

DIE SNEEU BLY ALTYD WIT

deur Morkel van Tonder

Uitgewers: Tafelberg (1970)

Hierdie boek is 'n uiters welkome toevoeging tot die Afrikaanse letterkunde en die skrywe hiervan spruit heel natuurlik uit die boeiende vervolghetel met dieselfde titel wat onder mnr. Van Tonder se direksie deur die S.A.U.K. aangebied is.

Scott se laaste reis is al geruime tyd mnr. Van Tonder se stokperdjie, en met die boek het hy ook 'n nuwe rigting ingeslaan. In teenstelling met ander skrywers wat die geskiedenis streng probeer navolg, of wat die voordele en nadele van Scott se beslissings en bevels onder die mikroskoop sit en daaruit die tragedie te oordeel, soek mnr. Van Tonder na die dryfveer wat hierdie agt mans (onthou dat daar 'n tweede groep saam was wat voor die Pool omgedraai het) so teen oorweldigende oormagte kon laat uithou het.

Myns insiens is dit ook soos dit hoort. Antarktika het self die vonnis op Scott se beslissings gevel en dit op tragiese wyse voltrek. Om anders as dit te doen lei slegs tot onverdiende verwyte.

Uit 'n baie noukeurige studie van die verskillende dagboeke probeer mnr. Van Tonder om die gedagtes, die gesprekke en die dade van die agt mans saam te stel.

Hy begin ook dan waar Scott sy ekspedisie na die Pool finaal saamstel en vorder dan vinnig na die sielontwrigtigende skok wat hierdie dapper groep moes verdra toe hulle gewaar word dat die eer om eerste by die Suidpool te wees, Amundsen toekom.

Daarna leef hy hom in elke moontlike gedagte, gesprek en selfverwyte van die groepie mans in op soek na hul innige dryfvere en hul breëpunte.

Geleidelik, soos die tragedie homself uitspeel, kom 'n mens stadig tot die gewaarwording van hoe diep hulle in hulself moes ingrawe om die moed en energie te vind om voort te strompel. Hul 'eie ek' moes tot die uiterste gespan word en hul siele word blootgelê op 'n manier wat soms vir mekaar 'n bron van inspirasie, en soms van moedeloosheid, was.

Hieruit leer 'n mens ietwat omtrent die hoogtes wat die mens se oorwinningsgees kan bereik. Die leser sal self moet oordeel wat dit was wat die lewende dodes so laat uithou het en waarom hulle nie die knie voor die noodlot wou buig nie.

Hierdie boek hoort op die boekrak van elke persoon wat die voorreg gehad het om in Antarktika te oorwinter en wat 'n baie klein insig het in die probleme waarmee Scott-hulle te kampe gehad het.

— D. C. Baker

ANTARCTICA'S INFLUENCE ON OUR RAINFALL

Recently, as an addition to my library of works on the Antarctic, I acquired a pamphlet of some ten pages and three charts, which bore the above title. The author, C. Weidner, a member of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, published the booklet in Good House, Cape Province, in 1925.

The writer went into great detail in the evolution of a theory whereby the climate of Antarctica affected that of this country. As far as I can judge, his supposition is parallel to that accepted by weathermen today.

In the foreword to the publication, by the late Field-Marshal J. C. Smuts, some very pertinent remarks were printed and I quote these words herewith:

"If the Union and Australia could agree to maintain an Antarctic Station opposite, or to the south-west of their respective territories, and the work of all these Antarctic stations could be co-ordinated, the result might be of the utmost value."

It was nearly a quarter of a century later in 1958, when the International Geophysical Year was established, that the words of our famous statesman, one of the world's greatest, were fulfilled.

— Sylvester L. Crozet

Polar Do's and Don'ts

1. Dares are neither offered nor taken. Necessary risks are bad enough.
2. Study charts and aerial maps of an area before operating in it. Know the crevasse areas, the penguin rookeries, where seals congregate, where the ice melts, etc., then carry a working map.
3. Check out with the camp leader or commanding officer when you leave camp or ship. Let him know where you are going and when to expect you back, then stick to your itinerary if possible. Maintain a log of these movements in writing if on a protracted trip. (Be sure to check in when you return.)
4. When leaving camp or ship, regardless of means of transportation, be sure you are adequately dressed, properly equipped, have sleeping bag and sufficient rations to last out in the open three to ten days. If flying, make sure your survival gear is aboard the plane. You may be stranded or have to walk home.
5. Never leave camp alone — at least two men per party on sea ice or hiking on land. The buddy system not only helps in prevention and early treatment of frostbite, but if you fall into the water, your buddy's efforts will probably save you. If you break a leg you have assistance and someone who knows where you are to go for help.
6. On shelf ice or glacier ice, parties must consist of three or more men, and they must rope together if in questionable crevasse country. In crevasse country

trail breakers on skis must continually probe for crevasses with ice axes. In probing for tractor trail, longer, heavier probes (crowbars) must be used. Select camps on glacial ice with great care, and don't unrope except on thoroughly tested and marked areas.

7. Parties must stay together with no eager, single man ahead or a straggler or two at the rear. When away from camp, stay in recently marked trails or on recent vehicle tracks, but even this precaution is not always infallible.
8. If at all possible, there should be at least one experienced man with each party going anywhere.
9. When a party of three are in a crevassed area:
 - (a) They should be equipped with —
 - (i) one or two 120-foot lengths of 7/16 inch nylon line; for tying party together;
 - (ii) one or two 150-foot lengths of 5/8 inch hemp rope for crevasse rescues;
 - (iii) crampons and skis (one pair each, per man);
 - (iv) pre-cut slings and snapbits;
 - (v) ice axes (at least one per man);
 - (vi) hunting knife for each.

Acknowledgement

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