

Remarks by G. D. Cartwright for Mr. Beverly Smith, Jr., of the Saturday Evening Post

Further details of the trip from Cape Town to Mirny.

By the second day out I was getting accustomed to the ship and the sea. ~~xxxxxxxx~~
This was my first long sea voyage even though I had done a fair amount of sailing on small boats in the Pacific. So, as a precaution, I took dramamine two or three times a day even though the sea was still moderate and I ~~was~~ apparently was getting along well. The food was so different, however, that I seldom had a vigorous appetite and it was sometimes a bit of a chore to eat a reasonable amount.

The toilet on our side of the ship apparently had no ventilation and I never walked by it or into it but I wasn't nearly overcome. It seems that the plumbing system was old; the ship was 27 years old, and could not handle toilet paper, consequently, the used toilet paper was deposited in a small canister at the side of the commode. This was a ~~bit~~ bit hard on me whenever my stomach was a bit uneasy.

The ship was a ~~55~~ 5600 ton diesel passenger vessel having first, second and third class staterooms and accommodating about 150 passengers plus crew. She was used ~~xxx~~ by the Northern Sea Routes Administration, a large transport group which presumably supplied the logistics for much of the Soviet Union's operations in the Arctic. I believe she was German-built but I'm not absolutely sure about this. I do remember that the diesel engines were of a German manufacture.

The main dining room was on our deck just aft of the staterooms and served by a small kitchen which connected with ^{a secondary} ~~xxxxxxxx~~ kitchen by dumb waiter. The main kitchen apparently was farther aft and food had to be carried across a short space of open deck, down a long passageway, up the stairs and back into the ~~the~~ main dining room; a very inconvenient

arrangement, especially during periods of bad weather. I often watched two of the ~~men~~ stewards lugging a big pot of hot soup across the pitching, sea-swept decks and wondered how they managed.

It was on the third day, I believe, when they said there would be a party that night to welcome the new member of the expedition. I never looked forward to these parties, partly because I didn't like to drink heavily and at this stage I felt very insecure in speaking Russian and not at all sure just what I should say. Nevertheless, the plans went forward with the usual enthusiasm which the Russians seem to have for parties. About ~~six~~ 6:30 Mr. Kunyn told me we would go to the Captain's cabin first. So, I put on my best ~~suit~~ suit, tie, white shirt and went with him at 7 o'clock. The small table in the Captain's cabin was loaded with quite attractive looking dishes, red and black caviar, cheese and ham, a salad, fruit and, of course, many bottles.

The Captain was in fact a light drinker but he always had a good range of drinks from whiskey and gin and rum through all of the usual Russian drinks--vodka, cognac, wine, champagne and so on. The little party followed the pattern which I came to know intimately. Everyone sat down at the table--that is everyone who could get to the table. There were about eight of us, all of them dressed in business suits and looking very tidy. The Captain, I believe, made the first toast. ^{As} ~~he~~ he poured the drinks all around, Kunyn spoke ~~me~~ softly in my ear and urged me to have something ready to eat as soon as the toast was drunk. So I followed the example of the others and got a piece of black bread and spread it with a thick layer of caviar, wondering how I would eat it after the drink. I was a bit concerned over my ability to stay with these men in what seemed to me like what was likely to be a pretty rugged evening. I didn't want to offend them; I didn't want to "let the side down" as it were, but I was really more concerned that I should become incapacitated and

make a real fool of myself. This I was determined not to do at any event.

So the first toast was proposed by the Captain, a very simple, friendly toast, welcoming me on board and ~~hoping for~~ ^{wishing me} a successful association with the expedition and a pleasant, safe voyage to Antarctica. It was considered bad taste not to drink the whole drink when a toast was offered, but I did notice from time to time that some of the Russians rarely drank the whole toast. This was the exception but it often applied to the Captain. This was understandable ^{since} ~~since~~ he was, in fact, always on duty so long as the ship was at sea and as he told me later, he felt as the host it was excusable since if anyone should be sober at the end of the party it was the host since he had the responsibility for ensuring that the rest of the guests were properly taken care of.

Then Dr. Shumsky, I believe, ~~was~~ proposed a toast, repeating the welcoming words and wishing me a successful scientific year and expressing their pleasure at having the possibility of working with an American scientist. I appreciated his remarks because somehow I felt they were completely sincere, not that I had any doubts about what the Captain said but somehow Shumsky's phrasing, as well as I understood it, appealed to me. Incidentally, Kunyn; who sat beside me, helped on the interpretation wherever he felt I ~~wasn't~~ wasn't getting the sense or where I asked him to clear up a point.

