

**DIARY OF THE 1906-1907 VOYAGE
OF HNMS CATHRINE OF TØNSBERG
INCLUDING DESCRIPTIONS OF THE
SHIPWRECK AND LIFE AS CASTAWAYS
ON THE CROZET ISLANDS**

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**CAPTAIN ANDERS HARBOE-REE
WITH ENTRIES BY HENRIK JOHAN BULL**

Translated and edited by Eva and Cathrine Harboe-Ree and Anna Ree Cutler

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In memory of
Mons Henrik Harboe-Ree
(1910–1989)



Photograph of Cathrine by Joh. Henriksen, Tønsberg, 22-8-1906

Preface

In the northern hemisphere summer of 1906 a small 127-ton sailing ship, HNMS *Cathrine* of Tønsberg, left Norway bound for subantarctic islands in the Southern Ocean on a sealing expedition.*† This was a risky venture for the men on the ship, sailing as they were to islands that were poorly charted and a long way from home. It was also a pioneering venture, because Norwegians had only just started to venture this far south in the search for whales and seals.

The captain of the ship was my grandfather Anders Harboe-Ree. When they set off he was only 24 years old and this was his first ship as master. The leader of the expedition was the Antarctic explorer Henrik Johan Bull. Both my grandfather and Bull had a financial investment in the expedition. There were another twelve men on board, as well as my grandfather's dog, Beef.

My grandfather was born on 20 October 1881 on a farm called Store Ree, which is near Stange in Norway. He died on 10 December 1959 in Lillehammer, Norway, aged 78. Bull was born on 13 October 1844 in Stokke, Norway, and died on 1 June 1930 in Oslo, aged 85. Prior to this voyage my grandfather had been on whaling and sealing vessels operating in the Arctic. In 1893–1894 Bull had led

* The abbreviation HNMS stands for His Norwegian Majesty's Ship.

† *Cathrine* was always referred to as a schooner, but according to English classification she was a brigantine, that is, two-masted, fully rigged on the foremast and fore-and-aft rigged on the mizzen.

a Norwegian expedition to the Antarctic on a ship named *Antarctic*. This voyage led to the first recorded landing on the Antarctic continent. Bull was convinced that there were fortunes to be made whaling and sealing in the Southern Ocean.

One of the other men on the ship, Johan Koren, was also an Antarctic explorer. At just 16 years old he had signed onto the ship *Belgica*, which on her 1897–1899 voyage became the first vessel to overwinter in the Antarctic. Koren was on board *Cathrine* as a naturalist. Apart from the captain and expedition leader – my grandfather and Bull – the senior crew members on *Cathrine* were first mate B.E. Rode, second mate David Hansen and bosun Thorvald Johansen. The carpenter was Anton Kristian Pedersen. The steward was Hjalmar Kristiansen and the cook was Julius Sundset, although these roles changed a number of times during the voyage. The remaining crew members were able seamen Lauritz Sorensen and Hans Lysacker, seaman Hans Christian Antonsen and two young men with unspecified titles, Emanuel Thiis and Hjalmar Jensen. All on board were Norwegians.

Cathrine left Norway on 23 August 1906 and reached the Crozet Islands exactly three months later, on 23 November. After two weeks sealing, on 4 December *Cathrine* was dragged onto a reef during a ferocious storm and wrecked in American Bay, Possession Island, one of the Crozet Islands.

The men found themselves marooned on a cold, bleak island thousands of miles from civilisation, with little hope of ever being discovered. Thirty-seven days after the ship was wrecked my grandfather and two crew members set sail from Possession Island in a whaleboat that had been strengthened

and fitted out for a voyage across the wild Southern Ocean. Their intention was to reach Australia, 7,300 kilometres away, to organise a rescue bid for the men remaining on the island. The three men and their boat, which was christened *Haabet*, in Norwegian, or *Hope*, in English, were picked up after eight days at sea by the Dutch ship *De Ruyter* and taken to Melbourne. After a total of seventy-eight days on the island the remaining men and the dog Beef were rescued by the New Zealand ship *Turakina*. No lives were lost, and my grandfather and Bull mounted a more ambitious sealing expedition the following year.

This diary covers the voyage and the time that my grandfather was on the island.

Several excerpts and the last entry in the diary, which was written by Bull, have been previously published: The diary of Captain Anders Harboe-Ree, translated by Eva and Cathrine Harboe-Ree, *RePublica: The New Land Lies Before Us*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 2, 1–14, 1995.

The diary itself has been placed in the Vestfold Museum in Sandefjord, Norway. A digital version is available through National Archives of Norway: <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/117212/1>.

A full account of the voyage and its aftermath can be found in: Cathrine Harboe-Ree, *The Unlucky Viking: A Saga of Sealing and Shipwrecks in the Southern Ocean*, Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2023.

Notes on the translation

The diary has been translated from Norwegian and edited by three generations of my family: my mother Eva Harboe-Ree, myself and my daughter Anna Ree Cutler. The translation

process was not straightforward. The handwriting was sometimes very difficult to decipher, the language was occasionally old-fashioned and obscure, there were sections that were completely illegible, a number of maritime and zoological terms required specialist interpretation and it was impossible to do justice to the rhythm, rhyming and nuances of the poetry in the diary.

Each new page in the diary is marked [1], [2], etc. in this translation.

Illegible sections are marked with an ellipsis:

A number of people have provided invaluable assistance in the creation of this version of the diary. Special thanks are due to my cousin Anders Harboe-Ree, who lives in the Faroe Islands, and my brother, Henrik Harboe-Ree, who lives in Norway, as well as to Stig Tore Lunde from the Vestfold Museum in Norway.

And a note on the ship's name

It is a coincidence that the ship and I have the same name. My grandfather had a sister named Cathrine, who I was named after. The ship already had the name *Cathrine* when it was acquired for the expedition. My grandfather may have influenced the decision to retain the name, but that is just conjecture. Nonetheless, the name of the ship certainly piqued my interest and heightened my wish to research the voyage and shipwreck.

Cathrine Harboe-Ree
Castlemaine, Australia
March 2023

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[1] *Thursday 23–8–1906 (Husøy, near Tønsberg)**

I was woken at 3 o'clock this morning by the rain beating down on the cottage roof. What a nuisance to have to set out in rainy weather. At 6 o'clock the wind changed to the northeast and brought clearer weather. The engineer was told to fire up and the crew began to pull in the chain; but then the steward came and said that we had forgotten to get hops on board for making bread. What a devil of a nuisance! I went ashore to Husøy and prodded the natives in their sweetest morning slumber, but of course nobody had hops. So we had to send express to Tønsberg for it; in the meantime we waited for hour after hour while the wind grew to a corker of a good gust.

At last at 9 o'clock the second mate came back from town with the hops; but in the meantime some sharp-eyed individual on board had discovered that we didn't have a bismar scale. A bismar scale! Yes, we must have that with us. So once again ashore to Husøy. This time I was luckier because I actually managed to locate an old scale.

* Husøy is an island in the Oslofjord near the city of Tønsberg; both are approximately 100 kilometres south-southwest of Norway's capital, Oslo.

At last we were ready. Mrs and Miss Bull went ashore and on board we heaved in and, with the engine at full speed, headed out of the fjord like a steam train. The sails were set gradually and we glided out past the Bolærne islands in beautiful weather. So we are on the way. The whole blue ocean with adventures and experiences before us and behind us our dear, wonderful country.

Friday 24-8-1906

A quiet, gentle breeze from the west.

We stowed away the provisions, tidied up the cabin and put down linoleum on the floor, [2] so now we are amazingly smart. We proceeded with the engine for a while. It works well and soundly.

Saturday 25-8-1906

A moderate breeze from the southwest. We fished for mackerel. The steward baked bread for the first time and was successful with the baking. Bull has had a stomach upset and is taking a laxative.

We are looking forward to fresh mackerel for supper. The engine was damaged a little around midday.

Sunday 26-8-1906

A steady, fresh breeze in the morning. We set the course straight southwest with good speed – rolling and butting with light rain – and fished two big tubs of mackerel in the afternoon. This evening Bull, Koren and I played three-cornered Boston* with containers nailed fast to the table. It was certainly fresh enough.

* Boston, or Boston whist, is a card game.

Monday 27-8-1906

Fine, clear weather with a light breeze from the northwest. Used the engine all day. Flew past barques and schooners like lightning. The engine is splendid in support of a little breeze, but what a dreadful racket it makes. Our crew seem to be nice, strong boys. May they turn out to be that in the long run.

Tuesday 28-8-1906

A lively, sunny, clear day. The sea was calm and smooth. We used the engine all day while dozens of sailing ships lay still and stared after us. Occasionally a steam ship shot past at [3] an awful speed. A splendid sunset tonight with a little, hovering, easterly wind.

Just as the sun was sinking we got to see Outer Gabbard lighthouse. A great satisfaction to see such sure navigation.

Wednesday 29-8-1906

Breeze from the east. Went past Dover early in the morning. Passed Dungeness at 11 o'clock. Signalled ashore the following: 'HNMS *Cathrine* of Tønsberg – wish to be reported per telegraph to my shipowner Storm Bull Kristiania. All well.'

We called out to a fisherman who, in exchange for some tobacco, took our letters ashore.

At 5 o'clock we passed Beachy Head under billowing sails with an easterly breeze.

A lovely, clear, moonlit evening.

Thursday 30–8–1906

Gentle breeze from the east. Speed about 4 miles per hour past the Isle of Wight (Saint Catherine's Point) at 4 o'clock.*

Friday 31–8–1906

The sea was completely calm like a mirror today; hazy air over England. Used the engine all day. All sails fastened.

Painted the cabin today. It is now starting to be very cosy.

Life and atmosphere on board is as pleasant as possible. Old Bull excels himself at jokes and witticisms and seems to thrive.

We still have maps ... we are soon on the whale hunt at Novaya Zemlya,† and then down amongst the South Sea Islands on an adventure. Bull is an extraordinary man. Soon 63-years-old,‡ but even so just as young as me with my [4] 24 years behind me.

Saturday 1–9–1906

Southeast wind with clear weather. Made good speed and found ourselves according to the time observation to be in the right place, if already a fair way out in the Atlantic. In the evening it was still, and into the night we had a headwind from the southwest. Gained a couple of degrees latitude.

* Miles per hour is used throughout the diary as an indicator of speed. The modern way to refer to the speed of a ship is knots.

† The middle of this sentence is illegible. Clearly they are not on their way to Novaya Zemlya, which is an archipelago in northwestern Russia. It is possible that the full sentence refers to leaving behind hunting grounds for which there are good maps.

‡ This is an error – Bull was shortly to turn 62.

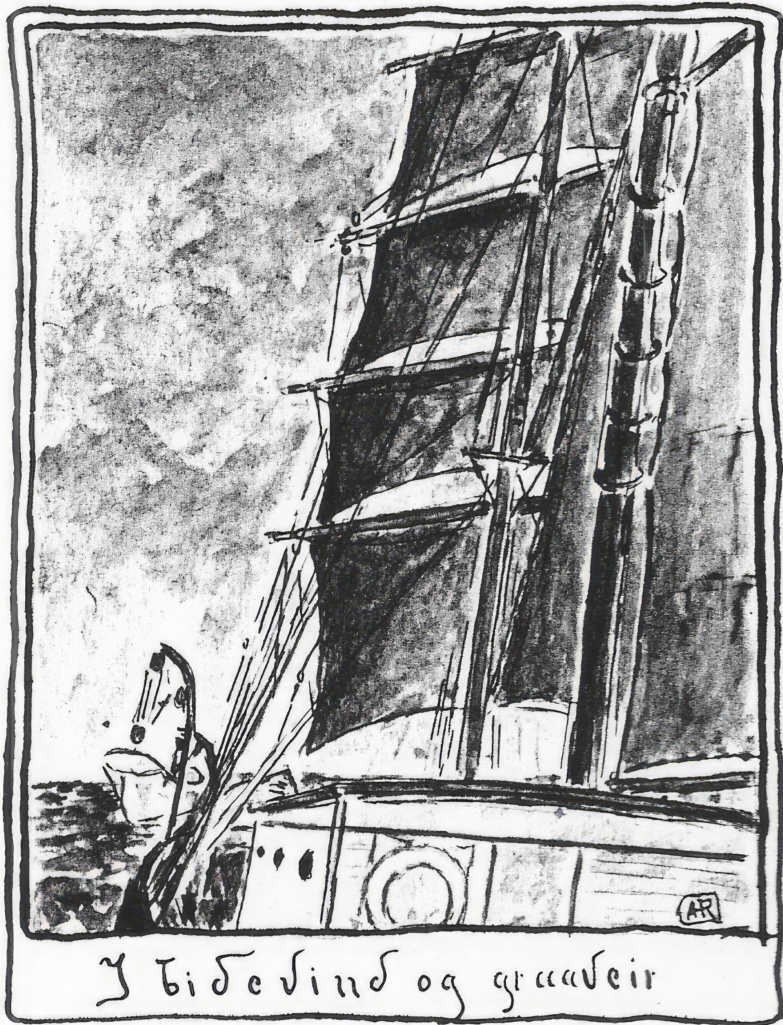
Sunday 2-9-1906

Woke up with a good if gentle wind, but *Cathrine* is an unusually good sailing ship so we make 4 or 5 miles per hour.

Held a service in the cabin at 8 o'clock. Sang hymns, with me as leader and Bull reading the lesson.

Sunday morning doodle.

Quiet and still with rolling waves and showers of rain.



In slack wind and overcast

[5]

Beef, Bull and Co, North Atlantic



The famous polar dog 'Beef'



*In unshaved slack-wind humour
A rare occurrence*

[6] *Monday 3–9–1906*

Fresh breeze from the northeast. Some rolling and butting. Have played Boston every evening now. And so the morning and the evening of the 11th day passed.

Tuesday 4–10 [sic] –1906 (12th day)

Lovely breeze from the north. Headed southwest with square rig at a good 6 miles per hour.

After observations at noon, we are located at 45°N latitude. The climate is now wonderful and the sun gets higher and warmer every day. If only this wind would last.

Wednesday 5–10 [sic] –1906 (13th day)

Thirteenth day. Good spirits are necessary in this venture. We are still proceeding with a fresh northeasterly breeze and a good 8 miles per hour all day and night. *Cathrine* is rolling fairly violently so the meals are awkward, but the days pass quickly. If this wind lasts for another three days then we can be at Madeira and be sure of the northeasterly trade wind.

Tonight the barometer is falling and the wind is freshening while heavy clouds bank up in the east. We will probably get a lot of wind and rain.

Thursday 6 and Friday 7 (14th and 15th days)

Good wind with rain showers. Varying between 6 and 8 miles per hour.

Saturday 8–9–1906 (16th day)

The same good weather. Tonight during a couple of squalls we had old *Cathrine* at 10 miles per hour.



After the squall

Tomorrow we expect to see Madeira. That's if the wind holds. We'll try to signal ashore to be reported home but can't get ashore to send letters as we don't have a 'Bill of Health'.*

Tonight we have got a northeast trade wind. It is still only blowing fairly gently but we hope it will freshen soon so we don't have to worry about the wind before we reach Lisbon.

Splendid sailing it has been. Sixteen days from Husøy to the northeasterly trade wind at 35°N latitude. Not many ships have sailed this distance in such a short time, but then the wind has been just according to our wishes. Now our saloon has been made very fine. I have painted every stroke myself. Simon's and my paintings look good on the walls.† I have also arranged weapons (rifles and guns) as decoration, which look good.

* 'Bill of Health' is in English.

† 'Simon' refers to Anders' brother-in-law, Simon Thorbjørnsen, who was a Norwegian artist.

[8] *Sunday 9-9-1906 (17th day at sea)*

Gentle trade breeze from the northeast. It's beginning to settle into really hot weather. Some of the boys forward have cut out big straw hats. And here aft we all go round in as little clothing as possible.

Bull has conducted a short service here in the cabin today. The hymn singing proceeds as is fitting. That the pitch is sometimes too high at the start and that the bosun sings the previous verse is undoubtedly a little comical, but that doesn't matter. When the skipper with unshakeable seriousness and poorly articulated shouting holds the tune, then the lovely old melodies still carry far out over the sunny blue waters.

Southwards we go hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month. We have not seen a sailing ship for six days but we are now getting close to Madeira and more trafficked waters.

Monday 10-9-1906 (18th day)

Today we passed Madeira. As the circumstances were not favourable we went past without going close. Now we are going with fresh breeze towards the Canary Islands. Bull has shaved today and looks like a proper human again. But, in God's name, my stubble will have to remain for the time being.

Tuesday 11-9-1906 (19th day)

Tonight I was woken by a dreadful crash. I ran out and saw that half of our main sail was lying on the water. Its fastening had given way but the sail was undamaged. We

are proceeding at 9–10 miles per hour so that foam splashes round the ship. ‘She sure is sailin’ well, and that’s for sure!’ says the bosun. We have sewn a new [9] topgallant sail, which will go up tomorrow. We now have a substantial amount of sailcloth in use, but then *Cathrine* can take a good deal.

Wednesday 12–9–1906 (20th day at sea)

Same weather and wind. Expected to see the island La Palma in the Canary Islands, but probably because of a strong southwesterly current have been driven too far to the west off course. However, on Thursday night we got into one of the notorious doldrums in the lee of the islands where the sea was in a ferocious boil of whirling currents and high, angry waves. As a result of this we also had an uncomfortable, rolling night. Early morning, however, it got better and today we have a fresh northeasterly wind again and are steering past Cape Verde islands at 7 miles per hour.

Beef is quite unhappy in the middle of the day. He is considerably bothered by the heat and lies in the shade with his tongue hanging out, breathing heavily. But in the evening he is lively and playful. He has a strict diet these days – mostly only milk and bread – so that he will not become ill here in the heat. He is, however, so fussy that it is almost impossible to get any food into him.

