

*Aboard the S.S. Larsen*  
*October 30th*

It is trying to have the expedition scattered all over the Pacific, in four ships separated by hundreds of miles of sea. This is past helping now. How much better it would be if we could have afforded to build a single ship large enough to do the job. Every man would then have a sense of being part of a whole organization, would come to know the other men with whom he must work during the next year and a half, and, more important, might gain thereby a proper valuation of the job itself. With the exception of the scientists and

several of the aviators, I doubt whether a dozen men on this expedition have any idea of the difficulties that face us. It is only natural that they should not. Very few know anything about this new world we shall enter into. A good many of them appear to think it is no more than an heroic journey, with opportunities galore for valorous deeds, high adventure and the like. They will have a rude awakening: heroism and coal shovels are not yet identified in common in their minds, but in the Antarctic it is only by prodigious use of the latter and of allied implements, such as the snow shovel, that attainment of the former state is possible.

The thought has occurred to me repeatedly that we are strangers. Scarcely a score know each other except by name and reputation. Drawn together by the common wish to participate in the expedition, these eighty odd men have been shoved, with scarcely a pause for introduction, into this lengthy journey, some of them on two highly odoriferous whalers, the rest of them on our own ships, one of them ancient, the other uncomfortable, and both of them small. The differences that separate us have been marked even in the group aboard the *Larsen*. Of the fourteen men with me, only one, Russell Owen,<sup>1</sup> calls me by my first name. It has already been necessary to rebuke one man, an officer in the military, for high-hatting one of the men who happens to be in the enlisted ranks. This officer is not to blame. He hasn't had time to learn that special privileges will not obtain on this expedition. An expedition allows of no social differences. "It is the man that counts, here as everywhere,"<sup>2</sup> as Nansen says; but especially here.

Where is there another organization knit together as this one? Outwardly it appears to lack the factors that make for stability and cooperation in civilization. There can be no promotion for work well done—no increase in pay. In fact, money scarcely enters into it. Many of the men are either volunteers or else receive only what is necessary to support their families during their absence. None of them could be paid for the service he will render. Nor can there be any lawful punishment for a misdeed or failure. There is no

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Russell Owen, correspondent of the *New York Times*.

<sup>2</sup> Amundsen, "The South Pole." introduction.

brig, with bread and water diet. There can be no court-martial for disrespect, or over-staying liberty, or desertion. There is only one thing holding us together, disciplining us, identifying us from any other collection of persons on the high seas. It is the fact of loyalty. Loyalty not only to a common purpose; but loyalty according to the various ideals we live by: loyalty to family, to country, to men, even to self, and to God. In this affinity I place my hope. There is no other bond on earth save this that will see men through an Antarctic winter night and the other experiences that lie ahead of us.