I worried as to how I would phrase my own toast and when I should make it. This was always a problem; I ~~didn't~~ often found difficulty in deciding what was appropriate to say, having such a limited command of the language and overawed ~~me~~ by the wonderful ease with which they seemed able to put their words together. It was rare when you found a Russian who couldn't, on the spur of the moment, make a pleasant statement or propose a warm, often

elaborate toast. After I proposed my toast I remember Kunyn urging me to eat--eat, eat, you must eat, you must eat. He seemed to appreciate the position I was in and was anxious that I should get through the evening with flying colors apparently. As I said, I was not completely easy with him at that time but we later became very good friends and I learned to respect him very much, to love his vast sense of humor and amazing ability with the English language. But that was to come, my suspicions and prejudices were still quite strong, I had very much the feeling of being on guard.

After about an hour during which the Captain played some modern music, jazz, on his rather good phonograph, someone finally said "We must go to the restaurant, everyone is waiting." I was feeling a little light headed by the time we got up to leave and wondered how much more of this I could stand. I suppose we had had four straight drinks--vodka, cognac, or whatever seemed to be appropriate--by the time we left the Captain's cabin. The restaurant looked very attractive with the tables especially decorated, each one with its quota of bottles--vodka, champagne, cognac. These were, in fact, the three standard drinks on practically every party. The men were all standing as we came in. The group of leaders that I was with broke up into two tables and the men sat down. There was a few minutes of that slight tension, the bottles were all opened and drinks poured. This time Dr. Shumsky made the first toast. It was a rather long one but as clearly as I understood it I appreciated it. He spoke about the broad objectives of the IGY and the cooperation between various countries in the Antarctic program and the opportunity they had to work closely with an American scientist. He wished the expedition a successful year and hoped that I, too, would profit and enjoy the work together. I felt it desirable to respond to this toast at once rather than waiting until others had toasted and also because I wasn't sure

how much more I could stand and still stand.

This was my first toast before the whole group. I felt completely inadequate. There were many things I would like to have said but felt I couldn't. Finally I apologized for my weakness in Russian which I hoped to overcome with their help. I thanked Dr. Shumsky for his kind words and then said that if they would excuse me I would continue in English and ask Mr. Kunyn to translate. They didn't seem to mind seeing that I had tried and ~~xx~~ said a few words, which they always enjoyed ~~because~~ because it showed interest and was oftentimes amusing to hear a foreigner speak Russian, I don't think many of them had often heard this. They chuckled, I am sure, at my choice of words and peculiar accent.

So I carried on in English telling a little bit about the arrangements for my being there and how I shared Dr. Shumsky's views that through this international collaboration sponsored under the IGY we could learn a great deal more than if we undertook these things separately. And I closed by expressing the desire that our life together in the Antarctic would be pleasant and profitable on both sides.. There were two or three other toasts from the head table and by that time people were beginning to warm up to the party and the toasting began to move like wildfire through all the tables so that it was almost impossible to keep up with it and I realized I never would unless I took urgent precautions. But somehow I managed through the evening--I'm not quite sure how, but I was able to get back to the ~~the~~ cabin ~~k~~ and the next day able to be up and about with the rest of them. This pleased the Russians and I felt I had gotten over the first ~~hurdle~~ hurdle successfully.

We were now getting into the strong westerlies which become the Roaring Forties and as the windes picked up my difficulty seemed to increase. Also we were approaching the New Year's celebration. I didn't look forward to this at all since many of them told with

great glee how big a celebration this was going to be. Having seen a ~~much~~ comparatively small and dignified celebration I was somewhat apprehensive. It turned out that by the 31st of December we were ~~will~~ into the Roaring Forties and in a very vigorous part. I had never seen such ~~xxx~~ tremendous waves. Several of us more adventurous types were on deck as much of the time as it was safe to be on deck and there were lots of friendly arguments about the force of the wind and the height of the waves. Of course they carried on regular weather observations throughout the voyage, including the ~~xxxxxx~~ regular release of radiosonde balloons to get upper wind and temperature data.