Friday 14–9–1906 (22nd day)

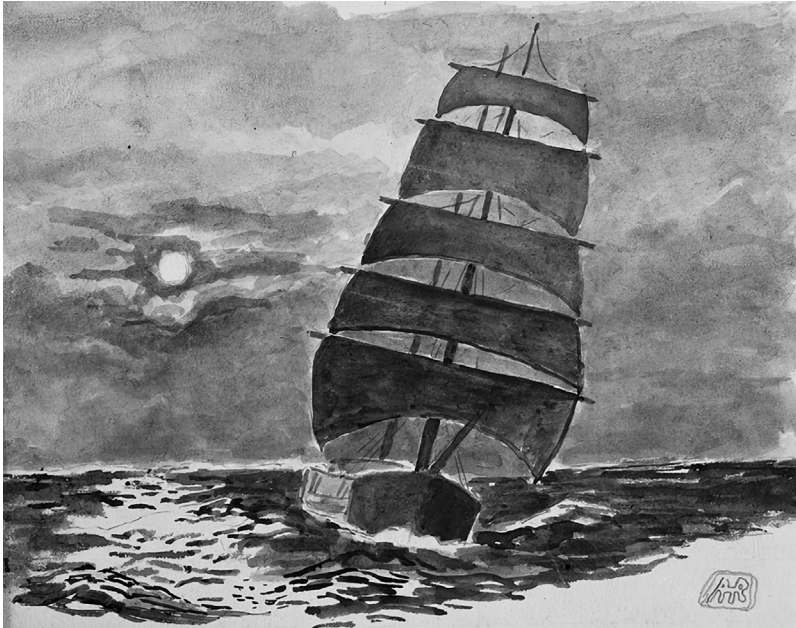
Even, steady, northeasterly trade winds with good speed. Now the flying fish are beginning to come in big schools. They rise from the water and sail along in long arcs, pursued

by bloodthirsty dolphins and bonito.*

Occasionally a rare shark is seen in the ship's wake, but otherwise there is a scarcity of animal life. There are practically no birds. Now and then a small storm swallow [10] visits us to see who we are then flies away again. In the cabin we have, apart from Beef, of course, just one animal, a fly that clings to Bull's forehead. But forward considerable animal life seems to flourish. The other day the bosun came and asked about lice powder. He had found about five of them on his back, with spares, he said.

Saturday 15-9-1906 (23rd day)

Today the wind ... but we are still going ... miles per hour and go southwards, southwards every single minute. There is such a rough ... sea that the ship is rolling constantly.



* The word translated here as 'dolphins' in the diary is 'springer', which could be dolphins or porpoises.

Sunday 16-9-1906 (24th day)

Sunshine and blue water. Lovely breeze with white swans along the tops of the waves. ... or using all dragging rags (of sails).

We are now using our topgallant sail, which is pulling well. The same bad rolling follows us.

Monday 17-9-1906 (25th day)

Same lovely weather night and day. It is unbelievably good. We play Boston every night. Bull is dominant, almost always winning. I have now carved a tobacco shelf. It looks good and is brightening up the saloon. [11] Our saloon is now the cosiest I have been in at sea. It is so strange when one can have it as one wants.

Tuesday 18-9-1906 (26th day)

Today we are sailing between Cape Verde and the Cape Verde Islands. We do not, however, see any land. The heat is somewhat bothersome, but at least we are on our journey.

Have constructed a shower today in the form of an empty barrel on the cabin roof. When we shower all modesty has to be put aside, because it takes place in view of all the men.

After he had measured the temperature today Bull determined that one would hardly get a cold by bathing, because the temperature was 28°C (in the shade).

The sea here is strangely green and completely smooth.

Wednesday 19-9-1906 (27th day)

A tired swallow alighted in the rigging today, whereupon the naturalist in Koren was immediately awakened. He

felled the proud wildlife, only to find that it was an ordinary barn swallow. It will be stuffed and kept as our first wildlife from the world of birds.

When Koren shoots he uses glasses and looks like a mighty warrior.

Once in a while a flying fish comes onto the deck and lies quivering until Beef has mercy on it.



The outdoor shower on board Cathrine

Thursday 20–9–1906 (28th day)

It is good that we have our shower now, and it is used diligently. There are naked figures in it [12] constantly these days. They probably have trouble sleeping when they are off duty and so they bathe instead.

*Friday and Saturday 21 + 22–9–1906
(29th and 30th days)*

We have now been on board for a month. When one considers that in this time we have sailed about 3,500 miles, then I think it has been quite surprisingly well done in such a little scrap of a schooner. At least we have completely made up the month we lost due to our late departure from home.

We are now ‘in the doldrums’, that is to say, becalmed in the equatorial regions. Occasionally we have fresh showers with rain squalls and thunder, which are then exchanged for stillness and a heaving sea.

Nonetheless we have crept well to the south and are today 9°N latitude and 20°E of Greenwich.

The heat at times is almost suffocating, but the days go by merrily and happily and of course [13] we are sailing towards colder parts, so we are happy as long as we have plenty of heat and sun.

Sunday 23–9–1906 (31st day)

Fairly light breeze with showers of rain interspersed with glaring sun. This is the fifth Sunday on board since we left home. Bull is conducting a service but his audience is certainly not large.

The engine is going and making such a noise that we who sit at just a little distance from him [Bull] can see only that he moves his mouth when he reads the text, and the hymn-singing also does not manage to drown out the engine. Went with the engine all day.

Monday 24-9-1906 (32nd day)

Same dead weather today, but with the engine at full speed and a little breath of wind we still managed 5 miles per hour.

After the meridian observation at midday we were at 6°N latitude. Are expecting to get the southeasterly trade wind any time now. There are plenty of bonito now but I think they won't bite on dory and they are too far away to harpoon. Shot a big dolphin today but it got away from us.

Tuesday 25-9-1906 (33rd day)

Lying close-hauled today from starboard. Have the wind straight ahead and a bad heaving sea, so that one feels almost seasick. This must be the southwest monsoon. Angry rain showers and fresh breeze.

Wednesday 26-9-1906 (34th day)

Same swinish [14] weather today too. Heavy sea ahead and much butting.

Thursday 27-9-1906 (35th day)

No change yet and poor progress southwards. This is a nasty hitch, but hopefully it will end.

Friday and Saturday we had a fresh breeze from the south.



* 'Real' is 'science' in Norwegian, and 'Line' is 'Equator' in both Norwegian and English.

In the afternoon the wind eased up a couple of degrees so we presumably have got the southeast trade wind. We are making good speed, constantly logging 7–8 miles per hour in close-haul.

Sunday 30–9–1906 (38th day)

Splendid southeast trade wind. At midday today after observation we were at 2°N latitude. Expecting to cross the equator tomorrow in the evening and will then probably have the customary visit from Neptune. There are many here who have to be shaved and receive their certificate, so there is likely to be quite a stir as a result. This afternoon we passed a big vagabond of a four-masted barque that had square-rigging and travelled in a northeasterly direction. We hoisted our colours but got no answer, so we presumed the ship was English.

*From Sunday 30 to Saturday 6–10–1906
(to 44th day inclusive)*

Fresh steady trade winds right through the day. We are also unusually lucky here as we have such a rum trade wind that we are heading south-southeast.

This newspaper will to a most important degree veer from the usual papers with their straight, boring lines meant to assist a landlubber to keep a straight line.

Our *Linepaper*, which has come to the light of day under the Line, is set out without any intention to follow any special line. — The usual ordinary even black lines on ordinary lined paper will be substituted here by many coloured curved lines to indicate the curvy forms of mermaids, mergods and

mergoddesses, [16] who live or dwell here at the mid-line of the earth, and here in the moon-clear nights perform their line dance.

One cannot either subscribe to or order our *Linepaper*. A single copy can, however, be obtained for a piratical price from the publisher.

This paper is not underpinned by advertisements either, because we leave that petty business to other more needy papers that haven't yet, like us with all our personnel, crossed the Line. However, certain free advertisements from our friends will be accepted.

Art. – Editorial office. Telegram adr. 0°0'0"

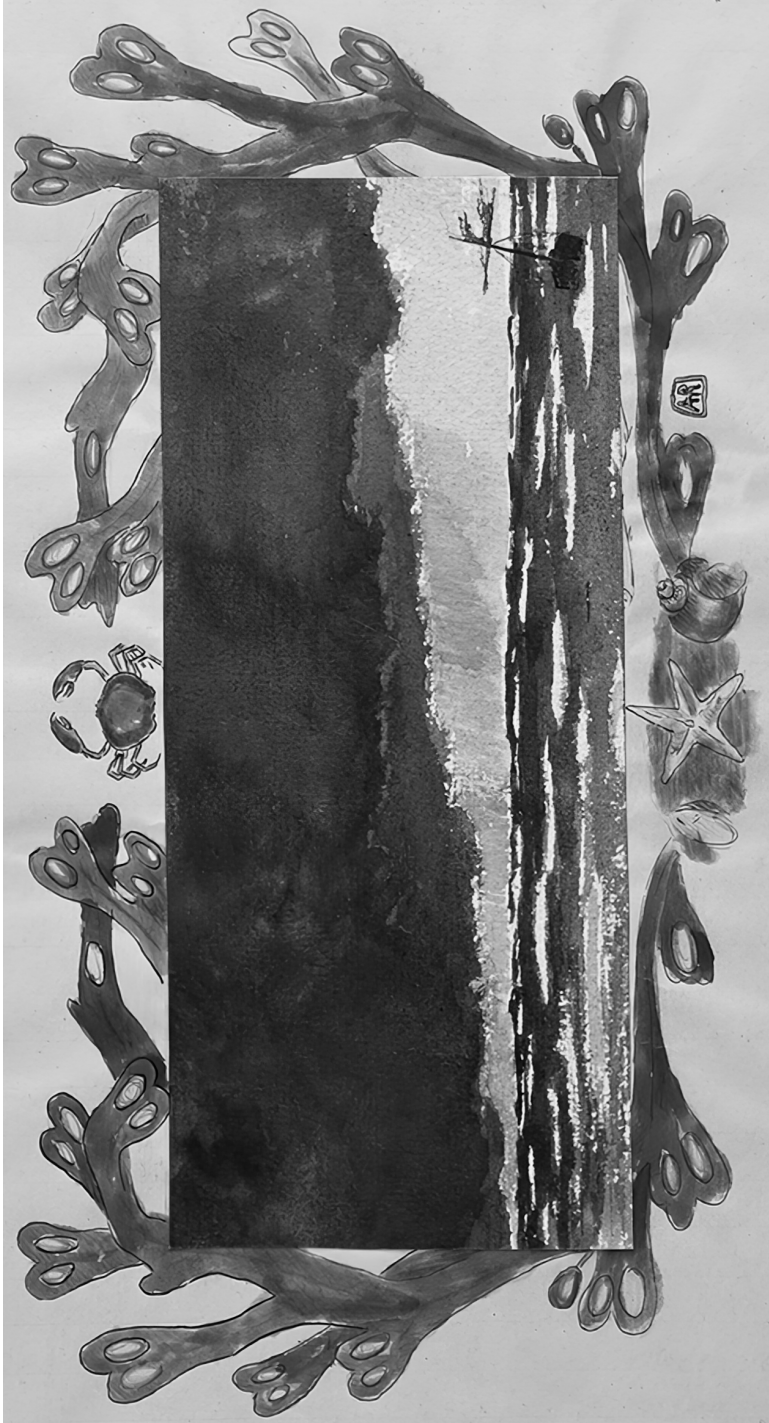
(Written by Bull. Better things have been written.)

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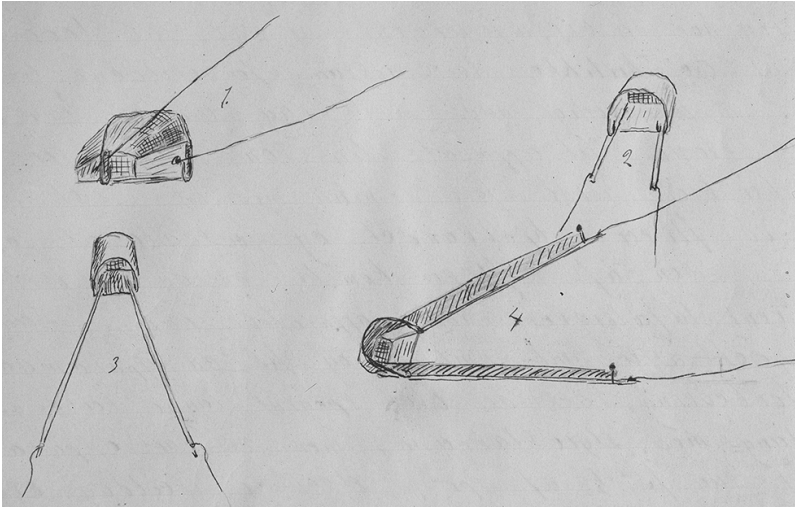
I	II	III
Little mermaid	Mermaid fine	Light glint in fog
Eyes playful	Eyes shine	Storm shriek of gull
Storm over sea	Deep and strange	Mermaid wife
Look not at me	Wonderfully clear	Shining strife
Come not near	Just leave me here	All given to you
Mermaid dear.	Oh mermaid dear.	Take me for life.

* These two words are the reverse of the earlier EQUATO and REALTIME.

[17]



After the hurricane



The storm swallow hunt

One day near the equator we saw a whole lot of beautiful little storm swallows that flew over our wake. We dropped some food scraps for them, and they threw themselves at them greedily.

Then we tried to catch one for our collection but the birds were much too smart. They did not bother about the bait when it was on the hook and so we let them be. But the spark had been lit in Koren and he would not give up so quickly. He started to fashion an implement, which at last after many changes and corrections looked like that in the no. 4 drawing above.

His plan was to trail the device a long way behind in the wake, then he would lure the birds with food scraps right up under the tail of the ship, where he would then be able to shoot them. When they fell in the water they should be caught by his contraption.

The plan sounded brilliant and everyone was very

interested, but as the work progressed some of the more sharp-witted on board started to smile a little. It is one thing to conceive a brilliant plan, and another to realise it in [19] practice. However, Koren worked on and ignored them, without taking any notice of the criticism that was to be heard coming without restraint from various quarters of the ship. Finally he got his implement made, as shown in drawing no. 3.

It was demonstrated by dropping wood chips in our wake, then attempting to capture them. But out of ten wood chips only one was caught in the device, and that was probably by chance. It was then pulled back on board and thoroughly improved, wherein long strips of sailcloth were nailed along the steering rods. But now, however, the device was so full of nails and wire and sailcloth, etc., that when the last and deciding trial was to take place it sank to the bottom like a stone. All men had to lend a hand to rescue the devilish item of machinery and get it on board again.

This prompted my poetic vein to stir and yield the following.

There flew a storm swallow under our stern,
There flew one, there flew three, there flew twenty;
When Koren saw them he was quite struck,
And swore he would capture a'plenty.
So off went he with industrious haste,
His own patent he set to inventing;
Alas, this was an illusion that burst,
And now you'll hear of his experimenting.

For three days he worked, the cleverish man,
While the ship was rolling its worst.

On the fourth day he had the instrument made,
From keel to topsail it traversed.
[20] It sure was no trifle Koren had made;
It was big, it was heavy and mighty.
But when he got it out onto the sea
It turned out to be a tad flighty.

We all in silence admiringly stood
When it dropped from the edge of the railing;
But the swallows just flitted about us and laughed
And the inventor lamented his failing.
It sank, the device, fine though it was,
Straight to the bed of the sea,
But never again will Koren be mocked
By storm swallows darting gaily.



[21] **'Now the maid is coming'***
 (or: 'The Captain's Dream')

As I lay here one night,
I was wakened in fright
By a shout from my neighbour's cabin.
Yes, the captain it was;
And he called this reply:-
'No, now the maid is coming!
Oh, this one, she is quite grim!'

So, nicely, I asked:
Has anything happened,
Can I help you with anything?
Although it's my duty
He answered 'Oh no,
Just go on your way,
For here comes the maid so grim!'
The day thereafter
He recounted it thus:-
'I dreamt from the sea, up she popped
And with a breast
On the top of each mast,
O'er the ship her whole body flopped,
Though loudly I cried, 'This must cease.'
And with my position just thereunder
I had to think she was a wonder.
Right grim she was surely to behold
This naked, curvaceous wife from the sea.
Yes, she stood over me like a fright,
So I cried 'Look! Here comes the maid!'

* This poem was written by Bull.

Her hair was sea-green, all tangled and ropery;
[22] It hung down her back to her hips.
Her nose was crooked and somehow damaged,
So of that I was little impressed.
But her eyes and mouth! How mesmerising!
What a smile. Straight to my heart it went!!
Yes, quite frightened I was; but then her tail and
back
Repelled me like the devil himself.
Below her waist she owned
Neither thighs, legs nor knees:
The maid's body finished with a tail,
Which reached from our stern to our bow.
Still, strange as she was, she awakened a mem'ry -
I caught myself thinking of one special woman!

'Now I have tried with pen and with ink
To trace for you some of her traits.
Some were like those of the elves -
I felt it when my hand started to tremble.'

Here ended the Captain. With a sigh he added:
'When will she be my wife, my little maid?'

On the Line. October 1906. H.J.B.

[23] *When Neptune came on board*

There is an age-old custom on board all vessels that pass the equator - Neptune comes on board and shaves those who cross the Line for the first time. This was also to be observed on board by us. We had five men who had not been southwards before and received a pass from Neptune,

and who therefore now had to be shaved. Among these was second mate Davidsen.

He had declared that he would not let himself be shaved like any young pup, and even swore that he knew how to defend himself with a knife. But Neptune's ways are inscrutable and he never lets anyone pass the Line unshaved.

For a long time in advance the five hapless men had been teased regarding this visit by Neptune and the shaving. Especially in the last two to three days there have been many pranks related to this. Amongst other things the second mate was told that during the day watch while he was in bed Neptune's archangel had been on board and got his baptism certificate, his citizen's papers and his contract from the skipper. He became annoyed, and later when one of the sailors recounted that he had seen a shaving brush floating alongside he became really angry. When he heard that the bosun had received a letter from Neptune with more detailed orders regarding the ceremony he became furious and swore that it was all nonsense.

[24] At last the big day dawned. According to the skipper's observation at noon we were to cross the Line sometime in the afternoon. This was announced foreward and at 5 o'clock Neptune came up from the half-deck cover astern – a dreadful old seadog in oilskins and with a long grey beard that greatly resembled twine.

He asked after 'the captain' and was told who needed a pass.*

* Neptune speaks in English in the diary.



God of the sea – Neptune

He greeted those who had crossed the Line before like old acquaintances. ‘Is that you Mr Mate?’ or ‘Hello old man, we’ve met before,’ and such like.

