Reaching the main body of the ice before dinner, we were crunching between the heavy floes until about nine in the evening, when we reached comparatively open water. I was now painting with an enjoyment of comfort that had been lacking for some time.

Wednesday, February 12. Bright and sunny. We were at last in Admiralty Inlet. A little space in the dun-colored mountains to the left of a great glacier was pointed out where we purposed landing to find a site for the winter station. About seven in the morning we rowed ashore. The boat danced over the blue waves, and the air from the ice was keen. It was delicious to drink in the sunlight from the pure azure and the sparkling sea. After a thirty minutes' row we came to a low shore, along which was scattered a fringe of huge ice-blocks of turquoise and cobalt blues, showing at their tops fantastic forms of sea-water arrested and frozen during the recent tempest. After choosing the site, I climbed up a hill and saw that the land looked like an island, with a strait of open water to the northwest of the glacier, and two small islands. We returned to the *Antarctic*, breakfasting at ten o'clock. Preparations were made at once to land stores for the winter party. The setting sun was the most dazzling gold, in a setting of pale yet rich golden salmon-pink at the horizon, merging into turquoise-pink, yellow, delicate violet, and finally into the deep blue turquoise-cobalt of the zenith.

The sun flashed its blinding gold across a perfectly calm seal the glacier to the left being a deep purple-cobalt blue, tintured with the sun's madder and gold, while the cliff on the right was a deep yet grayish purple and madder-brown, and the ice-floes at a little distance showed pure turquoise tints of cobalt and delicate rose. The sky was Eastern in its aspect, and somewhat characteristic of Egypt.

February 13. Bright and beautiful sunlight. All was noise, bustle, and confusion. Two whale-boats lashed together and covered with a platform were used to carry goods and provisioning ashore. The frame of the winter house was put together. The decks were slippery with grease and filth. Poor dogs! In a measure they had become accustomed to their floating home, but none of them liked it. The Eskimo dogs were aware that land was near, and their tails were screwed up tight over their backs in consequence.

Friday, February 14. Fine and clear. By 4 P.M. farewells were said. The captain was in the crow's-nest, the crew below in the fore-castle, and the scientific party was on deck. The Swedish flag was dipped, while the little whale-boat of the winter party grew smaller as our vessel threaded its way between the floes, out of the inlet, during which time many themes for the brush appeared. At supper we numbered six instead of ten, and the absent ones were missed. All retired early after the fatigue and excitement.

February 19. We returned to Admiralty Inlet after reaching the latitude of Robertson Island in a vain attempt to place a cache on either Robertson or Wetter Island, or on Cape Framnaes, and make a far southing. Our portion had been a continuous succession of gales and impassable ice. The decks were slippery and bloody and redolent of seals. The rigging was covered with a beautiful hoar-frost. From horizon to horizon there was a cold, black, bluish-gray sea, icebergs in mirage and in reality, with savage gray snow-squalls crossing the pale band of horizon light.

Some stormy petrels and brown-and-white Cape pigeons enlivened the melancholy scene, and in the far distance could be discerned the lofty spray columns from blue whales. I completed a memory sketch of an effect seen in Admiralty Inlet.

We returned to the winter station on February

21. Finding the party well, and taking farewell letters, we steamed out again at five in the afternoon. In the interim I painted three sketches, becoming thoroughly chilled and suffering from aching fingers. After hastily warming myself, I remained on deck painting more effects, which required much memorizing, as the panorama changed rapidly.

February 23. We had been through one gale after another, and although it was again calm, the threatening gray sky remained, with the ghastly glittering "iceblink" in all quarters, an unwelcome sign that the ice was all about us. In the southwest by west a single band of black-blue sky, a "water sky," remained; and if that lead had proved unavailable, we should have been frozen in for the winter. At 3 P.M. the lead was still ahead, in the new strait. We had entered between Terre Joinville and Terre Louis Philippe. To port was an uncharted island, very steep, with a natural archway at its southwestern extremity, almost entirely ice-free, and of a dunnish purple-gray.

By 7 P.M. we had passed into a comparatively ice-free sea, and as we were congratulating ourselves upon our escape, the heavy clouds parted, disclosing a lofty double-coned volcano, completely snow-covered, rising majestically thousands of feet from vast curved ice-hills, the seawalls of which rose three hundred feet above the sea. Huge whales spouted in all directions. The wondrous blue bergs, together with the complete ice-covering of the land, and the great quantity of storms and grisly colors, are some of the most distinctive features of the Antarctic as compared with the Arctic world. By 11 P.M. we were free of the ice-locked strait, and lying for the night in the lee of an unknown ice-covered island north of the Dausay Islands. The sailors' tread upon the snow-covered decks gave a crisp, crunching sound, indicative of the cold.