There wasn't extremely heavy rains with these winds, in fact, on one day the sky was virtually clear but the waves were absolutely frightening. I was sure they were higher than the ship had ever encountered and wondered whether she would survive. This was, I suppose, common with anyone who hasn't been through such an experience. Also, we were very heavily loaded with deck cargo which tends to make a ship unstable and she rolled at an alarming speed and to such a degree that I ~~x~~ often wondered about it. I remember one afternoon sitting on the very narrow deck just behind the restaurant with feet firmly braced against the wall in the little wicker chairs wedged in between stanchions so they wouldn't slide from one side of the ship to the other as she rolled and I could scarcely believe that the ship could ride these waves. We were sailing almost parallel to them so that they approached us on the beam. ~~2~~ When we were a trough the waves surely were 60 feet high, towering well above, it seemed to me, the highest part of the ship. As they rolled toward us I felt every time that she would never rise, that the wave would just roll right over us. But, of course, they didn't, except in one or two instances when caught in a particular kind of swell with possibly the wave breaking at the wrong time several of them did wash straight across the ship, the gunwales and all submerged in foaming green water. This scared me so much that I finally thought I'd better go inside. ~~xxxxxxx~~

I didn't like the way they made the beds. They had not only two pillows but a g big wedge which tended to raise your head rather high. I was always always accustomed to sleeping almost flat in a bed with a small pillow. So I at first tried to take this thing out but later when we got into these heavy rolling seas I found it necessary, otherwise, ~~xxxxxx~~ since we slept across the ship you'd be virtually standing on your head when the ship rolled and sliding against the bulkhead with a terrific bang. During the night you often heard things coming adrift and crashing into the bulkhead, people jumping up. Kunyn always ~~xxxxxx~~ seemed to be concerned with these things, running out in the night to correct some situation. He seemed to have such an important role to play that I was sure this was because he was some special agent in a sense and he always talked about his boys. I later found out he was in charge of the construction crew and took direct control over these younger chaps who were going down just for the summer period to finish the building of the base. I mention this just to illustrate the effect that prejudices can have on your judgement.

Well, g because of the heavy storm it was decided that we would postpone the New Year's celebration until we got into quieter waters--postpone the formal celebration I should say because they just couldn't resist having parties. Each cabin seemed to get a certain amount of liquor and I was being dragged from one cabin to another--that is I would have been if I hadn't protested with the utmost of vigor. Bykk this time I was just on the very verge of being seasick. After dinner we went up into the lounge--overstuffed ~~ix~~ chairs and tables for playing chess and checkers--I found sitting up there trying to carry on a conversation very unnerving and gradually the feeling of nausea took hold in earnest. So, I went back to my cabin ~~ixing~~ thinking I would ~~ixxx~~ lie down. Some of the pilots caught sight of me

and dragged me off to their cabin where they had some wine—red champagne it was. I wouldn't admit I was seasick and said I'd prefer not but they wouldn't hear of this so they began to pour out the glasses of champagne and drink it down in one big swallow followed by oranges or chocolate or sausage or anything they happened to have in their cabin. After a couple of these the Captain came in and they insisted that he drink with him, following which he insisted that we go up to his cabin. Before we managed that I had to rush off to that terrible-smelling, stinking toilet where I got rid of a mixture of meat and drink and fruit and staggered back to the cabin and started all over again. The Captain's cabin was crowded with people having a great time, the ship lurching at all angles, ~~knocking~~ throwing people down. I got ~~me~~ back on to the divan where I could brace my feet and sort of hold on to the table.

The toasting continued. Everyone was quite gay, anxious to toast me and to have me toast them. After each drink I seemed to ~~me~~ be able to make it to the Captain's toilet and get rid of the stuff. I have always had great difficulty in ~~vomiting~~ vomiting and after two or three sessions of this my throat was raw and pretty hoarse. So, as soon as I ~~me~~ could possibly break away I struggled back to the cabin and went to bed feeling I had all/^{of} the New Year's celebration and the Russians that I could possibly stand and wishing thoroughly that I was back out of this situation.

As soon ~~XXXXX~~ the seas quieted down a little bit and as soon as people recovered from the actual New Year's Day they had the big celebration— and it was a big celebration. It was held in the ~~x mix~~ main dining room for the members of the expedition and went along at a terrific pace. One of the biologists, an extremely sharp fellow with a satiric tongue, yet a very keen sense of humor, had written a lot of anecdotes and special messages which he

read over the microphone to the delight and hilarity of everyone. Of course I had to say something over the microphone and managed somehow even though I was getting pretty foggy about what was going on. Then, after a couple of hours of this everyone adjourned to the musical salon where the little band they had organized on the way took over. There was dancing and singing, everybody having a merry time. I don't dance and didn't particularly look forward to this sort of thing. Then one of the young sailors corraled me and dragged me up on the next deck where some of the crew--I guess they were technicians, radio men, tractor drivers and things like that of the expedition--were having their party. There was no separation between these--no rigid separation--it was just a matter of space. One of the boys was playing an accordion and all the women members of the crew were having a wonderful time. A big strong Russian girl of about 20, oh maybe about 24, was playing, an honest looking girl, she seemed quite light hearted, suddenly caught my arm and the next thing I knew I was whirling around that deck like mad.