Then he picked out his assistants amongst the crew and the sacred ceremony was set to take place. A container of water was hauled up, a board was placed over it and Neptune pulled out a four-foot long wooden knife and a big cement brush, while shouting with a loud voice and calling out for the first man, deckhand Hjalmar. He approached very solemnly, was shown a place on the board and sat down with a resolute face. His face and head were soaped over with green soap and lampsoot and then scraped with Neptune’s knife. Suddenly the board was pulled away so that, plop, he went into the tub. He uttered a roar, jumped out of the tub and disappeared forward.

‘The next one,’ ordered Neptune, [25] but in the meantime the other unshaved ones had disappeared down in the forward cabin. They had taken away the stairs and were now waiting armed to the hilt to be called up – so the bosun had to put his head down through the half-deck cover and say, ‘If ye supposed to be sailors then ye’ll have to come up now and nowt be cowards.’* This had the effect that one by one they allowed themselves be shaved, as is proper, and there was a lot of good cheer and fun.

At last only the second mate was left. He was off duty and was lying in his sweetest sleep. He had not heard the carryings on until he was aroused by Neptune in person standing there shaking him and saying, ‘Hello there young man, get up now ‘cause I’m goin’ o’shave you.’ ‘Damn! What’s this?’ The second mate shot up, rubbed his eyes and looked at this awful old fellow. ‘I’m Neptune, you know. And you had better come at once.’ So then he came out on deck with an expression clearly saying, ‘Here you’ll get somebody to play with.’ However, he was greeted with a round of ringing laughter. The newly shaved ones the most noisy.

‘How many of you are against me?’ he asked. ‘All hands,’ declared Neptune. ‘Alright then, in God’s name, you’ll have to shave me. There’s no use expecting anything else.’

As with the others it now went with him, [26] but the sight of his face when the stiff cement brush with green soapy water went over it was so utterly comical that Neptune, his assistants and the spectators all howled with laughter and when in the end, dripping like a wet dog, he stood and shook himself, he was as furious as a fierce bull.

* Said in a Norwegian rural dialect.

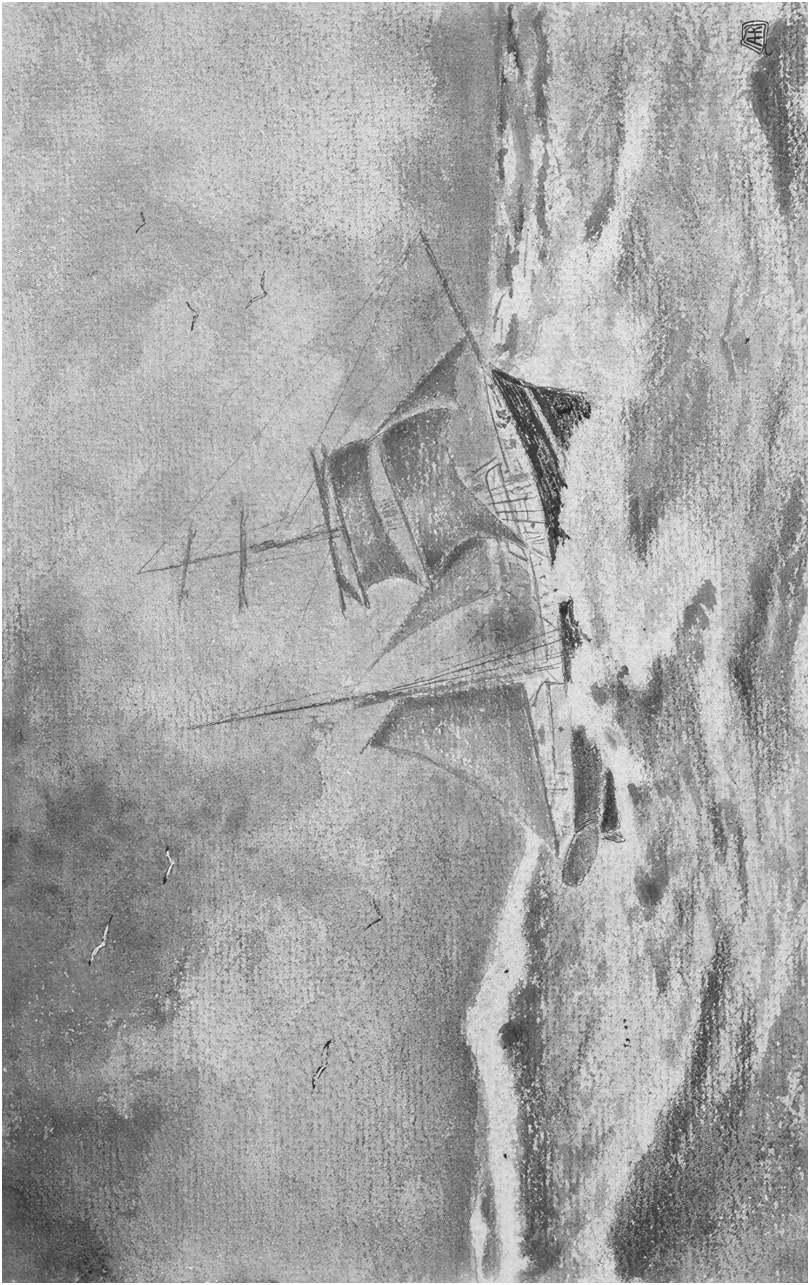


A barber scene

Later in the evening when he was on watch and stalking up and down the half-deck in a dark mood I went over to him and asked if he did not realise that this was the most important and holy moment in a seaman's life. He answered grumpily, 'Well, if this is holy, then I don't know what I'm to believe in any more.' 'And if there's justice in the world, then those sons-of-a-gun who thought of such things will meet a sorry end,' he added with a sigh.

A. H. Ree

[27]



Cathrine of Tønsberg – fresh strong wind

[28]

Free advertisements
Demand Löiten's
Linieaquavit First

NEWS!! NEWS!!
Triumphs of Technology
The stormswallow trap.

A modern contraption for trapping storm swallows may be purchased from Johan Koren. The device has received many favourable remarks from experts and can be recommended for an absolutely sure and quick catch.

– Chambre Rouge –

LOOK HERE!!
A somewhat used but unusable straw hat went overboard at the equator. The hat belonged to first mate Herr Rode and was therefore marked 'Herod's'.

Reward is not likely to be paid.

A quick and undaunted man may obtain a place as soaping-boy with the barber.

– Neptune.

[29]

Christmas Eve in the North Sea



The captain – ‘If only the ones at home knew where we were.’

The cook – ‘If only the captain himself knew it!’



*Bosun (to one of the able seamen during a discussion about the ship's mate):
‘And he talks about cleanliness, that pig. His hands are as dirty as my feet.’*

[30] *Saturday 6–10–1906 (44th day from Husøy)*

On 10°S latitude 24°W longitude from Greenwich.

The voyage through the trade winds is splendid and has been quite exceptionally lovely in the past week. *Cathrine* is pushing ahead at 7–8 miles per hour around the clock. We go almost as steadily and quietly as if we were lying still.

The climate is wonderful, just warm enough. One goes about dressed utterly lightly, aired by the cooling winds.

The air is clear and perfectly clean so that a healthier place could hardly be found, and so beautiful it is here. Dear me what an enchanting place. Many might find it dull, this eternal sea and sky and only the few planks carrying us. But one who understands and can enjoy beautiful colours would never be bored here, because our Lord has hardly bestowed such a careless extravagance of colours on any other part of the world.

Fine delicate light reflections in the east herald the coming of the sun at 5.30 in the morning. The struggle between night and day is soon resolved, because down here the sun arrives as gleaming fire to chase the night away with exuberant glee, to appear at exactly at 6 o'clock as a full sun-bright day. Then there is a deep blue sky, driving white clouds and a playful sea with glimmering swans skimming along the tops of the waves. At 12 o'clock the sun is right overhead but the fresh breeze means it is not unpleasantly hot. Of course, it is hot, but not the same intense heat as under the Line.

[31] The most beautiful of all here are the sunsets, when the sky in the west is shining in an infinite golden sky. It spills some of its gold into the sea and goes through the

most spectacular graduations to a lovely deep blue under the zenith. But the show is short and as soon as the sun has dipped down the stars in the east begin to flicker, quickly gain in strength, become more numerous up above and, before one is really aware, the whole firmament is brilliantly illuminated. The Southern Cross is already high in the heavens now, and the two clear stars of the Centurion stand on high to show us the way southwards.

Later in the evening the moon comes up. It is exactly the same round and cheerful one as at home, just as shiny, but no more shiny, and just as cheerful, but no more cheerful.

In this way we will go southwards for about eight to ten days yet, with the same glorious weather, but then it will end. Then come the winds from the west, the storms and the heavy, mighty seas.

Sunday 7–10–1906 (45th day)

Same wind and weather and we are making good speed southwards.

Had a service today and nearly everybody took part. We have now learnt to sing better so it goes pretty well.

Tuesday 9–10–1906 (47th day)

Good weather all the time and steady wind. Braces have not been touched since near the equator and all cloth is aloft and atop. Tonight I had to put on both singlet and waistcoat because it was really cool. We will soon be out of the tropics and [32] then we will have cold weather. We are now on 17°S latitude and 23°W longitude.

Friday 12–10–1906 (50th day from Husøy)

Yesterday and today we have had dead weather. Quite minimal breeze and little speed.

Koren has constructed a new trapping device, which in spite of its great ingenuity still proves useless.

Today we got out a barrel of good fat; that is to say, the steward was to open a barrel of salt mackerel but when he put his hand into the barrel he got hold of a glorious piece of pork. The ship's chandler in Tønsberg probably made a mistake. I have at last painted my cabin. It is quite beautiful with green and white panelling.

Our steward is injured. He cricked his back and is completely incapacitated so one of the boys forward has to cook. The food is now very unpleasant and I have little belief in the steward becoming much better for a while at least. I have the utmost respect for such back problems.

I have seen the first albatross. It came sailing across the ship on its mighty wings. Soon we should get more. We have traps ready to catch them when they come.

Saturday 13–10–1906 (51st day)

Bull's birthday today. The child is only 62 years old today. He was woken up in his berth with a beautiful [33] coffee tray. I had a whole lot of presents for him that I had been given to look after by Miss Helga Bull. Amongst other things there was a big picture of King Haakon VII in a mahogany frame, which is now gracing our saloon. He also got two telegrams, one of which read:

‘Mr. H. J. Bull, leader of the expedition, our benign eyes are resting on you.’

Haakon VII
Christian Michelsen*

For breakfast we had ptarmigan ragout. The steward had baked Christmas cake (with yeast and fruit) and sponge for the occasion. The birthday boy was toasted with gooseberry wine at breakfast in the cabin and the crew got a dram and a cigar.

All day our big new flag was flying from the main mast. 'Honour to whom honour is due.' I don't think there are many who at the age of 62 stand as leader and active participant in a Southern Ocean expedition.

All day there was a slight breeze, which lasted right into the evening when we got a little boost from the southeast that freshened into a proper breeze during the night.

Monday 15-10-1906 (53rd day)

Same dead weather. We have probably reached the southern edge of the southeasterly trade winds, because now we have a little breeze from the southwest and are on course for the Cape of Good Hope.

Today we saw a sailing ship, a barque, which was headed for Europe with square rigs.

It is considerably cooler now. The bosun pulled on an Icelandic jumper today. It would have to be said to be superfluous as yet, but it will [34] soon get colder. We are now level with Rio de Janeiro.

Friday 19-10-1906 (57th day out)

It's been a really bad week. Breeze from the south and south-

* The King of Norway and Prime Minister, respectively.

southeast, a pitching sea and little speed ahead, mostly drifting. From last night until today we had a nice easterly breeze, but now the wind is more or less straight up and down again.

It looks like the good spirits have made Swedes of us now,* because all of last week has just about been wasted. On deck work on the hunting implements is now proceeding keenly. The smith is making seal picks – dreadful murder weapons on long handles. We have now also made stretchers of light pine coppice stakes with sail between to carry fur and blubber ashore. The steward is injured again, another slip in the back he says. I don't know any way to cure him, because that medical book in the medicine chest only confuses a poor fellow – I suspect his illness is nothing but homesickness anyway. He was married just before we left. If I go on such adventurous travels in the future I will be wary of taking on newly-married people. In the meantime another of the boys has taken on the cooking and he is managing well, so we are not suffering.

Yes, tomorrow is my birthday, and also my eldest brother's, so I know that they will be flying the flag at home on Store Ree. I wish I could hear a little from them tomorrow. I know that there must be some news, because my sister was to have a baby. Has that gone well or badly?

[35] *Sunday 21–10–1906 (59th day)*

Today we had good wind. It came in the night and has lasted since, northerly and northeasterly. Yesterday and last night we sailed 9 miles per hour with violent rolling.

It was my birthday yesterday. I became 25 years old. I

* 'Made Swedes of us' means deserted us by crossing the border.

was roused in bed by the cook, who had a delicious coffee tray for me. When I got out on deck I saw that the mate had hoisted the flag up top. At breakfast I got presents. My friends in Tønsberg had sent a whole parcel along, with all sorts of rubbish nicely wrapped in little boxes. There was a little children's mug with 'Good boy' on it, a tiny bathtub with a naked celluloid child in it, a rattle and lots of other things in the same vein, which caused general jollity during the unwrapping. I got telegrams too, one which read thus:

Follow our heed
Be noble in deed
Yours, 'Maud.'*

But the best and most welcome present is the driving breeze. Perhaps a little too fresh, and Bull seems to think that I sail a little too recklessly with the old ship, because the royal sail and the small sails are up all the time, but *Cathrine* is surpassing herself. She is as tight as a 'chamber pot' and has not yet taken a wave over the railing.

[36] *Tuesday 23-10-1906 (61st day)*

Today and yesterday we have had the wind against us again. South wind and more south wind. *Cathrine* is not much of a close-haul sailer when she comes to the small sails, because then it is really hard going. It is beastly luck to come across this before we get hold of the west winds. The steward is now pretty all right again and has started to work.

Today two of the boys fought. It was the cook and able seaman Lauritz Sorensen. They charged into each other and it was a joy to see. Then I had to step in with my overarching

* Maud was the Queen of Norway at the time.

authority and restore order. This was not difficult because I am, at a pinch, also quite handy. Oh well, it is good that there is a little fire in the boys. They will probably work so much the better when we are hunting.

If only we could get some better wind soon so we could get closer to our destination. Little Beef is a blessing to have along, in the full meaning of the word. I seriously considered giving the dog to Cathrine (my sister, that is) because she is so fond of him, but I suppose she has got a more valuable being to look after now, so she is not likely to be missing him. Never have I seen or heard about such a little creature as my pretty little dog. Now when I ask him if he is alright, the old dear doesn't hang back – he nods his head, barks and jumps all over me.

Thursday 25–10–1906 (63rd day)

Hey! What a cracking pace yesterday and today. Old *Cathrine* really got to know she is at sea, to be sure. One could [37] also believe that she feels younger and wants to show that she can still plough the ocean waves like in the olden days when she journeyed to St Thomas and Copenhagen with Jamaican rum. She is light and graceful dancing at her full 10 miles per hour. The log reel whirs like a spinning wheel and is empty before the glass has run out. But then we do have the breeze now. 'Dear Lord, don't it blow so the rags are flying,' says the bosun when he is standing at the wheel. We also have an agitated sea, but it cuts across from behind and does not do much damage.

Does it ever roll. Yes, I'll vouch for that. My inkwell is nailed down on the table in front of me and Bull just suggested that I tie my pen to my index finger so that it

will not shake out of my hand, advice that I find a little superfluous, however. But it certainly is fun to sail like this, especially after lying close-hauled and slapping in a pitching sea for a week beforehand. We are at about 35°S latitude today and going southwards, southwards. We fastened our topgallant sail in the evening yesterday, but I am considering getting it up again now. She can take it, *Cathrine*.

In honour of the fine wind, Bull and I had a party in the saloon this morning. I found a tin of preserved apricots and Bull had milk biscuits. Rare fare for us these days.

Does the time drag? Oh no, not yet anyway. I always have something to occupy me. I have now carved oak frames for my paintings. Yes, I certainly dare say now that a finer and cosier cabin would hardly have been to Kerguelen before. Beef is a little [38] off colour due to this rolling. He's patently not quite a seadog, and has a little difficulty balancing.

Saturday 27–10–1906 (65th day)

'Spinning along at a splendid rate.'" Today we have logged 11 miles per hour, it is true, but I don't quite like it. It is too much speed for my old one. Just as long as she doesn't over-exert herself. The water is also smooth, so I am reluctant to give orders to save the sails. I am anything but satisfied with our compasses. For southerly and easterly courses they are quite crazy. Nor am I quite sure about our chronometer. We have not had an opportunity to correct it since we left home.

Sunday 28–10–1906 (66th day)

Storms last night and today. Topgallant sail and topsail fastened and making good speed. The direction is good and

* In English.

I can't complain about the speed. *Und was kann mann doch mer verlangen.** The evening was smooth and quiet, so we started the engine. Then violent rolling all day. Meal times are the worst, because we practically have to manoeuvre the food into our mouths.

She heaves and butts and rolls
So knives and cups and bowls
Become dancing dinnerware,
Then the mate falls from his chair.
The skipper's trousers get spots,
And grease from the dishes soars
When the tables lift from the floors.
The poor old crew,
Lord, how it tires you.

[39] *Monday 29–10–1906 (67th day from Husøy)*

The wind is against us, from the east today. Grey and cold weather. One sleeps unbelievably well in such weather.

There are now a lot of birds. Storm birds of all kinds of colours, shapes and sizes. Right from the mighty albatrosses ('alpatrosts', the bosun calls them) to the tiny weeny storm swallows. Koren tirelessly hunts the birds. But of course he doesn't get any. On the whole I'm beginning to feel sceptical towards these great collections, because so far we have only managed to collect a barn swallow, which Beef also seems to have destroyed, in spite of all the many completely admirable devices that have now emerged from Koren's hands and brain. The result up until now has only been to frighten the birds, and seabirds, as is well known,

* In German, translated as: 'What more could one ask.'