February 24. Rain and squally; our latitude 63° 3', longitude 53° 20' west. It was a day of discomfort, and one in which we had a miraculous escape.

All night the gale blew, and I was unable to sleep, on account of the pitching and rolling. Through the din 'I could hear the stroke of 3 A.M. in the gun-room. Curious about my belongings, I

lighted a candle and groped over fallen chairs, boxes, and all sorts of apparel, and found all safe. Returning to the cabin, I read and then tried to sleep, but was soon disturbed by voices and hurrying feet above. Some one came down the companionway, and a conversation ensued between the captain and the second mate. Then the song of the sailors rose faint and distant, as if in a wail of supplication, above the shrill blasts. At breakfast the captain related that at six o'clock, amid the thick fog, a huge iceberg suddenly appeared on the port bow, while the gale was blowing us upon the colossus, against which huge seas broke. It was only three ships' length from us. We were just able to pass by this imminent peril.

The gale rose in fury. Work was impossible. I remained on deck a great part of the day. Most of the men were in their bunks. Cape pigeons, gray albatrosses, gray pigeons, and the little stormy petrel, were nestling cozily on the heaving seas in our lee, feeding upon the animalculæ that come to the surface in storms.

Wednesday, February 26. A black day; a gray day as to sky and seas, but black in its hidden dangers. All night the storm blew with violence. There were hurried voices amid the booming and din of the tempest as sea after sea struck the little vessel, which emitted frightful strainings and groanings, mingled with the crash of falling pots, pans, chairs, and the tremulous beatings of the propeller as the stern was lifted out of the water. We breakfasted at 10 A.M., standing. The captain believed that we were in much danger of being driven upon the ice-clad rocks of the South Shetland Islands. He was trying to keep the ship off to the northward. We lost our best whale-boat, part of the starboard bulwarks in the waist, and a portion of the shrouds. The carpenter, with a gang of men, constructed in my former cabin a hatch-door for the companionway, in case its covering should be washed away. The sailors came through the gunroom and between decks to go forward, as the waist was washed continually by heavy seas. Oil was poured upon the water to calm it, but with what effect I was not able to perceive. Some of the men locked themselves in their cabins. I managed to gather all my sketches and seal them in tin cylinders which I had provided for such an

emergency, in the hope that if we should founder they might be picked up. Then I slowly made my way to the bridge. It was a wild scene. A light-gray impenetrable mist with snow was driving in fierce squalls over the surging waves, rendering it impossible to see ahead. The fitful light of the sun shone through the mist toward noon, a pale, misty, greenish yellow. The seas swept under and over us from the starboard and almost broadside, as the engines of the *Antarctic* were too feeble to keep her head to the wind. One of the discouraging features was that the South Shetlands were imperfectly known and charted. At the wheel were two men in tarpaulins, grizzly and shaggy, and covered with ice-frost. The cabins were foul with the stench of bilge-water, and I went on deck to breathe a little fresh air, and was immediately drenched by the waves.

There was a break—a slight, transient break—of palest blue amid the swiftly hurrying storm-mists and a faint yellowish gray to windward, when all became suffused with a pearlish-turquoise tinge. At the evening meal we stood waiting in silence the captain's arrival. Presently he groped his way down the steep companionway in oilskins, and, without waiting for a query, turned and announced that we had just cleared the rocks. When I thanked him, he characteristically replied: "I t'ank mysel'."

The storm had blown us fifty miles westward, and at eight in the evening land was sighted, which proved to be Elephant Island of the South Shetland group. Afterward we found that we had been within, less than two English miles of those terrible rocks. Our position, February 27, at 10 A.M., was between Elephant and King George islands. We rejoiced in a southerly wind, and set foretopsail and jib. The gray mists hung about us, effectually shutting out the ice from our sight, and I felt that I had painted my last Antarctic sketch. At night, on February 28, as the evening shadows fell through the gray, the red and green port and starboard lights were put in position for the first time in many days.

At the Falkland Islands I boarded a steamer from Valparaiso, and proceeded to Montevideo and thence to the United States.