Fortunately she was, as I say, a big strong girl and I didn't have anything to do but hold on. ~~Everybody~~ Everybody got a tremendous bang out of this--so did I when we wound up against the bulkhead. But it helped to relieve the sense of tension. When we got back down in the main musical salon she repeated the performance; what with the carpeting on the floor all rumped up, the rolling of the ship, ~~too much~~ too much alcohol, and a pair of heavy Navy boots on I couldn't possibly have done worse but she seemed to like it as did all the others--taking pictures like mad. Finally the night ended and everybody got to bed before dawn I suppose.

Well, these things are tough but they somehow helped to break down the barriers and the next few days there were lots of comments about our parties and people chuckled over some

of the things that happened.

We were now moving into the colder part of the voyage. There is what is called the "Antarctic Convergence", which is a rather irregular line stretching more or less continuously around the Antarctic seas and a moderately sharp boundary between the subtropical airs to the North and the colder Antarctic or sub-Antarctic air on the continent side of the line. So everyone began to blossom out in one kind or another of their Antarctic clothing. Several of the members who were more interested in English and had some ability in speaking English would get together with me almost every day to have little conversations in English and I in Russian. This was, of course, very helpful and it was helpful in a practical and it ~~xx~~ also began to build the friendships which were to prove so satisfying during the course of the expedition. Unfortunately, two or three of this small group only stayed the summer and I was very sorry to see them leave as the ships departed. One in particular, Boris Bakhartov, ^{became} ~~was~~ a very good friend. I found him wonderful comfort because I could communicate with him and we seemed to hit it off right from the very beginning. He was a geologist but it turned out that there was so little exposed rock in the area in which the expedition was working that there wasn't too much for him to do so he didn't stay.

The chief seismologist, Fyedsenko, I believe, also was rather good at English and enjoyed talking about books and science and was quite helpful in correcting my miserable Russian. There were from time to time little parties but people were now looking forward with keen anticipation to seeing the Antarctic for the first time. They did have several scientific meetings on board which I found extremely interesting. I couldn't follow the discussion directly so Kunyn or one of the English-speaking chaps, Karasick, would interpret during these sessions.

The thing ~~g~~ that impressed me right at the ~~the~~ outset was the freedom of discussion that seemed to prevail. I found these meetings very much like similar ~~the~~ meetings in the United States. This was one of my many prejudices which I gradually lost as ~~kk~~ my association and knowledge grew. I don't mean to suggest that they are just as democratic and free as we are but certainly in these scientific matters there was an unhibited exchange, many ~~of~~ criticisms, some of them quite pointed and sharp, others put in the humorous vein but still with a lot of sense, not simply a joke. These discussions helped very much to get a better grasp of the program because there ~~is~~ usually was a review of the program before the questions and arguments started.

~~the~~ Also I did go to some of the movies. In the first part of the voyage during the warm weather they were held on deck but this soon became impossible and we moved into one of the sort of salons--glassed in salons--on the wing of the ship. Most of the movies I thought were pretty poor. One in particular was the story of a ~~young~~ young ~~in~~ worker in an automobile forging plant. He was all mixed up; in love with a sturdy-looking young engineer, a girl about 22, obviously keen and very progressive, that is in sympathy with the ideas of the state, but the propaganda line was so clear and the human side of the story, or the ^{human} natural/side of the story so weak that ~~the~~ many of the Russians became thoroughly fed up with the film and shook their head in disgust.

The one picture that did appeal to me, however, was a perfectly superb version of "Twelfth Night." I was to see this several times and ~~it~~ ^I never became tired of it. The cast was extremely well chosen and the setting marvelous--in the Caucasus somewhere, with an old castle apparently the ~~principal~~ principal locale. All the actors were outstanding.

I came to see several of them in other quite different roles and was surprised at their range of abilities. The girl who played the part of—I can't think of the name at the moment—was actually a beautiful blonde girl. This girl was the only Russian pin-up I saw all the time I was in Antarctic and then only a very attractive view of her face taken from the "Twelfth Night" film. She was fairly well known as an ~~actress~~ actress but I don't think I saw her in any other pictures but this one.