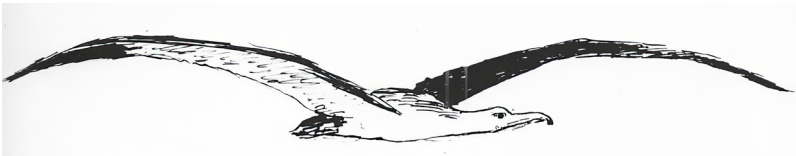
do not frighten easily. We did get a Cape dove, but that caught itself flying into one of the lines, which then got caught around one of its wings. Still, Koren was as proud as any victor. 'Eureka! Eureka!' Now he intends to fish birds with snares and lassoes. To lasso a bird in mid-flight does sound somewhat far-fetched for us ordinary mortals, but Koren says that it is just a trifle. 'Just look how easily I caught that Cape dove,' he says.

Tuesday 30-10-1906 (68th day)

I do not understand this weather. An east wind down here at 40°S latitude ... where [40] constant westerly winds are expected eleven out of the year's twelve months. Well, well, one has to have patience, nothing else for it. In the evening the wind turned north with a strongly falling barometer. The wind increased so I made fast the stormsail. Violent sea on the prow.

It is not exactly playtime lying down here in a little scrap of a schooner.

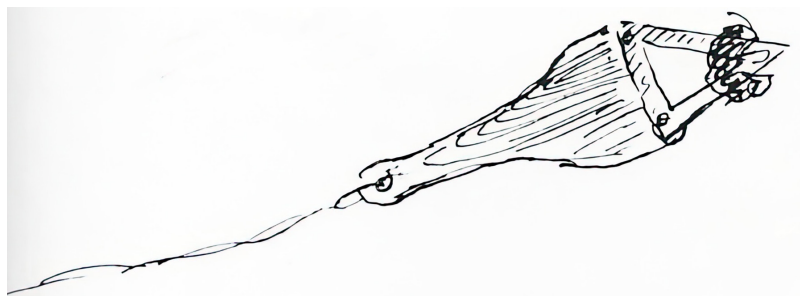
Today the carpenter caught the first albatross.



Albatross

An enormous bird measuring 3.25 metres between the tips of its wing and weighing about 12 kilograms. Yes, that was a commotion. All hands both on and off duty stood aft on the half-deck and joined in or watched the hunt, and the

carpenter was of course the lion of the day. That was fair enough. The bird was caught on a triangle of tin that looks like this —



Bird trap

A piece of pork fat is tied onto the pointy edge and the triangle is nailed onto a piece of wood so it won't sink. When the bird pecks at the fat it gets caught in the hook it has on the tip of its beak, then it gets pulled aboard.

It will be eaten. I have never tasted such game before but it should be alright. We have caught several other birds too, and some [41] storm birds, says Koren. Well, 'storm birds'. That seems to be the name for all the birds they don't know. Each new bird we see has to be a storm bird, I am told. This bird activity is fun. I myself give it a miss, but I see that the crew is enjoying it, and if there is anything that is important on such long voyages it is keeping the boys in good spirits with something to think about and be interested in. It is a pity for the birds, oh yes, that may be so, but if they turn out to be edible I am not concerned. Besides, they have to go into the 'collection'. Now I must go out to look a little at the weather. She travels so nicely that I think we must take down the foresail.

Wednesday 31-10-1906 (69th day)

‘Fair wind.’ It came this morning from the west, and now we are heading straight away from the weather with a dashing topsail breeze. What an immense sea swell there is. Today I saw the biggest wave I have seen in my time at sea. Good Lord, Heaven and Earth, what a tremendous monster it was. We had just had supper and I was walking up and down on the half-deck. Thiis, one of the boys forward, came and was to relieve at the rudder, but was showered with water on the way, got soaking wet and had to go and change his clothes. So then I took the wheel for a little while. The second mate came running and cried out, ‘Watch out, captain!’ I turned [42] and saw the foaming crest of a mighty wave just beyond the railing and high above me. ‘Now he’s coming over,’ cried the second mate. I took a good grip on the knobs of the wheel and waited for the wave to break over us. It came thundering and roaring down. ‘It will sweep the cabin with it,’ I thought, but, strangely enough at the last minute *Cathrine* lifted her stern up in the air and the wave, mighty as it was, slid underneath, sending a wanton spray at the midship and disappearing forwards. We looked at each other, the second mate and I. ‘If she gets many of these there will be trouble,’ he said. But there are few such monsters, thank God. One feels awfully small when such a wave towers up behind the ship to attack it. I can remember having the same feeling the first time I saw the towering sky-scraper buildings in New York. Only there is a difference – the buildings are man’s creation and they stand still. It is the westerly winds that make the waves down here, and they come roaring at many, many miles per hour, these fellows.

I read a learned article about waves once. Can't remember for the moment who had written it, but it said that the highest waves can only reach up to ten metres. Yes, it is likely they can deceive farmers, but today the Lord has proven to the second mate David Hansen and me that they can get higher. In the same article it said that it is only an illusion that the waves move in a forward direction. They actually stand still, but to the eye they look [43] as though they move forwards.

It would have been fun to have the professor – because it was a professor who wrote it, I believe – beside me at the wheel and get him to explain how the whole wave thundered forwards and why we could see its back as it continued its mighty run eastwards while we lay perfectly still. Oh no, as I said, they can make farmers believe such things, and maybe themselves, but not sailors, to be sure!

Sunday 4–11–1906 (73 days out)

I do not understand these compasses. Friday midday I got a good sun measurement and then stood at 38°52'S latitude and yesterday midday after an accurate observation we stood on 37°S latitude despite having steered east-southeast according to the compass. The discrepancy here is big, about 30°, but even so we had to use a 4° deviation error with the steering compass to reach up to the 37° of our sailing distance in order to get a reckoning to agree.

We have four compasses on board, one steering compass aft, one in the cabin skylight and two small boat compasses. The one in the skylight and the two small ones show pretty much the same, and the difference between these three and the aft one is 2° for easterly courses, but where do the 4° come from? Yesterday at midday we had the sun 2° in front,

across the stern, and after this had a correct showing of an east-northeast sailing direction, which is our course to the Cape, but where does the [44] darned low latitude come from then? Current in the water? Yes, it's true the map shows north-going currents down here, and I have repeatedly seen clumps of seaweed that must have come from the south and therefore prove current movement northwards. But so much variance must surely be impossible here on the wild sea. Have decided to steer for the Cape of Good Hope to at least get our chronometer controlled. This is far from satisfactory, this thing. I am so worried by it that I cannot sleep at night. I take observations as often as there is an opportunity. I take bearings on the sun and stars, but am no wiser. Mate Rode, who is a confident old navigator, can't manage this either, but with God's help there must be a solution to the mystery.

In the meantime the days go by. We have blessed, beautiful weather, although the breeze is a little too light, as a result of which we seldom achieve more than 5 miles per hour. The sea is smooth and playful but a grey layer of clouds shuts out the sun and makes our observations difficult.

Yesterday afternoon I arranged a shooting competition for everybody with the saloon rifle. The boys shot well, and a couple even surprisingly well. To be sure it was a bit a haphazard because the ship was rolling somewhat, but they had ten shots each and so the chances were even. I discovered afterwards that the sight had veered to the right, but that was something that nobody else knew about, so for me it is a puzzle that the shots were as good as they were. The boys enjoyed themselves [45] and were so keen it was a joy.

After the end of the shooting I held a prize-giving ceremony on the half-deck aft and made the following speech.

‘When today we are gathered here for our first big international shooting event, I will briefly take the liberty to express a thank-you to all the participants who, in spite of the very long distances involved and this bad time of the year, have disregarded all difficulties and attended. Most of us have not come such a long distance, but there are some who have travelled from afar. For instance, we have a man who has travelled from Whale Island in Norway right down here to 37°S latitude to take part in the shooting. His shots also give him great honour and he is a credit to all the inhabitants of Whale Island. Then there is a man from Frederikstad, a fearless boy from Kristiania, two men from Andebu, and the rest I think, to a greater or lesser degree, are Tønsberg people.

Forge ahead on your course, young men. Practise your shooting, as thus you uphold the honour of your fatherland. There may come a time when it will be demanded of you to aim your weapons at the enemies of the country, and then you will need to shoot well. Now I will proceed to the prize-giving.

1st Prize – 10 cigars – Bosun Thorvald Johansen

2nd Prize – 5 cigars – Deckhand Hjalmar Jensen

3rd Prize – 3 cigars – First mate Rode

The Lady’s Trophy (one crockery ashtray – gold-plated, by the way) went to Emanuel Thiis.

The big silver medal with the inscription – ‘Honour to whom [46] honour is due’ – went to the bosun, who has secured the South Atlantic Ocean Championship (the medal was made of tin). The little silver medallion with the inscription – ‘Sic Transit Gloria Mundi’ – went to the cook

Julius Sundset (also called Smørberg, or Butter Mountain, on board), who excelled himself to a high degree by having a blank target after ten shots had been fired.

I then led a three-by-three hooray for the prize winners and the same again for the captain (the organiser), and the shouts rang out fresh and merry far over the grey, cold water – a great surprise for the seagulls, albatross and Cape doves who circled around us in long arcs. Beef barked like crazy – he seemed to think there was too much noise aft.

Today, All Saints Day, we've had a service. It was a beautiful reading. Nearly all the men took part today. The steward is so utterly comical as a hymn singer that I have to use all my self-control not to burst out laughing in the middle of the holy activity. He sings with an unsurpassable, dragging pathos. He pushes his chin into his chest and looks immensely pompous as he roars out, 'Ooone ssstreeeam ooof looove'.

Caught an albatross and a mollyhawk gull (a kind of smaller albatross). They are excellent to eat and Koren's collection is increasing well.

Friday 9–11–1906 (78 days from home)

Yes, now we have been up under the Cape of Good Hope, but, oh, what an unpleasant swine-wallow that would be to end up in. Have had good weather [47] and calm seas in the last week, so the engine has been going constantly. I am so tired of the powerful drone of the engine and the shaking. I'm so tired of it that I can't tell you. There is '*Viel geschrei und wenig woollen*' with such an engine, really. * Yesterday and today, because of the strong north-going current, we have

* In German, translated as: 'a lot of noise for little result'.

stood almost still. Hour after hour I have gone and taken a bearing from Table Mountain over Cape Town, which we glimpse through the foggy haze. A wondrously beautiful mountain with its flat top and wild steep mountain-sides. Thank God our chronometer is in perfect working order. According to my calculations we should have sighted land yesterday before noon, and it was right on the hour.

Yes it was an indescribable relief, and we could have saved ourselves that swing off course, but we have not lost all that much time by it, I hope, and it now feels immensely safe for me to be able to rely with certainty on my chronometer.

About 8 o'clock yesterday morning a shout rang out, 'Sail in sight of the starboard bow!' Yes, a sailing ship. The first proof in two long months that we are not perfectly alone on the wide ocean.

We headed for it. The crew were given time off to write letters and I myself wrote several. It took us three hours to get the vessel on hold. It was a big iron barque – *Dagmar af Lillesand*. I put a boat out and rowed over with our letters. We did not have money for postage, but I took with me a case of cigars.

The barque was on its way from Cape Town to Port Adelaide, under ballast. It was, of course, a fair diversion for our mail to go via Australia, but it will arrive a few months before us [48] anyway. I boarded at noon. Captain Danielsen had just calculated his latitude and longitude, which completely matched mine. He was otherwise one of those slow west-coasters whom one just about has to turn inside out to get anything out of them. He had departed from Cape Town the day before yesterday and had left from Liverpool 90 days ago. Consequently, little *Cathrine* has

taken 20 days less and has even been a little further south. I asked for European news. 'We have nay news.' He did on the whole seem to know extremely little, and so I made my visit as short as possible and went back to my own ship again. Captain Danielsen seemed very anxious about the Consul in Port Adelaide not wanting to cover the miserable expense for our letters; wherefore, I had to write out a bill to the Consul General in Melbourne. Talk about being miserly. Even after a whole case of my good cigars. I could have sent many letters for that. Yes, that is real Norwegian hospitality. He offered me schnapps gin. Ugh! I still have the taste in my mouth.

So we have travelled on: steamed merrily away from the big, proud ship and set course southeastwards along the land, which we have in our sights.

In the evening today we have a little wind from the east and stretch southwards, but the sea is almost in a boiling current, so we advance little, although the engine rattles [49] and goes so that you can't hear a thing. There is indeed much noise from us when we come chuffing along like a big Atlantic steamer.

The steward harpooned a dolphin last night and served us 'dolphin beef' for breakfast. Beautiful meat it is, and it tasted good.

Today four big albatrosses and six mollyhawks have been caught, so now we have fresh food for quite a time.

Monday 12-11-1906 (81 days out)

Now we are gliding well again. Have got a fair wind, a little weak, to be sure, but even so we make fairly good speed on course for the Crozet Islands. It is a blessing not to have to use the engine. It will now rest until we arrive. We should

be there in about 14 to 20 days, if the wind doesn't get too much abeam.

All equipment for the hunt is now clear and ready for use. May we soon get into the swing of it. After observation today we stood at 38°S latitude and 24°E of Greenwich. 'Oh yes, we are indeed moving eastwards. We will get there, even if not quickly.'*

In the meantime, the men hunt for albatrosses. Koren is good at skinning and preserving the skins. He has only one all-embracing interest, Koren, and that is birds. Pointy beaked, curved beaked, flat beaked, long beaked, short beaked. Oh dear, I am so tired of this talk that several times I have probably given him a 'beaky' answer.† He is so bird-mad it is apparently a deadly sin for him to eat a bird egg. They have to be collected. Yes, I believe firmly that if he has descendants these will undoubtedly multiply by laying eggs. [50] No, now I'm being unfair to Koren. He really is kind and good enough.

Bull is a little impatient now. He would have liked to have been at our destination. I think that we have to be more than satisfied with the result we have. Because, dear me, haven't we sailed a good stretch since the 23rd of August. To be sure, we could have been on Kerguelen now, but we could also have been lying becalmed under the Line. Oh, we'll get there eventually.

Thursday 15-11-1906 (84 days out)

From Monday to last night we had a real storm. Either there is no wind or there is a raging storm. There doesn't seem to

* This quote is from an Old Norwegian song.

† In Norwegian 'beaky' also means 'cheeky'.

be any middle road down here. But as long as we can just stay more or less on course then it may blow a little as far as I'm concerned; although they do get pretty long, those black stormy nights. I am not quite confident, so I sleep poorly. After observation today we stand on 40°S latitude and 32°E longitude. We are sailing about 9 to 10 miles per hour today, with topgallant sail up.

‘When it storms with might
Raise the sail up top (and so on)’

A not very sound theory, by the way. He must have had good stuff to sail with, Fridtjof the Bold,* if he always let the sails stand, but that's up to him. Here on board *Cathrine* we salvage them in time, but then we have not lost one single scrap yet, either.

Well, sailors are funny. We have eaten albatross a few times and I thought they were beautiful and believed that they must have liked them forward, too, but tonight they have heaved overboard two beautiful bodies. The reasoning seems to be that the food one gets for nothing should [51] not be eaten. I'm sure that if we were on shore and had to pay dearly to get albatross then all mouths would eat them and find them delicious. But then they'll just have go without food. That's no problem.

I think we have made a record concerning playing Boston. Last night under a reefed-topsail gale we played quite merrily for a little while. We managed to win the game in turn thirteen times by reaching grandissimo. That must be a record. That must be hard to beat. Bull is usually a clear winner. He now owns all the tokens and, in addition, we

* This is apparently a quote from the Icelandic saga *Friðþjófs saga hins frækna* [*Friðthiof's (or Fridtjof's) saga*].

two others owe him several cases. He does play extremely well, but then he has Koren in forehand, who can never manage the mysteries of the cards and constantly excels in the wrong play. Yesterday afternoon a wave spilled into the cabin, so that stools, spittoons and books and all sorts of things floated about in a merry race from side to side. Ugh, it gets wet clammy and unpleasant after something like that. Clothes and shoes become mouldy and the leaves in our boots stick together. But never mind, 'He who gets wet gets dry again.' Isn't that how it goes?

Friday 16-11-1906 (86 days out)

Today we have a rather gentle breeze, almost still. Bull is rather impatient. I understand. Goes and taps the barometer every 10 minutes, not that it helps us push along.

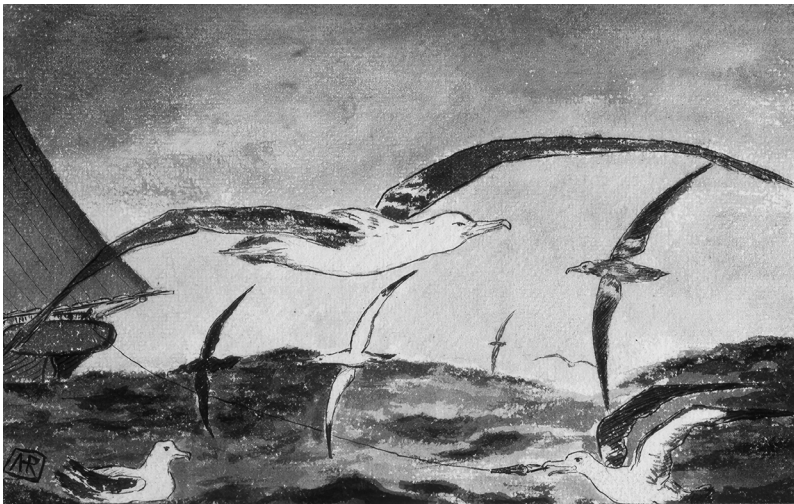
Today we caught twelve albatrosses. Really some colossal and beautiful birds. I tried to photograph them in an arranged group.

This morning we put a boat out. Koren was to shoot his storm swallows, which [52] he has now pursued in vain for more than two months. I thought it was a bit of nonsense, but when he told us that they were worth 50 crowns each I gave in. He surely won't get anybody to give 50 crowns for these, common as they are. Two of them were brought down and, in addition, two of the black 'storm birds'.

Yesterday we saw two sailing ships, a barque and a full-rigger, which crossed our course straight eastwards. The full-rigger made immense speed, so it seemed, but we kept up well with the barque. After observation today we are on 40°20'S and 34°15'E of Greenwich. It goes slowly.

