

THE WICKED MATE: THE ANTARCTIC DIARY OF VICTOR CAMPBELL. Edited by H.G.R. KING. Alburgh, Harleston, Norfolk: Bluntisham Books and the Erskine Press, 1988. 192 p., maps, illus., bib. Hardbound. £19.95.

Lieutenant Victor Campbell accompanied Captain Robert Falcon Scott on his final scientific expedition to the Antarctic in 1910-13, and H.G.R. King's *The Wicked Mate* comprises Campbell's journals from those years, interspersed with excerpts from other accounts of the same expedition and illustrated with drawings and photographs, many of which have never before been published. While Scott raced southward to the Pole from base camp at Cape Evans, Campbell led his party north on scientific explorations of the Cape Adare and Terra Nova Bay regions of South Victoria Land.

The first journal — June 1910 to December 1911 — relates the experiences of the six-man party as it surveyed and carried out meteorological, geological, and botanical studies in Robertson Bay in 1911. Only one of the six was a scientist by profession, but the others — all members of the Royal Navy — were trained to collect specimens and data for use by the scientific community back home. The party had hoped to scale the glaciers surrounding the bay, thereby gaining access to the interior, but the glaciers denied them passage. Nevertheless, the data and photographs that the expedition managed to secure proved of considerable scientific interest.

On 3 January 1912, the *Terra Nova* picked up Campbell's party and carried it down the coast to Evans Coves in Terra Nova Bay, where it was to collect further scientific data and to continue the survey work. Here, the second journal begins. After landing the party and eight weeks' worth of summer supplies and food, the *Terra Nova* turned her bows and headed back into the Ross Sea, intending to call for the party six weeks later. Unusually severe ice conditions, however, prohibited the ship from relieving Campbell's party, and the poorly provisioned men had little choice but to spend the Antarctic winter on their own. The winter, which proved an exceptionally harsh one even by Antarctic standards, was passed in a 15 x 9 foot ice cave the men had dug to escape the incessant winds that made mockery of tent canvas and sliced through summer clothing to freeze flesh in minutes. Often forced to crawl on hands and knees whenever they left the shelter of the ice cave, the party eked out its survival by eating seal and penguin, a diet that contributed to serious dysentery for several individuals. A full eight months were endured under such severe conditions. And as if mere survival in that fouled and frozen pit were not test enough of human endurance, all faced a 230-mile sledge journey back to Scott's base camp at Cape Evans after the sea ice froze solid enough for sledge travel. Under Victor Campbell's command, every man survived this nearly unbelievable ordeal.

Campbell's diary entries are terse, direct, and matter of fact, but occasional flashes of character break through the mostly impersonal account to reveal an attractive personality. The journals show a subtle sense of humour and a delicate sensitivity toward both the beauty and the vulnerability of the natural world. One notes, however, that expressions of sadness brought on by the suffering of animals disappear as those same animals come to provide Campbell's party with its only means of survival. The quiet authority and respect Campbell commanded among his men mark him as a natural leader. "The Wicked Mate," which, according to the short biography provided in the volume, was Campbell's soubriquet on the expedition, lends itself beautifully to a title full of appeal for any marketing man, but little in the journals themselves displays a personality warranting such a nickname.

In one very important respect, Campbell's journals invite comparison with another book, Heinrich Klutschak's *Overland to Starvation Cove* (University of Toronto Press, 1987), which has been recently translated and edited by William Barr. Klutschak accompanied Frederick Schwatka on his 1878-80 journey to King William Island in search of documents relating to Sir John Franklin's expedition, and, as did Campbell's Northern Party, Schwatka's small

group of men spent two winters in extremely cold and windswept regions that were totally foreign to the men's customary places of residence. As well, the leaders of both expeditions are especially deserving of praise for having kept death and serious injury at bay in such harsh conditions.

But the two approaches to exploration are as distant as are the poles near which they were conducted. Campbell earns his respect through his leadership abilities and through his personal courage. He is unquestionably a self-reliant hero of the "true grit" variety, calm in the face of impending disaster and willing to face great risk and peril. We cannot but praise him for these virtues. Schwatka, on the other hand, commands respect for his astute adaptability, for his readiness to change his methods to those that will better suit the environment and make his time in the Arctic more comfortable. Campbell, for example, frequently records suffering from painful snowblindness, but Murray Levick, surgeon to the expedition, reported that the men were "very perverse about wearing goggles," a simple remedy that would have prevented the great discomfort and temporary incapacity. Similarly, while frostbitten flesh came to be routine during the winter in the ice cave, Campbell confides in his journal that several times his own frostbite arose because he insisted on being a "hard case" and refused to protect his face, even on windy days in the dead of an Antarctic winter. Schwatka, one senses, would have relied more on avoiding snowblindness and frostbite than on having the pluck to bear up under their consequences and go back for more.

The inadequacy of their European clothing works as a theme throughout Campbell's journals. Yet thirty years previously, Schwatka had demonstrated the warmth of clothing made from the hides of caribou, seal, and muskox, especially when constructed and worn in the style of the Inuit. And in matters of diet, Schwatka had learned a great deal that would have been useful to Campbell's party (ship's biscuit seemed a dietary necessity to some of the members). Although I generally dislike Stefansson's easy criticisms of the many arctic endeavours carried out in the British Naval tradition, I cannot help but recognize many places in Campbell's journals where a more accommodating perspective could have made the undertaking less onerous. But I should not wish to discredit Campbell's personal courage and charisma; his methods, like Scott's ponies and mules, were the unavoidable product of an ethos that dictated that imperialistic conquest could only be successful if the game were played according to the rules of the Empire.

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CHURCHILL: POLAR BEAR CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. By MARK FLEMING. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press Limited, 1988. 96 p., 138 photos. Softbound. Cdn\$25.00.

In this book, Mark Fleming has assembled a delightful and informative photo-essay that captures the year-round essence of life in Churchill, Canada's arctic seaport. Poised as it is on the fringe of the true North, but with commercial links to the productive South, Churchill has always maintained strong links to the lives and ways of the inhabitants of the Arctic. In its short lifetime, this community of hardy people has successfully embraced a variety of lifestyles from the traditional northern occupations of hunting, trapping and fishing to the high technology of military and scientific endeavours. It has also maintained a valuable trade link for grain and other commodities while satisfying an ever-growing influx of tourists from the South. In prose that serves to knit together a stunning series of magnificent photographs of the four seasons of life in a northern port town, the author has successfully captured the paradoxical nature of Churchill. For the reviewer (an occasional short-term