Monday 19–11–1906 (89th day on the blue ocean)

It is difficult to believe we are now in the 'Roaring Forties',* because we have really good weather. Very unsteady wind, however. It leaps from southwesterly to northerly constantly and comes with snow and rain squalls, which are interrupted by sunshine. Just like an April day at home. But it is cold here. In the sun today at noon 5°C was measured, while at night it would hardly be much above freezing. When I came on deck this morning there was new snow, which lay in the shade all day. After observation today we are on 44°17'S latitude and 39°40'E longitude. On this longitude north in May it is indeed considerably warmer than here – Barcelona, Constantinople, New York! We are now level with the island group Marion, or Prince [53] [54] Edward, Islands. These are small barren volcanic islands without habitation or vegetation. If we had more time we would have gone there to see if there were any seals (fur seals) although it is hardly probable.



Albatross hunt

* In English.

Day by day the distance to our first goal shortens. I have worked out that we should have the anchor down at Crozet Islands on Saturday. Oh, how happy I will be on that day, because it will be exciting to go onto the land there and walk about.

Guess if the fur rug is good to have about me now. I brought with me a really splendid one, one of mother's best, and I am eternally grateful to her for it. Beef is also immensely enthusiastic about it. I have bathed him in carbolic water several times and I think he is free of fleas, so it is a cosy to have him as a bed-mate.

Thursday 22–11–1906 (92 days)

Now we are nearing our first goal – the Crozet Islands.* We decided to try landing on these islands where there is said to be a good field of sea-elephants.† Our compasses are wildly mad again so I am sailing only on observations, which is not easy down here where there is nearly always fog. Yes, if any power on Earth gets me as far as Melbourne with these compasses as they are now, then it will be strange. I get so dashed nervous about sailing with such trepidation, and look and look to get a glimpse of the sun to take an observation from.

Oh, if we could get clear weather tomorrow. I do expect to see land then and must [55] have an observation. If not I'll have to head into the wind and make the ship lie still to wait for clear weather. Bull is also so nervous that he seems to have the firm conviction this is just a result of me not

* The Crozet Islands are part of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands. In French they are Îles Crozet or, officially, Archipel Crozet.

† Referred to throughout the diary as sea-elephants, they are southern elephant seals.

being able to navigate. No, I would like to see anyone who could sail straight with this stuff. And how slowly the days go. Yes, this day with thick fog surely has been one of my longest. Indeed it is a responsibility, I assure you of that, but, as I said, if only we could have clear weather tomorrow then we should be sure of seeing land. Now in the evening it is clearing up and the wind is freshening. Otherwise in these last few days we have had a rather gentle breeze from aft, with thick fog.

Friday 23–11–1906 (93 days)

Goodness me what a day it has been. Started with thick fog and some wind from the west. Not a glimmer of sun for longitude observation all morning. Oh yes. Extremely nice. So I put my last hope on noon, but the clock went to both ten and eleven and half past eleven without the merest sign of the sun. Well, at long last I got a poor sighting, at ten minutes to twelve. Altogether, I didn't dare trust it with full confidence, but I understood enough that we were some minutes too far south. That was a nuisance. All the previous watches we had steered south-southeast, and had come 28 minutes north with this one. The deviation here is 35°. With this watch we had come rather a little south. Oh well, so we then steered in a more easterly direction.

Would have to try that. After noon, rain and fog and miserably grey and cold. I saw two penguins [56] and some strange black birds. Oh yes, we were not too far from land, but where was it?

Dead reckoning.* Yes, we had that. But when it had not

* Dead reckoning means to plot your position based only on the logged sailed distance measurements and the corresponding compass points.

coincided with the observations one single day since we left the Cape, it would be strange if it agreed just today. About 4 o'clock the sky cleared so that I was able to get a chronometer length. It revealed us to be on 49°50'E longitude. So then we should be able to see land. I had a watch both from the cabin roof and from the topgallant yard, and the boys stood in various places on watch, because the one who could first yell out 'land' would get a dram as big as he could swallow. But no, nothing could be seen. In some directions we saw a fair way, but in others there were fog patches that cut off vision. I heaved to the wind and sounded – no bottom. Well that I don't understand, because it says in the chart that about 100 fathoms have been measured, but we had no bottom with much more length out. What was I to do then? Should I sail to the north, south, east or west. I sat in the cabin and made calculations using the charts. Had I made a mistake? But no, the calculations were well and good, but then we should be able to see land. I was so despondent that I was quite stunned, and Bull was not very chipper either, to be sure. Then I heard many voices at once. Land in sight! I ran out and lo and behold we had a towering island right on the lee side of our bow. Oh my goodness, how glad I was. They all got a dram. I don't think Columbus was much happier when he found the West Indian Islands. And it was a proud victory for [57] me too. So my calculations were right and my concerns unfounded.

We were at Hog, or Pig, Island.* With a fine breeze we sailed in under the 2,000-foot high island. Grey and cold with patches of snow up along the sides and immense

* In French, Île aux Cochons.

precipices, the new land lay before us.* The top we didn't see for long and just somehow felt the full extent of its height way up above us.

Darkness descended, so now we were lying in the lee of the island and tacking slightly with small sails to wait for daylight early tomorrow. Will try a landing there, although it seems to be almost unapproachable according to 'Directions of the South Indian Ocean.†

Night between 23 and 24

There won't be much sleep tonight. We have gone backwards and forwards in the lee of the island but get driven further and further off by a northeasterly current. Have started the engine so as not to drift down on the Apostle Islands, which we can see now. Twelve wild jagged rocks form a little group, the 'Twelve Apostles'.‡ Around them there are said to be many reefs and shallows so I don't want to get too near them. From childhood I have thought of apostles as something one ought to steer by. Not so in this case, oh no. Bull can't sleep either now, but comes here to me and goes in and out of doors. He is so afraid of breakers on reefs – I was standing on the half-deck when a wave came washing awkwardly and slapped up under the rear of the ship. Bull came tearing up to me, concerned that we were ramming aground. Well, to be 62 and lying here can't be any fun. He is a [58] strange man. He is always cheerful. In three hours it will be light. I could lie down but there won't be any sleep anyway. My compasses are such that I dare not trust even a

* The Crozet Islands lie are located 45°57' to 46°29'S and 50°10' to 52°19'E.

† This is a reference to *Admiralty Sailing Directions*, which are produced by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office.

‡ In French, Îlots des Apôtres.

bearing. The next big question will be to find Kerguelen if there is nothing to hunt here. When one learns navigation at school it sounds so simple. One has tables for all sorts of things but one does indeed have a lot to learn, not to say most to learn, outside the school, in practice. But then one usually has better compasses and things than these that I have. I worried about them in Tønsberg, had little belief in them, but then I had them at the instrument maker and I got a brand new one also, so I thought I would manage. That instrument maker in Tønsberg seemed to me a shady fellow, nor did he, a watch-maker as he was, have proper knowledge about compasses or magnets. I had the control assistant on board to correct the steering and check the compass, but that was probably just basic. It was rainy weather that day and I think he got wet, the poor man.

Saturday 24–11–1906 (94 days)

Early – 4.00 o'clock – there was light so we tacked up under land against a fierce current. Made little speed so it took us a good watch to get up under the island, which looked barren and inaccessible. It was majestic and beautiful, with its immense green-clad hills and its dizzying, ragged cliffs. At 9.00 o'clock the anchor touched bottom but the hold was [59] poor because there were high swells. Through the binoculars we could see a whole lot of sea-elephants on the beach, but the entire beach was covered in white spray so it did not look very promising to land there. We have Possession Island 60 minutes further east,* with better harbours, so we decided to haul up and go there, and are now on our way. Yes, I say that we hauled up, but we were spared that, because the

* In French, Île de la Possession.

anchor chain snapped and now a good anchor is lying beside Hog Island in 10 fathoms of water, if anybody would care to rummage for it. When the chain snapped we very nearly (by the skin of our nose) put the ship ashore on a reef, but we hurriedly raised some scraps of sail and got clear. Yes, that would have been a fine thing. Then the saga would have ended, at least for *Cathrine*.

There are many penguins in the water around the ship. They move like the quickest fish, jumping in arcs along the surface, like dolphins. There were several new kinds of birds to see. At 3 o'clock this morning a peculiar little bird was sitting in the galley. Quite small and innocent, it sat there and enjoyed the warmth. The door was open and it had sneaked in. It was probably a kind of razorbill, but only as big as a small starling. I held it for a while, but then my better self got the upper hand and I let it go. It was, however, not the least bit afraid of me, but was immensely frightened of Beef. I believe that Koren had a good mind to skin me alive when I told him that I had caught a bird and let it go again. I took some photographs of Hog Island today, but they were not much good. Unfortunately our film has got moisture on [60] it and only yields mediocre pictures. Through the binoculars we could see a whole lot of big yellow-grey bodies on the beach. They were sea-elephants, and there must have been enough cargo for us just on Hog Island, so it was a nuisance to have to leave them. I would not have done so either if it had not been for Bull. He did not like it there. Well, nor did I, really, and we hope to find better anchorage on Possession Island.

Once again a wakeful night. Oh, I am beginning to feel weary. At sundown we saw Possession. Hog is 2,000-feet

high, but this one is a good 5,000 and looks mighty wild. Oh, what barren, sad lands. The geography looks 'from a distance' very much like Iceland.* Here one should be able to put sheep ashore and keep them in a grand scale. Hog could surely feed 2–3,000 sheep and that would yield 'pounds sterling' for sure,† and one could surely live quite well down here, too. A plan for the future which, like so many others, will probably be put on the shelf, but I am sure that one could carry on a big sheep and wool export from here. In earlier times Hog was overrun by pigs, according to 'Directions', but sealers from America, England and the Cape Colony have eradicated them. In the 1840s it has been lively down here on these islands during the season.

It is said that some summers there have been about 500 sailing ships seal and whale hunting on Crozet and Kerguelen. I hardly believe in so [61] many, but that here big riches have been caught is beyond any doubt. However, it has been dearly-earned money because, ugh, the wind here is icy cold as it comes charging down from the heights, and this is almost mid-summer. Although summer and winter are said to be about the same here.

Monday 26–11–1906 (2nd day on Possession Island)

Now we have come this far. Yesterday morning in lovely clear weather we glided into the harbour here in American Bay. Well, harbour it can hardly be called. It is, rather, an open bay completely unprotected from easterly winds.

We had already seen from afar the immense sea-elephant bodies that were lying on the beach right around the bay.

* 'From a distance' is in English.

† Ditto 'pounds sterling'.

After having anchored we put the boat in the water and rowed ashore, Bull, Koren, a couple of rowers and myself. It was a little difficult to find a landing place at first, but in the end we did find a safe spot and jumped ashore. Good gracious, how many seals there were. There is game enough, and more than enough, for us. Yes, I think they are here by the thousand. The males are tremendously big and fat. I shot a couple of smaller ones first and then had a go at an immense old fellow that rose on its flippers with a dreadful roar. I planted a Remington explosive bullet right between the eyes of the beast so that a blood spurt, ugly and red, shot several metres along the sand, but do you think the swine died? No, [62] it came waddling towards me! To be honest, I became frightened and retreated. Another bullet in the throat. The animal gave a mighty lurch and lay still for a while. 'Dead,' I thought, and approached it, but then it rose up again! Another bullet, yet another. Two bullets from Bull, so that now about 8–10 spurts of blood were pouring out of its head and the streams of blood ran into the sea, colouring the water red for long stretches.

Then the monster bolted out to sea and moved away in a leisurely fashion. At times we saw the head appear and blood was still pouring out of it in inch-thick spurts. Oh, it was ugly.

We walked up along a creek that stretched from the bottom of the bay and in through a flat valley. In here as far as the eye could see there were piles of seals everywhere. They took absolutely no notice of us. Liked it well when we scratched them under the flippers and on the tail.

Yes, these are riches indeed! Goodness, what great numbers there are. We came across a place where seal and

whale hunters have lived. The house had blown down and the remains were strewn about. There were three giant iron boilers, which would have been used for boiling the blubber once upon a time. A wreck of a ship partly buried by sand was high up on land, while lots of chain sections and bolts, copper plates and other rubbish were lying all around. I came across a graveyard. A weather-beaten spot up on a low hill. There were a few graves. On two of these stood crosses with inscriptions. They were dead whalers who had found their last rest here. In a barren and sad site enclosed by barrel staves and sticks, with a covering of long stiff grass, [63] there lay sailors from many different parts of the world, side-by-side.

A flock of penguins has settled in the lee of the graves. I sat down to photograph them and one came over to me. They look like they are going around in children's pyjamas with feet in them, and are so utterly comical that one has to laugh at them.

The one who came over to me was not the least bit afraid, and stood for a while in deep contemplation about what kind of funny being I might be. 'Quack,' it said, then turned right around and went over to three of its comrades. It chatted for a while with these, then they all four came over to me in formation. When the camera clicked, it looked as though they were laughing. The picture was, however, very unsuccessful. My film is as good as useless. That is a nuisance, because it would have been terrific fun to take back photographs of all the strange things one sees here.

Earlier, I had put my rifle down beside my backpack on the beach. When I got back there, there were a multitude of beautiful little shining white birds. They resembled

ptarmigans,* and were perfectly tame. I had to chase them away and, wouldn't you know, those mischief-makers had kicked the barrel of the rifle and the backpack full of sand. I downed three ... ducks, which were like ours at home. Koren was completely out of his mind about all the birds and fired and fired. In the end I had to ask him not to shoot so many because we have no use for a whole lot of bird carcasses. Some we will eat, of course, but man doesn't live on bird alone and he won't be able to preserve all those skins anyway. I saw some beautiful, splendid cormorants.† [64] They were sitting on their nests and were impossible to move. There were three eggs, as big as a little hen egg and a fine, light-green colour, in each nest. Beef came along and was very excited, chased penguins and barked like crazy at the elephants, which pretended they didn't even see him. He had a go at a little baby and bit it on the tail, but when he saw its gaping mouth and heard it roar he slunk off with his tail between his legs.

The crew enjoyed themselves no end. They had free time because it was Sunday and ran around between all the animals. Each one had their own experiences and adventures. We went up along the creek, Bull and I. Elephants had dug holes in the ground where they were lying. Once when I was passing a little mud pool a head with a gaping red mouth and great rolling eyes suddenly popped up. The seal was probably lying in a mud bath like the pigs do at home.

The big males amuse themselves in a mud bath in a rather strange manner – they rise up against each other, to a man's

* There are no ptarmigans on the Crozet Islands – these were presumably snowy sheathbills.

† Neither are there cormorants – these would have been shags.

height and more, and then they crash together with a dull thud. Again and again they can rise like that and clash against each other. A man would be crushed by such a blow. At about noon we rowed back to the ship again. We had by then two boats, because the crew had put out a boat and come ashore after us. Koren was impossible to find. He had taken off into the mountains and was gone, but we rowed off anyway. In the afternoon we were again ashore, and then he came so laden with birds that he could hardly walk and asked if we were not going on board for dinner soon. He had no idea that we had been on board for many hours and had come ashore again.

I found a depot [65] for shipwrecked sailors that has been put on this island by the English government. The house has blown away and all the goods are lying round about, ruined. There must have been much good food there and all sorts of tools and equipment that have now rusted away. On a sign, which has blown many hundreds of metres away, it says: 'Notice! This is for shipwrecked people only.' It had been deposited by the English frigate *Comus*, which in the '80s was here on a 'surveying expedition'.* There were heaps of rats there, which no doubt had had a ball in all the spoilt food.

We found a bottle with a piece of paper in it. It only said that the American schooner *Rattler* had been here about twenty years ago. I imagine that they were the last who were here. At any rate the generation of animals living on the island now has never seen people. Here the saying 'Scantas implicitas [sic]' in its fullest meaning would be in order,†

* The notice and this phrase are in English.

† This should be 'sanctus simplicitas', which is Latin for holy innocence.

because greater innocence than that which these animals have I cannot imagine.

This morning at 4 o'clock I was woken up by the watch warning the mate that the dinghy had gone. It had probably drifted away. That is a nuisance, because it was so handy to have for dashing ashore, instead of these big heavy boats, but we can manage without it. We are taking down the topgallant rigging and mizzen sail to have as little exposure to the wind as possible. It blows so terribly here. These squalls come charging down from the mountains, so that one would think that the anchor chains would snap to pieces, but now we have put out an anchor and a [66] chain big enough for a Boston ship.*

There was not much hunting today because we have so much to do on board that it is good to get out of the way, but tomorrow we will go ashore and let loose on the elephants.

It was blowing tremendously today, but this evening it has cleared up and the wind has abated. Oh how hard it is on the chain and the anchors when these awful clashes come. We brought along a reserve anchor that I bought in Frederikstad, and which should withstand a fair lot, but it could also give way. We have erected the stove today and it is unbelievably cosy, with warmth and light. Our lamp has such a lovely sunny glow. Yesterday the Norwegian flag was flying on the Crozet Islands. It has probably not been here before, but there have undoubtedly been many Norwegians amongst the seal-hunting crews here in the old days.

* This may refer to defence ships built in Boston in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The ships had supposedly impenetrable, strong oak hulls.

Wednesday 28-11-1906 (4th day —)

No, this anchorage is *wiederlich*.^{*} Today the entire ocean is coming in here and we have ferocious rolling. A furious, howling, hurricane-like storm. I have my heart in my throat, so to speak. If we should go adrift. All the same. We should be lying at anchor even so, but the weather is rough now. Yesterday we had a beautiful day, caught four boats full of skin and blubber. God almighty, what murder. It is heavy work, too, and much work. First the animals are killed, then they have to be skinned, then the meat is cut off the skins and then the blubber has to be cut. The blubber is slid [67] straight into the burners in the hold, while the skin must be well salted down. I went ashore and took part all day yesterday, from early morning to late evening. We put down sixty-nine elephants, mostly small. The skins are awkward to load because of the undertow at the beach. We had to anchor the boats a little way out and then pull them ashore through the water. The animals here seem to have two or three lives. If one kills them in one place they are just as much alive somewhere else. I now give them a bullet between the eyes first, which shatters the whole brain, then a couple of men attack with lances that they thrust in under the flippers, but they are still difficult to kill.

One went out to sea yesterday with its head full of bullets and about 10 or 12 lance thrusts. It swam about for a long time then came ashore again and lay down with its comrades, apparently just as healthy.

While I was skinning a seal yesterday a white ptarmigan came and sat down beside me and I hit it on the head with

* The German word 'wiederlich' here means 'foul' or 'distasteful'.

my pick. It lay there quite still for a long time, then I had to go and sharpen my knife and when I came back the ptarmigan came and pecked at the blubber, as healthy as ever. This sounds like a lie but, strange to say, it is true.

The whole beach is teeming with birds that gorge on the fat and blubber. If one happens to leave the blubber side of a skin lying up for an hour then it is stripped bare. The seals that we shot on the beach on Sunday have gone. When we went to skin them yesterday there was only one left. [68] The only explanation I can give is that they revive and move to a new resting place. From now on we will only kill the animals that we can skin straight away. The ducks and the ptarmigans are the finest game that can be imagined, but the men forward can't eat them, apparently, and the steward doesn't like cleaning them. That steward, by the way, is a dreary fellow. Ugh, what a drag of a man, and he gets 70 kroner a month. Today we have not hunted, and this irritates me greatly. We could just as well be ashore and skinning at least, and then we could be taking the skins aboard when the weather's good enough. But Bull is terribly nervous and afraid. He thought it was blowing too much. I could well have gone, of course, but if anything had happened I would have been hearing 'Didn't I say so?' for a long time.

No, even with all his many good sides Bull does not fit in on board a hunting vessel. He goes around all day insisting that the ship is adrift. As though we don't have the land in sight and can see that she is lying steady. We sway in the wind squalls and, because the chain slackens and then stretches its full length, this does give the appearance of drifting.

Well, if this weather continues it will indeed go slowly for us. We really should press on all the time whenever we can get ashore.

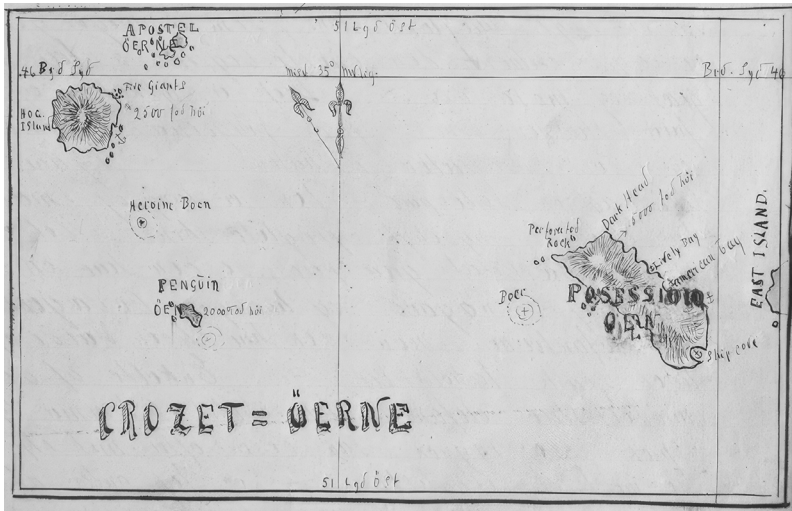
I'm making big plans these days. One should be able to hire a 2,000-ton steamer, hire 30–40 men and come down here. Catch there is enough of, and overflowing, too. With a steamship one would not have to be afraid of going adrift and [69] could anchor up near the beach. Then one could put the skins in nets on shore and hoist them aboard with a winch. One need neither cut meat nor blubber away, just slide it all down into the hold. The oil is about as good with boiling anyway, and one would be able to load in any weather.

As soon as the boat was full one would push on to Cape Town, where one could get in ten days, and then the blubber would be unloaded and boiled there. On such an undertaking one should be able to save greatly. 'There are lots who do it,' said the shopkeeper, who sold cheaply.*

I have made an estimate.

Suppose one got 1,000 tons of blubber, and that is not difficult here. Yes, I am sure I could easily manage that much. The price for blubber is 20 pounds sterling per ton, which comes to 20,000 pounds. One could charter a tanker for 400 pounds per month and, if the trip is estimated generously as taking six months, then this makes 2,400 pounds; hire of people and provision, equipment and so forth – 2,000 pounds; insurance of equipment and eventual catch – 500 pounds; extra expenses – 500 pounds. Income – 20,000. Expenditure – 5,400. One could have 14,600 pounds *on the keel* on arrival at Cape Town. If one then calculates the

* It seems that this is an old saying, although its meaning here is not clear.



Map of the Crozet Islands

expenses of boiling and then sending the crew home, and similar, at 4,600 pounds, then one should have a clear profit of about 10,000 pounds sterling.

That is 180,000 kroner!

So, even if one caught a lot less and had greater expenses, one should still [70] be able to make an enormous profit. It sounds fantastic perhaps but the plan is really very fine, and if I can't make something out of this then that would be odd. But first we have to finish this blessed trip, which I don't believe in the least little bit. We'll probably find the island, I don't doubt that, but whether there is a harbour is another question altogether. No, it is no use lying here with a little scrap of a schooner just waiting for good weather. We need more resources because the money is just lying on the beach.

Yes, the plan is splendid and it will be realised sometime.

Now in the evening it is pouring with rain and it is cold too, with ill-mannered rolling. If there is clear weather

tomorrow I'll take the ship a little closer in under land to avoid such a long rowing trip each time. — Dear God, how dearly I would love to have been at home tonight. One gets sick of it when everything must be tied down, on land also.

[71] *Friday 30th November (6th day at Crozet —)*

Thanks be to God. Now things are running smoothly. We have got about 150 elephants in 12 fully-loaded boatfuls. It is blowing badly these days and snowing, so that all the land and the ship as well are very white. Oh dear, what speck and spectacle.* A finer hunting-ground than this hardly exists anywhere around the globe. As quickly as we can get the work done on board we travel ashore for another load. I stood this morning in a single spot and shot 40 elephants, big and little, that were lying around me. An awful murdering it is, to be sure, but now I have learnt how to shoot them dead. After a shot in the eye they are not very spritely any more. It is bothersome with all this nasty weather. Miserable and cold with driving rain and sore hands. Every evening I am the doctor. Have had the idea to put naphthalene on sores and it is a good help, it seems. — The meat of the seal, especially the pieces from the back of the young seal, is beautiful to eat and the penguins are very tasty. A kind of cabbage plant growing ashore is very good and constitutes about the only vegetation apart from grass and mosses. Beef is happy and races around the beach. Chases penguins and cormorants and bites the seals on the tail. Yesterday I shot a sea-leopard.† It is long and sleek with beautiful spotted fur. It is a nasty beast when it attacks, as it has an immense

* 'Speck' is fat, or, in this case, blubber.

† Now known as a leopard seal.

row of teeth and quicker movements than the elephants, but it has little value and comparatively little blubber. Some of the medium-sized elephants have up to six inches of blubber on their backs so they are, according to my judgement, the most advantageous. I assume that by [72] Christmas we will be about fully loaded, because this is going very well indeed. Bull seems to think that I am too foolhardy, rowing off in all sorts of weather, but we certainly can't lie here at a standstill. Besides, it goes well as long as we don't overload the boats.

Saturday 1-12-1906

This morning we rowed ashore with one of the boats. As the weather looked fine and the sea was smooth, we lay to by one of the outer headlands where there was a multitude of small seals. The landing place was not exactly very attractive, but because the seals were there in such numbers we could not resist the temptation to land and then we went ashore and shot and skinned. We might have got together about 40-50 skins when I suddenly saw that a high breaker was coming inwards. I ran to the boat but came too late, just as the sea took and overturned it. Yes, that was fun and games. The wind had increased and these hunting boats are so impossibly large and heavy, so that to get it on land was an impossibility. We did, however, succeed in the end in getting it on an even keel again, but then it was full of water. Oh dear, how we struggled, in water over our head. The bailer had disappeared so we had to use rubber boots to bail with and, after about an hour's struggle, got the boat sufficiently afloat so that we could scramble on board and get it bailed out. This was doubly irritating because of the beautiful catch we had to leave behind on the beach. That the sea has now

taken. In the afternoon two boats went ashore and came back deeply laden.

[73] *Monday 3-12-1906 (8th day on land)*

We have had a dreadful night. The worst in my life. I don't think I have ever been so close to certain death. But our Lord still saved us. I'm not able to describe the time from last night at about 8 o'clock to today before noon. On Sunday morning the second mate Thiis and I set out on a long mountain tour. Will tell about that later. We were away until late in the day and by the time we returned a nasty easterly wind had started to blow up. Easterly winds are certain death for us here because the whole ocean is brought in with them; they are, by the way, said to be very rare here. It was sad to come on board exhausted and tired as I was after my tour and then find the ship and crew in danger.

The wind and sea rose quickly, and to try and get under sail in such a sea would simply have meant running the ship aground on one of the reefs. No, it was of no use. I put more chain out, as well as a big manila rope on the best chain.* Got the engine going to lighten the knocks from the sea. More could not be done.

The wind freshened to a full storm and the sea immediately grew so huge that at about 10 o'clock the waves were breaking over the bow. Bang! The port chain snapped. Now we were lying only with the starboard one, which is, admittedly, a colossal chain. The sea was rising around us and crashing in a foaming boil. I called together ship's council, that is to say, the oldest and most experienced. I suggested to the crew

* A manila rope is a natural fibre rope used on a chain to provide drag in order to buffer shocks.

that they put a boat in the water and row directly ashore. They could still have managed to get ashore on the sandy beach, while later it was worse as the sea built up rapidly.

[74] It was decided, however, that all should stay on board as long as possible and that we would monitor the weather. The storm increased and it grew dark. All hands had their lifebelts ready and were prepared to battle the raging elements.

The second mate and Bull put on their lifebelts, I noticed. Yes, poor Bull. He was so anxious, stood for hours looking at the barometer and compass in the cabin whenever the wind leapt up.

I can't understand how the chain could hold with the mighty jolts made by the ship, but hold it did. We began to drift and drag the anchor with us and, close astern a bare couple of ship's lengths, we could even glimpse breakers through the darkness. We again held ship's council. Because the reef was so close the mate and Bull wanted us to let the anchor go while there was still time. They thought we could turn the bow towards land, put the hull ashore and pour oil on the water.

What was I to do? That was advice from my first mate, an old sailing ship skipper, and a good brave sailor he is. But I couldn't. No, I couldn't put the hull ashore here because I thought the chance of saving lives would be so small.

We would never have got through the undertow that raged in there. No, we had to lie. I saw that she had turned again and was lying quite still. The second mate came and reported that the hawsehole forward had gone.* I ran to the forecastle. No, only a part had gone out. Bad enough, but one would

* The hawsehole is the hole in the ship through which the anchor chain runs.

still have to try. Some thought that I should cut the rigging. That I could not do, because rope would get caught in the propeller and then the axle would probably break, but we ought to lie a little longer. [75] I don't often pray to God, but this night I did and it helped in the end, I believe.

In the grey morning light a heavy shower of rain came. With that the wind leapt to become a storm from the northwest and then little by little pulled itself around to become westerly. That was what saved us. There was a glimmer of hope. Perhaps it might end well after all. However, the sea became terribly turbulent with this sudden change of wind and moved in high whirling columns around us. Another strong shower of rain dampened the sea somewhat and, bit by bit, things have become a little better. We still have an enormous sea, but it settles more each hour because of the fresh westerly, so I think we are saved now.

But this has been a frightful night. Oh, what long hours. I can't really say that I was afraid of drowning – would probably somehow have clambered ashore. But think of living here, on the island, for years! Indeed, because ships do not come here often.

Wet through to the skin I stood on the half-deck hour after hour; did not notice much coldness, however. I can remember that I caught myself standing there humming Paludan-Müller's comic negro song.*

‘There was a 16-year-old
Negro queen Bill-Billy,
Her courtiers she gathered
And spoke to them regally.’†

* Danish poet Frederik Paludan-Müller.

† The name Bill-Bill has been changed to retain the rhyming of the original.

Then I had to laugh. It did undeniably suit my position perfectly to sing Negro songs. Funny that I didn't also start 'Jim and I', and so on.

Then I thought about all those at home of whom I am fond. It would have been preferable to be at Store Ree instead. But now the weather is reasonably good. She lies across the sea and rolls tremendously, but that doesn't matter at all.

[76] *Tuesday 4-12-1906 (9th day —)*

Now it is just as bad again. The watch roused me at 3 o'clock. Then there were gusts of easterly wind again. We tried to haul up and get under sail, but it was impossible, so we have to lie. Under the hauling we drifted a little more in towards the reefs, which are now a ship's length astern, but I want to lie. Will put ashore those who want to go, with clothes and the most necessary things.

I myself will stay on board as long as there is a splinter left of the ship. And if I should not be able to save my life, well, there are six others at Store Ree who will keep our good name in honour and keep up the traditions. I will send this book ashore when the others go, and so help us God. I ask you at home to send a greeting to —. Yes, I think you know who I mean. And then you should know that if I go under I am at my post to the last and that I am quite calm and content, in a way.

It is so very strange to stand here and write this, but our chances are as small as can be. It is breaking dreadfully over the reefs astern and the storm is raging, and increasing, so that I am firmly convinced that this will go badly.

Sunday 16-12-1906

We are now ashore on the Crozet Islands. Fourteen shipwrecked sailors and our dog, Beef. The whole thing is a sad adventure and it is likely to get even sadder. I will try to relate our experiences, if I can. I finished by saying that a boat was going ashore. Bull, second mate Hansen, Koren, [77] deckhand Hjalmar Jensen, the steward and able seaman Hans Lysacker went ashore first in a boat. They took the most necessary clothes and food with them and rowed off. I saluted them with the flag, which by the way went up incorrectly because one end of the flag line was fastened the wrong way and loosened itself, but it still got to the top and it hung there as long as the mast stood.

I stood on board observing the boat and old Bull. They struggled and rowed and at times it looked as though they stood completely still in the gusts of wind. At times when they were deep in the troughs I saw nothing of them, but at last I saw that they made land near Conspicuous Rock and were able to get ashore. They also pulled the boat up, after a fashion, so that it stood clear of the water. God be praised. Bull and the five men were safe. I asked the others who were left on board to go in another boat, but they wanted to wait a little longer. They came into the cabin and got a good dram. Good boys, those fellows. Calm and steady as on a pleasant fair-weather day and intent on doing their share to save the vessel. But what could we possibly do? We pulled one of the boats around to have it in lee in case it had to be used. It was a difficult job in the high, violent sea.

Seaman Hans Antonsen jumped fearlessly into the boat, which many times stood vertically and pulled violently

on the slender hunting line holding it to the ship. But he stood by the rudder as calmly as if it was just an ordinary embarkation and he steered while we hauled [78] the boat around. Close astern we had the roaring reefs where the sea rose in a towering, foaming spray. If the line had snapped then the boat would have disappeared into that in a second. But was he afraid? Oh no. Those kinds of feelings have no place in a plucky sailor's heart. So we were lying there for another half hour or more. I stood and sounded astern. Had 7 fathoms all the time. Suddenly I got a bottom at 4 fathoms. Therefore we were drifting. 'Cut the rig!' I hollered, and grabbed an axe.

Bosun Thorvald Johansen jumped up in the rig with a hatchet to put a hook on the beam and I stood ready by the harpoons. Then the hull shuddered violently and the ship dipped in the stern. 'All hands in the boat!' There were eight of us left. The other men threw into the boat what they could get hold of in a hurry and all seven were swiftly in it. I stood by to lower the boat in the block. The mate cried, 'Come along, captain.' No, I did not want to go. I did not want to leave the ship as long as she was afloat. 'Well then, I'll stay too,' he said. 'Me too, me too,' they all shouted. 'Either the skipper comes, or we all stay on board.'

So then I jumped after them, because, after all, I could not go into the breakers with the ship and risk the lives of seven men. That would have been stupid. Maybe I was afraid, but not of death, at any rate.

So we rowed off, but [79] good Lord, what a trip. The boat drifted into the kelp so that we could not get a proper pull on the oars. Around us the sea was breaking thunderously and furiously over the reef. Yet we made enough progress

so that by positioning the boat away from the weather we were able to row towards the sandy beach. We got free of the kelp and rowed as men possessed. I am sure that we had the heavy boat doing 10 miles per hour. Then, all of a sudden, an enormous wave took hold of the boat and threw it far in over the sand.

We all jumped out and with a mighty heave dragged the boat onto land, clear of the next wave, and then we were safe from drowning, at least. But we were on shore on a barren, uninhabited island thousands of miles from people. Without a house in cold, rain and sleet. It sure looked cosy. I went over to a kind of a cave where Bull was sitting. 'Welcome here, Captain Ree!' he shouted. 'God be praised that everyone is saved.' Then little Beef came bouncing towards me, beside himself with happiness. The dog was in the first boat ashore and now gave me its greeting and welcome in a touching way. Well, at least it was a ray of light to have little Beef there.

So we sat there, 14 men, and watched *Cathrine* going under. First we saw that she was lower in the water. She was floating on the blubber in the boilers, but that did not last long. About an hour after we got ashore we could see that her [80] stern had dropped. I had stopped the engine, but it was probably still warm, because we saw smoke and steam rising.

During one high wave the hull was deposited on a reef, the rig swaying backwards and forwards. Was strangely tough and remained intact. Then the ship smashed in half, so that pieces went flying. The main mast with the flag on top broke off and then the foremast rig came dancing down. In less than ten minutes the beautiful little ship was a heap

of wreckage. The boilers tore loose and merrily floated off. All men were sent off to salvage wreckage. It drifted past our bay and into a little bay to the east where one could descend only with the greatest care, because the scree on the mountain was quite loose and crumbly. We did not, however, find much of any worth. All my clothes and all I owned on this earth was lost. I had had no time to think about taking such things with me. But with the first boat I had sent some clothes from a ... chest and a blanket, as well as a little tobacco. It started to get dark and I was as wet as a dog from rain and sea spray. Bull and I were lying in the little cave. He had his bedding with him and, luckily, wasn't cold. But such a night as I had then I'd thought would be impossible to experience. I sat in the opening of the cave only poorly protected from the rain. Dirt and sand flew down from the mountain and into my face and I was so cold that my teeth were chattering. But morning came that night as well. Now and then I got up and ran in the rainy weather to get a little warmth in my body. The other boys had just as bad a time, and some even worse. Some had crawled under a boat they had upturned and those were relatively well off as they lay over and under each other just like sea-elephants. But neither was it a splendid shelter. Others sat under the open [81] sky. But, as I said, morning came that night as well. The steward had a little bread in his pocket and a couple of tins of milk that were rationed out evenly. Then it was off again to find wreckage. A lot had come into Hell Bay, which we call it now. I found Bull's formal tails and many other good clothes. Tins of butter, a tub of salt fish, three drums of oil and a lot of wood. Everything was hauled up as far as possible so that the sea would not take it again.

The cabin and the scullery, both strong new constructions, were perfectly whole and stood out on the reef, but we could not get there yet because of the sea, which was still rising high and mighty from the east.

For our meal we fried penguins on a spit. Used one of the big boilers that were left here from previous oil boiling for a fireplace. They tasted good. From the depot for shipwrecked sailors we found some useable corned beef, as well as spoiled ship's bread. It tasted bad, but hunger is the best cook, so that was swallowed as well. A box of tea that was just black soil was opened and tried and the boys said it was good. They had found a box of sugar too. The sugar was just like yellow rust, but it was sweet. I also tasted the drink, but whether it was tea or rat poison they had found I could not say. We hauled the boats together and tilted them against the mountain, covered them with wet peat and stretched out a strip of sailcloth, which I had sent with the first boat, to lie on. Then we huddled together in the evening and warmed each other. I only heard one complain. It was one of the able seamen, who on board had been considered a clever and fearless sailor, but who behaved like an old woman during the shipwreck. Otherwise they were bright. I told skipper yarns and spirits were high. Bull had his bedding and he slept well. Poor fellow. For him it was worst. All his plans and all his work were stranded on the Crozet Islands; but he was cheerful nonetheless. I slept splendidly well and so did all the others, [82] so they said. For breakfast the next day we had a mixture of corned beef and spoiled bread. It was dreadful, but I ate too much anyway. Then we put a boat on the water and rowed out to where most of the ship was lying.

We found there a whole lot, both food and clothes, which

we got ashore in good condition. All the food that is not in sealed boxes is, however, ruined by kerosene. We have lived under the boats for ten days now. It is a miserable lodging, to be sure; still, I have been alright. The penguins have been our food, morning, midday and evening. The soup from them is beautiful. We have no salt, but salt seawater serves the purpose. We have found all the rifle ammunition and four Remington rifles. Koren found his spectacles on a reef. God knows how they got there. We have found two lamps, but we have no kerosene. Speck will have to do the job. It will do, too. We have also found a whole lot of other things. The boat has been busy all day, in and out with wreckage, while our clever carpenter and some others worked on our house, which is now finished. We slept here last night for the first time and it was like coming from the meanest poor cottage and into a palace. It is cold in this palace too, but we sleep fully dressed. Meanwhile, we have got the stove from the cabin ashore. There is no fuel on the island, but we will get a lot of wood from the wreck, so that will do for a long time. I have a dispute with the steward. He wants to use up all our precious provisions straight away, but that will not do. We must use sea-elephants and birds because there is a plentiful supply of that here and it is also good food. It can't be helped if the diet is a little monotonous. We must save. I brought one photo with me from the shipwreck, and I have found a great many others [83] since in the most unlikely places. Thus I found Borghild Strigstad far up in the scree, and Elise Molvig in a pool far inland.*

So now we are inhabitants of Possession Island on Crozet, but this is no place to remain. It snows, rains and

* The identity of these two people is not known.

is bitterly cold every single day. Oh what a terrible land. And people possibly may not even come here by ship during our lifetime, so I don't want to wait here hoping for a ship. We have two boats, such hunting boats as they use in the Arctic Ocean and on the bottlenose fields. They are good, seaworthy boats and have many a time been out in ferocious oceans on the fields to the north. I will sail off for Australia in one of the boats, I will. The bosun and able seaman Hans will come along. They are experienced with boats. We will sew sailcloth over the boat, put a deeper keel under and take good ballast. When we get a little rag of sail on it we can manage the sea for a long time. We will rig up a drift anchor and there is enough damper oil from the elephants. Yes, we will set off. I have decided to depart on the 15th of January. If we are lucky we will meet a ship and, if we fail, well at least I have done my duty. The lives of fourteen men are at stake, because they cannot last long here on the island. Besides, being castaway here is as good as being dead to the world. I count on 45 days for the voyage to Melbourne. Have a compass but no map or navigation tables. An old bone of an instrument, the first mate's, has been found, a declination table I have to organise, and then the good Lord will have to steer the boat for us.

Today we have celebrated the day of rest in our new house. I [84] decided that we should play a bit, because it rained almost all day and some people's spirits were a little low, I could see. We played 'My ship is laden with' and many other such games, and the boys enjoyed themselves. Then we did match tricks and, finally, in the evening when there was a little good weather we played ball on the sandy field. I must think up things to do so that they don't lose

heart, because humour is essential if we are to live here for some years. Well, I now have only one month left before I set off from here.

Our house is made of skins, peat and planks from the wreck. It is big and roomy and lined inside with moss and sailcloth. The bunks are around the wall and are made of peat and sailcloth. They are beautiful to lie in and we sleep well. There has been a terrible stomach epidemic amongst us. It is probably the food, I think, but we will probably get used to it with time.

Monday 17–12–1906

Today we found the Christmas parcel from home. It has been lying on the bottom of the sea for 12 days now and was, therefore, very damaged. But presents it was, and never have I appreciated a little greeting from home more than now. The other day I found Asbjørnsen's and Moe's *Fairy Tales* amongst the stones.* A present to me from my splendid brother Henrik. It can be dried and will be enjoyable both for me and all the others. The parcel found today was badly knocked about, however all the mitts, those meant for the boys, were quite good. I distributed one pair for each straight away. I myself have been remembered with a whole lot. I have rinsed a lovely shirt and a pair of good underpants from mother and grandmother in fresh water, and I will put them on for my fantastic voyage, if the Lord will let me set off. A pair of photographs in a box frame from Dagen and Elias.† Chocolate from Simon and Cathrine and a bottle of eau-de-

* Authors Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Engebretsen Moe were Norwegian folklorists.

† Dagen and Elias are Anders' sister and brother-in-law.

cologne [85] from Mother.* And then there were other little things from all the other sweet, kind siblings of mine. Lots of thanks for everything. Neither I nor they would ever have thought that these should come to me from the bottom of the sea. It is good that at Christmas you have no idea how I am, because then you can celebrate in the belief that I am also alright. Hopefully I will have arrived by boat before you start to expect that we should have got to Melbourne. If by then I am in the land of the living.

I dreamt last night that we were in the boat and met a big ocean steamer that picked us up. But when I woke up I was lying in this poor cottage. Oh well, I'm alright. I'm not starving and I'm not cold, have good spirits and courage, so this will go OK, to be sure!

Today the steward has cooked a kind of black pudding of sea-elephant blood. And it was really good. The penguins are still the best, however. The soup from these is very good and would taste great even to a *feinschmecke*.† We went on a trip out to the wreck again, found the smith's anvil, a clamp, a frying-pan, two oil drums and a couple of knives. All of these are good things for us to have here ashore where there is nothing of course except stone, scree, sand, peat and sea animals. One day I saw an animal in a cave that was surely one of the valuable fur seals. If only there were more of those here. There are elephants here in unbelievable quantities. If I get away from here in one piece I want to come back with a steamer. Because hundreds of thousands of kroner, not to mention pounds sterling, are lying everywhere here. Yesterday about sixty or seventy seals came and settled down

* Simon and Cathrine are Anders' brother-in-law and sister.

† 'Feinschmecke' is German for gourmet.

just near our house, where they lay and bellowed so loudly that we couldn't hear ourselves speak. Then we chased them with sticks, but they are so stubborn that they will hardly move at all once they have settled down. One would [86] not go, but was lying there bellowing so loudly that we had to shoot it to get it to shut up. Today three king penguins came right into our kitchen, where they ended up in the pan.

Tomorrow we will start working on our boat, which will be rigged out well for its long voyage. A good thing that we have both the bosun and a clever smith with us. They will be good use to us, because I want to have reinforcements and metal fastenings.

Friday 21-12-06 (Crozet Islands)

The days are passing here too, and the strange thing is that they are passing quickly. We are working on the boat, which has to be fitted out for the voyage. I am sewing cork belts, which will be stretched around the outside. We were lucky enough to salvage a big bag of cork, which now will be of immeasurable value to us. The carpenter, the bosun and the second mate are forging, joining; the work proceeds, but it is slow because we have hardly any tools. We have got the keel under. It is now six inches deeper than the old one, is bolted down with half-inch iron bolts and clad underneath with a big iron strap, which was lying on the beach here from an earlier shipwreck. Some people are beginning to be down-hearted. They would prefer to lie and sleep all day and it is almost impossible to get them out to the wreck to salvage materials. Stomach illness affects us badly too. Yes, it shapes up to Christmas. I do what I can to keep spirits up. Every evening after everybody has gone to bed I read aloud

from Andersen [sic] and Moe and the boys laugh about all the *nisser* and *huldre* and the stories about them.* It certainly was a useful Christmas present I received from Henrik this time. Yesterday we were out on a long rowing trip around the east coast to another bay that is called Ship Cove. It was a nice little harbour, but it is also open to easterly and southeasterly winds. There were unfathomable masses of penguins and seals there. In a colony of king penguins we found eggs about as big as a fist, or even bigger. We collected some, although they were not quite fresh. What strange birds. They do not have nests but carry their egg with them in a pocket [87] under their belly and waddle along. They are about a metre high and have beautiful plumage with lovely colours. In Ship Cove there were also remains of earlier seal boiling. There were three giant boilers; the seals had arranged themselves right in the middle of the boilers where their forefathers about 40–60 years ago had been boiled. We left a bottle with a note in it there in case a ship should come to fill up with water, although there is really little likelihood of that. There were a lot of ptarmigans. They were quite embarrassingly tame. Koren took his shoes off and then they pecked him on the toes, pulled his socks off and kicked his rifle full of sand and dirt. One should be able to get four or five thousand seals in a fortnight in that bay with a steamship. In other words, one could get rich, and very rich, with a steamship there. Yes, if I get away from here in one piece and get home again it would be strange if I didn't put together a new expedition to come here, but it must be with a steamship, because there is not a lot of good weather in which to hunt and there is an extreme amount

* 'Nisser' and 'huldre' are Norwegian goblins and the like.

to hunt, but for the moment I have other things to think about.

First, I have to put out in a boat, out on the mighty Indian Ocean where the westerly storms cause havoc and the seas rise so high. Well, how is it going to go, I wonder. It will have to take its course.

Saturday 22-12-1906

Today we have driving, drenching rain. And so cold and miserable. I don't think it is any colder at home really. When it rains outside it also rains inside here. The whole roof leaks and drip, drip, it comes through everywhere. We have erected the stove in our living-room today and that is good because it warms very well. The boys are, with some exceptions, dopey and slow and not very pleasant. They don't give a damn about anything, I heard today. Rather uplifting to approach Christmas in such a way. The carpenter, the bosun, able seaman Hans, Thiis and Koren are the best ones. It is the youngest ones who I don't feel are doing their duty. My authority as a captain is now only pro forma, since the shipwreck, but they still obey me, when all is said and done. No, I must now think about how things are at [88] home at the moment. Yesterday Lossen came home from the city and Dagen from Lillehammer,* so they are gathered together at home. Cathrine and Simon are possibly in Kristiania with their little one, if she can't manage to travel so far. Today there is baking, frying and cooking for Christmas. Oh! Imagine the cakes. If only we had a fraction of them here. But that sort of thing we will have to forego. In addition, the steward is not prepared to cook tomorrow. A fine chap

* 'Lossen' refers to Anders' brother Laurentz.

he is to have along. Oh well, then he will not get any food either, and that will help, I think. I feel I do what I can to keep the boys in good spirits. I'm longing to depart in our boat because it is bad to be here on the Crozet Islands, that is for sure. Our dinghy, which drifted away from us, has come back. One of the boys spotted it on a reef. It is almost undamaged. It must have been driven a long way out to sea by the westerly winds, and then the easterly winds, which have been blowing for a while, have brought it back again. Strange that it should return here. We have started to skin seals to repair the roof, but it's a slow job. The men are contrary, and then no work goes well. Right now they are sitting or lying on benches or bunks. An uplifting sight. Well, it has quite a lot to do with the rainy weather.

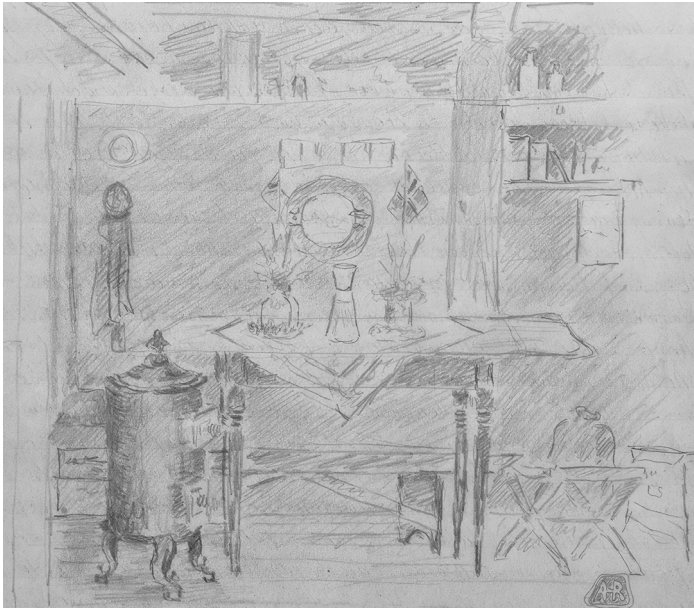
24-12-1906 (Christmas Eve)

Yes, it is indeed Christmas Eve, that is for sure. We have nice weather, strange to say, and are dry indoors. For Christmas supper we will have traditional *smørgrøt*.^{*} And tomorrow, Christmas Day, we will have coffee in bed. Yes, we will celebrate Christmas. We have found the hymn book and my Bible and so the Christmas gospel will be read here too, and hymns will be sung. I have washed all over today, and shaved also. The steward had taken with him a scrap of a shaving knife and with this I have sawn off my splendid full beard. Albeit under great physical suffering. But now I have a 'clean face'.[†] Koren has found heather and some microscopic little white star flowers that will decorate our hut. And then I hope that I can work up the right feeling for tonight.

* 'Smørgrøt' is a type of porridge made from butter.

† In English.

Now the fir tree is decorated in the big hall at home. Dear God, if I could only take part there for a little, little while. It is good, however, that those at home believe that we are well and alright. Well, we are not suffering. Far from it. It is not everybody who has *smørgrøt* [89] tonight, as we have. Provided that we don't burn it. The carpenter and one of the others was over in a bay to the north yesterday and tells about tremendous masses of seals there too. Thousands, they said. Yes, if I can get through I want to come here again, if there is any possibility. Bull's fantasy-land I don't give another thought.



Our Christmas table on Crozet, 1906

Christmas Day: 25–12–1906

The *smørgrøt* last night was perfectly splendid, so that everybody ate too much. We sang some Christmas hymns and Bull read the lesson, as well as a nice little sermon he had

written. Then Koren read a funny story from the magazine.* Finally, they all got a dram from a bottle we had saved. It was really cosy and warm in our room. At 9 o'clock we went to bed. I went outside for a little while in the moonlit night. It was quiet and clear.

[90] The contours of the mighty mountain ridges stood out with their wild backs against a red sheen in the west. And the Southern Cross was clear and shining in the sky to the south. Glory be to God on high. Peace on Earth and goodwill to all men. The land we are on is His, and He saw us also on Christmas Eve. Then I went to bed with music from the snoring chorus in the bunks around me. The first mate is a terrible snorer, so I lie and poke him with a sharp stick every five minutes. He swears that there are fleas here, but I know better. Early today we were roused from our bunks by able seaman Lysacker who had made pancakes and brewed a little coffee. They tasted better than the cakes on Christmas morning at home, but then it was also our whole breakfast.

The bosun and I have been over the mountain north of us to a bay that I presume must be Lively Bay. There, too, were boilers and ruins of houses. And the whole valley completely packed with sea-elephants. So that here on the island there are five bays, teeming with seals by the thousand in every bay. Oh yes, if our Lord lets me get through then I will find a way to come here again. That is for sure, because I can become rich here in a couple of months, but steam I want to have, and no sailing ships with high rigging. The trip was strenuous and long, through wild passes and over ridges that

* Koren produced a magazine, called *Crozeteer*, while they were on the island.

make Beseggen look like child's play.* There are drops of thousands of feet. All the stone is loose and crumbly. Just as one thinks one has got a foothold the whole scree under one begins to slip, so that one must move with the utmost care.

Sunday 30-12-1906

Yes, the days are passing. They do become very monotonous, but we are well off. A storm from the north has been raging, which has hindered us from putting out in a boat right through Christmas. Hans Lysacker is steward now and cooks better, yes many times better, than the miserable steward ever did. So we are living well now. We get meat cakes, which are splendid. And then we live a lot on blood products and penguin soup. Yesterday Koren and Hjalmar went on an egg-gathering trip. They found 76 albatross eggs, so now we'll live like dukes in the New Year period. One albatross egg weighs from 500 to 600 grams and tastes like a hen egg. That is some egg.

Work on the boat, *Hope*, which we have christened it, is going slowly. [91] Because when one has to be a smith and only has an axe for a tool it is a little awkward. But the carpenter is a clever man and any one of us can tinker a little, so we'll get the boat ready. I'm longing to get going to get clear of this – the sooner the better. Yes, the year of the Lord 1907 will be a strange year for us. But if we are lucky with the boat then all will be well anyway. *Cathrine* was fully insured so nobody will lose anything as a result of the shipwreck. It was of course sad to be skipper for only four months and then to be wrecked. But I know that I could not help that. Bull goes around inspecting our work on the

* Refers to Beseggen Ridge, Jotunheimen National Park, Norway.

boat and giving expert advice, which is never followed. No, in this case I want to have the boat the way I want it. The carpenter, the bosun and able seaman Hans are experienced sailors and have been out on the hunting-fields in these boats over many summers, so I would rather accept their advice, and I don't think that I am quite green myself, I hope. We talk much about the steamship that we will come here with if all goes well. Bull wants to come down here again, but I don't think that will come to anything. I can't understand what he needs to do here any more. His gain will be just as great if he stays home, and if I come here again I want to have absolute unrestricted authority and work according to my own judgement.

1-1-1907

New Year's Day today. Yes. A fateful year this year of the Lord will be. But how will it go, and what will happen? I know the beginning. It was here on Possession Island in American Bay, in our improvised palace. Hans Lysacker roused us at 8 o'clock in the morning with good New Year weather and egg pancakes, which were really good. 'Happy New Year' greetings came from around the bunks. Yes, 'Happy New Year' it is indeed to be hoped. In about a week we should be off in our boat, and what will that trip bring us? Perhaps I won't get any older than the writer of this journal this year. Well, all will be revealed in the end.

We have got a New Year guest. A beautiful little black albatross chick that is practising shrieking like a circular saw. Koren caught it yesterday when he was on a boat trip. We have got a pack of cards together now. Very incomplete and awkward to be sure, but with a little good will one can play a

rubber of whist with it quite well, [92] and that is certainly a nice change. Now I suppose the Christmas balls have started at home in the district. Well, we avoid taking part in that so at least save the annoyance of not having been invited. There is a little touch of easterly wind today so we will probably soon get bad weather again. Yes, there have now been three good days in succession and they have to be paid for with just as many bad days. It says in 'Directions' that 'easterly winds are a rare occurrence between these islands.' Well, that is a joke, because we have now had them four times in this period. The seals are going to sea now. All the thousands who were lying here have taken off. Only some big ancient males remain, and then an occasional skinny young seal. Over the last few days I have observed a few females who are a fairly long way inland. Yes, it is quite unbelievable that they can crawl as high as some of them have done. They probably go so high up to escape the brutal amorous attentions of the males. They have an immense amount of blood. From a seal of about 7–8 feet long one gets eight buckets full of blood, and the blood is perfectly good too, especially for blood pancakes. It is such fun to watch the little river that cuts through the valley here. It is in the process of making a new outlet course through a big sand dune. I have placed sticks and see day by day that my sticks are knocked away by the constantly working river. The dune is so big that by my calculations it will take about 3–4 months to break through. By that time I should be back here with assistance for Bull and the other fellows. Bull now thinks that I will be back in the month of March, but that is now, and will be, an impossibility, so I tell the men that they must not expect me again before the end of April. If I come earlier, well, so

much the better. But they should not expect me before that because there certainly isn't a steamship lying with a steam up ready to take off for Crozet as soon as I arrive, wherever that will be.

Friday 4-1-1907

This year is beginning with fairly good weather, but I do hope to be up in warmer regions before very long, because it is really cold and unpleasant here. We read aloud from *Framgutterne* these days,* and play cards for pieces of tobacco. Work on the boat is steadily progressing, and it will be as good as we, with poor means, can get it. Occasionally we collect [93] a boatload of penguins from one of the neighbouring bays. We have eradicated all those that were here in American Bay. The meat on them is really beautiful, and they are now our main food. The cabbage plant that grows here is not good because it is altogether too bitter, so we don't use that much. Over the past few days we've had so much rough sea that there has been no question of getting out to the wreck. That is bad. All the wood that is there should be brought ashore now because a lot is needed for cooking, but that will have to be up to the ones that are left here. They are so slow and lazy that it is irritating to be with them. Well, not all, but there are about three or four who are certainly not the way I might wish. I don't want to say anything because I only have a week left here.

Today Thiis, who is a fine fellow, and I went for a trip over to Hell Bay looking for nails from the wreck timber there. A hurricane force storm was blowing, so that stones

* Refers to Bernhard Nordahl's account of his three years with Fridtjof Nansen on the voyage of *Fram* to the North Pole: *Framgutterne: Tre Aar Gjennem Skrugar og Nat: Beretning om Nordpolsfærden*.

were flying around our ears and I had to carry Beef. The coal boiler, which had drifted in to shore, has now gone out to sea again. There must have been a couple of tons of good coal in it, so that was disappointing; I have repeatedly said that a couple of men should go and put the coal in a safe place ashore, but they have not been bothered and now it is gone. Well, if we don't succeed and are unable to send help to the island, they will be badly off.

Really I ought not to go, perhaps, because I am the only one who still has some authority. But when they are left alone, I think there are some characters who will not be pleasant for Bull to live with.

Sunday 6-1-1907

Rain and cold grey weather. We had intended to work on the boat today too, but it is not possible, this morning at least. Yesterday four men went egg-gathering. They found 130 albatross eggs, a not small addition to our frugal household. Albatrosses, which at sea are one of the swiftest [94] flyers, are big and clumsy on land. They can hardly stand on their legs. They lie asleep on their nests and one can just approach them from behind, take them or lift them by their tail feathers and tip them out of their nest, which is only a high grass tuft, then one finds their one big egg.

After the bird has been taken from its nest it waddles back to it and settles down to sleep without noticing that the egg is gone. The king penguins are even more stupid. They are difficult to rob because they carry their eggs in a pouch. About a fortnight ago when I was over in Ship Bay I took the egg from one of them but lost hold of it so that it

slipped. * I put the shell near the penguin again, and don't you think that the fool took it and put it back in its pouch. And yesterday they found it again and, to be sure, it was going around with the shell still and incubating it, probably in the hope of twins. Another one had taken a round stone instead of its lost egg, and it is now happily incubating this.

We made a fire in Ship Bay and fried an albatross on a spit. It was like the finest roast baby veal. The bird has so much fat on it that it ran from the spit, but the wood was poor. It consisted of old half-rotten barrel staves that are from the old boiling operations. They smelt rotten, but gave rise to an amusing performance. A cluster of old male elephants close by were lying and staring at us, but then the wind got in their eyes so they got smoke both there and in their snouts. They sniffed and cried so the tears were running from their big black eyes, and finally they had to turn their tails to the smoke.

Yesterday I saw the biggest seal I have seen, a really immense body and so old that its whole skin was split and torn all over. It had difficulty walking, and that I can understand perfectly well. If one weighs 6 or 7 tons and doesn't have any legs, at the same time as one has gout and the weakness of old age, it can't be easy to walk.

[95] *Wednesday 9-1-1907*

Well now our boat is ready and I think it is as good as human effort could get it with the materials, and especially the tools, we have had at our disposal. Carpenter Anton Kristian Pedersen has, during the whole of the work, proved both his ability and his willingness to help with all kinds of things.

* Ship Bay was referred to as Ship Cove earlier in the diary.

If our boat arrives at our distant goal then he is the one who receives the most honour for it. He also wanted to take part in the voyage itself but, as he is married and has children at home, I do not feel that he should come. We three who are setting off are all bachelors and fancy-free. So without us the loss at home would be bearable. Johan Koren, our zoologist, has also offered his assistance on the voyage, but more than three we cannot be because of provisions and room on the boat. Koren is a splendid fellow. Willing to do all sorts of work, and it is he who on his long mountain wanderings has found so many eggs for our household. Yes, there are plenty who would like to come. Even old Bull would not hesitate for a moment if he could be of use – it will also be an anxious and distressing time for those who will remain. Food they have for survival, but seal and penguin would hardly be first-class food in the long run. (Besides there would be personalities who would be difficult as time goes by.)

In the evenings we have been reading aloud about the *Fram* expedition, but it hurts to hear about the beautiful food they had that Nordahl mentions several times. Things like cauliflower, pear puree, oxtail soup and chocolates. But we have renounced that, God knows. But then we have albatross eggs, and they are good. However, now they [96] are also coming to an end. Seal and penguins will go out to sea and then perhaps foodstuffs will be a bit poor for the fellows who remain. Poor things. However, we have hung up a lot of meat to dry and, even if it smells a bit, it is still food. They are now also going to start fishing and will get mussels from the seabed, and then they will manage, no doubt. Yesterday we collected a boatload of penguins – one hundred and thirteen – so that was a big kill. The mate,

Koren, Thiis and the steward skinned and hung them for drying; able seaman Lysacker made meat cakes for those of us who are setting out sailing. We have some to start off with so that we can save our precious provisions.

Hammering is ringing out merrily from our workshop over near the boat. It is the carpenter at work, now putting the finishing touches on the job. The rig has been erected and the sails positioned. So now it only remains to put the boat on the water and get in place ballast, water and provisions. Then we sail tomorrow, God willing. Bull will keep this book and, if it goes home without me, then you will get it at home at Store Ree, too.

So I will say thank you times without end to Mother, Grandmother, brothers and sisters, because you have always been so good to me who so little deserved your love. Give my greeting to Kristine also and thank her for everything. *Cathrine* was well and fully insured, so that you will get back the money I borrowed from you. The pay and share that I have coming to me I will ask Bull, in the event of my decease, and in the event that they will be rescued later, to distribute to the crew, my first and perhaps last shipboard crew. They will very well need [97] a few extra shillings, if they ever reach home, that is.

To the comrades who remain at American Bay, Crozet.

~~When today we go out
On the stormy sea
From Crozet's weather-beat isle,
We will take with us the saving God
Who rescued us all
With a smile.~~

~~You who are left
Don't lose heart too fast
We'll be back, God willing, quite soon,
If the rescue is late
And the mood does deflate
Keep humming your happiest tune.~~

~~You know that we strive
As hard as we can
To rescue you all pronto,
If we die on the sea
Each of us three
We have fought our mightiest foe.~~

~~If we do not arrive
If our boat does us fail
Rest assured you will get away yet,
Take greetings to home
Say our duty we did
And say it was happily met.*~~

[98] *Thursday 10-1-1907*

Rain constantly since last night and today storm from northwest. Oh no, it would be difficult to get out against this wind. We'll have to wait for a better chance. Bull dreamt last night that my sisters were on board and said goodbye to me. But as I am not a dream interpreter I don't know if it is to be interpreted for the good or the bad. Perhaps rather the last. Beef is so sweet these days – so affectionate and happy.

* This poem is crossed out in the diary.

He is having such a good time here. Just imagine being able to hunt a herd of big mountains of sea-elephants or to get a penguin fleeing wildly and pursue it down to the beach out of frenzy and rage. Then Beef stops and thinks that he has done his duty. But I do hope that I will get him back home to Fredheim.*

We are taking the boat off its scaffold today and getting everything completed so that we can leave as soon as the wind turns for the better. The floor in the living quarters was swimming in water this morning when we woke up, but now they are going to get the roof properly watertight as soon as we have got going, because then they will have more time for such domestic occupations. There has been so much striving and running around for everybody during the last month's work on the boat, so there has been little time to think about anything else.

I just about think they will be glad to get rid of us soon. Just getting a boat out of the water here is a great task. It always has to be pulled up high on the sandy beach so that the undercurrent won't take it out to sea. Then all hands are necessary to pull the heavy boat foot by foot up onto land and the same way out again. Our dinghy is still on the reef. There has not been sufficiently calm water to get it in here yet. Two of the men are talking about making a little flat-bottomed boat to row for wood and to fish [99] from if they can't retrieve the other one.

Friday 11-1-1907

Today fine brilliant weather. All men up and at work at 5

* Fredheim is where Anders' sister Cathrine and her husband Simon Thorbjørnsen lived, in Stange, Norway.

o'clock this morning. Our boat, *Hope*, is on the water now. We took it out on rollers. Now it only remains to get our belongings stowed and then we are off. God be with us!

And then an affectionate greeting to all my dear ones at home, in case this goes badly.

With these words I finish these diary entries and give the book to my splendid old comrade, whom I am also thanking herewith for everything between us, which has been only good and enjoyable.

And Harboe-Ree

[100] AMERICAN BAY, 29 JANUARY, 1907*

Dear Captain Anders Harboe-Ree,
Dear young friend,

Only today have I found enough strength to sit down in earnest with the intention of writing you a long letter (one more). Your words of parting to us I had to let Thiis read, as it surpassed my strength. I thank you from here from all of us and then I thank you for myself so very much for your friendly and understanding mention of me. I was always glad when I understood that we were in harmony together, and I repeat here what I have so often written and said, that the three months on board in your company will always belong to my dearest memories. The shipwreck not included. And I will have to put up with the fact that you called me nervous and that you don't really think that I fit on board a renewed vessel. I cannot expect of course that you would be able to fully understand the sentiments that governed me early and late on our trip. But it is my wish, through this, to give you a reasonable explanation for the reasons that drove me – irresistibly – out of my dear precious home where I could live without cares, so to speak, for the time that I can expect to have left on earth.

I should tell you here that, when as a young unmarried man I started my business in Tonsberg,[†] then life could seldom have looked more promising for anybody than it did for me. Closely related as I

* This entry was written by Bull.

† This is how Bull wrote Tønsberg.

was to the most well-to-do and well-placed families in the town, business was just play; in addition to this, there was the peculiar facility that I had for work, and the many good talents as well that *a good God* had bestowed on me, so that within just a few years I had amassed many thousands of crowns. But something got in the way! In the boom period in the seventies, when the boom came to [101] our fishing town, there developed a life of parties and clubs that became a real ruin for us young people. With my great humour and happy disposition, and with an ever well-filled purse, it was not difficult for me to keep my circle of friends together, and it happened to me as it has happened to so many before me and will happen to so many after me: parties and friends became the *most important*. Business and home came as number two and number three. The results were then also the usual: a gradual decline in income, loss of trust, and in short, after sixteen years had gone by, all that I had owned, including the essential part of my wife's estate, had completely disappeared. Certainly the biggest part was lost through unlucky speculation, but this would not have been of great importance had my business affairs not otherwise been neglected. But by then, thank God, I had also woken up. You know yourself how just about hopeless it is to be able to regain a lost position in the home country, especially when it has been lost under conditions like mine. After conferring with my precious and beloved wife, I took off for Australia one fine day, while I made myself the promise that either I would conquer the compulsive passion that

had got control over me at home, or else I would go under in a fight down there, in the foreign country, instead. So then I started a life, which at least as far as the first five years were concerned, was a life on a knife's edge, with loneliness, poverty and deprivation, with ups and downs, but never without *hope!* You will understand yourself what this means for a man of forty-three years who has lived in his past in affluence and luxury. When he then has to go and seek his living with work as hard as timber-felling, digging, farmwork, and so on, especially when his physical strength is as weak as mine. Of course, I often suffered, but my exceptional health and my great humour maintained me. When I finally felt [102] sure of myself, I sought and got favourable positions within Melbourne's business world, and the worst was then over. My selfless elder son came to me about this time and, after staying for one and a half years, he went home and wanted me to go with him. I therefore resigned from my present or rather, my then good position, which anyway, was held open for me for a year, in case I should wish to return. But then there remained the question of how my fortune could be won back! I have told you about, and you have read about, my voyage with *Antarctic*, and that probably would also have been an opening if old Foyne the financier had not died during that trip. His death put a stop to any further development of the voyaging that was started with *Antarctic*. And now you would also know about the work that I have done in vain since 1895, that is to say, in fully eleven years, to try to head southward again, where it has

been my conviction, for this entire time, that the desired fortune would lie. So then, at long last, this expedition with *Cathrine* became a reality. For this I thank you not the least, who so confidently put your many crowns into the project. I was especially happy to get a young man like you, when I understood that once your interest in the project had been aroused, you would have enough courage and energy to follow it through. Certainly, you had put a lot into this business, but with your 25 years and your well-to-do family and your good courage, your investment could be regained, even in the worst circumstances. The situation was quite different for me, however. It was a case of either or. Either it must succeed or all hope of being able to get something together again at the age of sixty-two would be totally extinguished. Right from the day when the project with *Cathrine* started – during the long period that passed before everything was got in order to depart – during the voyage out but especially during our few hunting days, I constantly pondered over the exciting question, [103] ‘Will I succeed this time?’ Would this be an end at last to my many years of dependence and pecuniary worries? Perhaps *now* my so-deeply-missed and once-possessioned independence could be regained? And first and last: imagine if I could repay my debt to my wife for her great *contribution*?

And then, when the hunting lay before us there in American Bay and I *saw* ‘Canaan’s Land with milk and honey’, was it then so strange, dear Ree, if an old man with a past like mine should become what you call nervous? Yes, I am willing to admit that the

wish burnt in me every day: if only we were already finished here and with a full load aboard. And when the barometer fell and the bad weather hung threateningly over the hills, then the excitement and the fear rose in me with double strength that my great hope would slip away, this time as well. We both know now that my worries were not unfounded. I wish I'd said to you, at the time, that it was not so much for my *life* that I was afraid, although I would dearly love to die at home amongst or with my own instead of out in the world, but I thought it would be *so hard* after all my struggles to be so near the goal and then be taken away before the goal had been reached. With your good heart, I know that now you will excuse the unpleasantness that I unwittingly often caused with my 'nervousness'.

Then, when I stood that unhappy day on the beach, how my great hope collapsed with *Cathrine's* wreck on the reef. Then a bitterness the likes of which I have never felt in my life overcame me, because the bitterness was directed against my God and Maker, against Him who in all these years not only preserved my *life* so amazingly, but – and this means a great deal more for me – had also let me keep my character from my youth. [104] The main traits of which, I dare claim, are a friendly inclination to others and a good kindness for and towards everybody. But I should make you aware that I am not mentioning these traits in order to praise *myself*; because it has been clear to me for many years that Man has nothing of either outer or inner advantages, except as gifts from a loving Maker. Therefore I

cannot ever see young or old people boasting in one form or another, whether it be of fortune, standing, talents, or other attributes, except in a ridiculous light, and their behaviour as the height of stupidity I did overcome my bitterness then, soon enough, and could say thank you from my heart because we *all* were saved! But still I could not, and still cannot, understand the Lord's meaning in letting me get so far with my plans only to just *show* me the riches I wished for so much. It was like saying to me: Look, but don't touch. It seems to me that He might have stopped me in so many ways, but far be it from me to rebuke the Lord, for He has shown me altogether too much mercy and charity. It is, however, so extremely difficult, you see, to resign in the world, to give up what stands for one as a good and practicable idea, and I realise that I still cannot abandon the thought of regaining my independence through hunting in the south. But you *must* live, dear Captain Ree! As I say in my diary – God, you *must* hold your hand over the boat, you *must* save me from finding myself in the position of having to blame myself for being the cause of these three young people sacrificing all and going to their downfall for my sake. I fear that my faith would be shaken to its foundation, and I do not understand how I could ever go home without you having safely reached your harbour. And with that hope and with that faith [105] that we will meet again in life, we will have to work again with a renewed eagerness; *together* we can achieve much. Individually it would be harder for us both. And with this I finish, with the wish that we will see each

other soon! Oh, what a day it will be when we hear the ship's siren in American Bay and see that you are on board. These lines are of course only meant for you, but they contain nothing that anybody else could not read. I have never made any secret of my past. For me it stands with all its shadows as a time inexpressibly rich with mercy and love! Therefore the spirit is never down for long!

Yours ~~affectionately~~ sincerely,

H. J. Bull