We were all looking forward to the first iceberg and suddenly one day there was a big commotion, everybody ~~running~~ running from their cabins, grabbing cameras. It was rather distant but a lot of pictures were taken. This scene was repeated many times and I hesitate to say how many hundreds, even thousands, of pictures of icebergs were taken. I took a pretty good share of these. When you go back and look at them you feel you wasted a lot of film. They don't all look alike but there is enough similarity and their magnificence is frequently lost on the film. Most of these bergs are what they call the table iceberg, which is just a huge, flat, almost uniformly flat slab of ice. Some of them have been known to measure almost 100 miles in length. We never saw any of this magnitude but some of them were of pretty staggering proportions. Some tower out of the water possibly 200 feet which means that they must have roughly 1,000 or 1,200 feet beneath the surface. Then there were the old bergs which had been travelling maybe a year or more, very much eroded by the waves and some of the beautifully carved into castles and grottoes and so on. When the seas were high these ones which had broad underwater "foots" as they are called, would cause the waves to rush against the side and break in a gorgeous plume of white surf which sometimes would ~~be~~ shoot as high as the iceberg itself.

Some of the more elaborate shapes it seems are due to the fact that as this erosion by the waves goes on and the melting underneath proceeds, the berg gets ~~more~~ topheavy and

turns over then you see quite extraordinary shapes. The storms seemed to be less in these areas, the ship rode quite comfortably. Finally, just before we reached the ice pack everyone had a great thrill when an Il-12 aircraft from the base flew out to give us our first welcome. This was quite an exciting experience. We were still 500 or 600 miles off the continent and it was apparently just an effort to make us feel welcome and possibly to get a little further information about the best route through the ice pack.

The ice pack is an almost continuous belt of drifting ice which in summer lies off the edge of the continent as much as several hundred kilometers, its outer edge being usually 500 to 700 kilometers from the edge of the Barrier. So it is a kind of white belt of ice ringing most of the continent. Sometimes it is extremely difficult to get through, depending on the way the wind has packed the large ~~pieces~~ pieces of ice together. So, the problem is to find leads and breaks or weak spots in this pack.

It was clear that the Cooperatsia couldn't force her way through this pack alone so we were met by the bigger, heavier ship--heavier and more powerful ship--Ob. She apparently approached some time during the night and we awakened the next morning with great excitement because we were already in the pack. We could tell this even without going outside because one of the things which the ice pack does is to calm the waters. The ice, of course, keeps the wind from acting on the water and unless there is a very severe storm which tends to break the pack up the seas are almost flat. Also we were getting out ~~km~~ of the Forties and into the winds which circulate around off the ~~continent~~ continent and at this time of year they seemed to be comparatively light although, of course, they can be very strong. So, from then on until we actually reached the base ~~xxx~~ we were never troubled by storms or rough seas. Oftentimes we proceeded quite slowly. The pack was fairly tight. Ob had to search out the weaker spots and force its way through with the Cooperatsia following.

It wasn't long before we saw our first seals sunning themselves and sleeping on the drifting pans of ice. And then, to the delight of everyone, the little Adelle penguins. On seeing the ship they all ~~rushed~~ rushed to the nearest side of the pan and then as the ship approached they all rushed back away from us, squawking and flapping their wings. ~~Everybody~~ Everybody on deck snapping pictures as fast as they could.

It was clear we were certainly very near the continent now. As we approached closer to the base the ice became continuous; it had breaks in it but these were in comparison to the unbroken areas, in the minority. So here Ob had to search out the channel by which she had come away from the base. These channels shift and close depending on the movement of the ice under the influence of both wind and current. The last day was very slow going. We had already sighted the continent ~~example~~ the day before, gleaming, low down on the horizon in the brilliant sun. It was hard to tell that it was a continent; it looked very much like a soft cloud—a thick layer of cloud—but if you looked through glasses you could see the shadows of higher clouds on the surface. Yes, it was no doubt, this was Antarctica; a real thrill to see it for the first time.

On the 10th of January we were in sight of the base through glasses—just a few little brown spots way down on the horizon against the white gleaming ice sheet. At 10 o'clock at night after weaving our way in and out of the ice, occasionally finding spots of open water, the Captain shut off the engines. There was Mirny about a kilometer distant. Ob pulled up several hundred yards to the west of us. She would, in the course of the next few days, break a more suitable berth but this was where we stopped for the moment. The big ship looked unreal as though it had been cut off at the bottom and someone had set it on this white, unbroken surface of ice.

Soon a ladder was lowered over the side of the Ob and 10 or 12 of the men, heavily garbed and wearing high Russian boots and carrying long poles to probe for holes and soft spots in the ice, came walking over to the Cooperatsia. There was much shouting and arguing, a ladder was lowered over the side of the Cooperatsia and in a few moments they were all on board, throwing their arms around their old friends and kissing them on the mouth, which quite staggered me at first. They seemed very warm-hearted people. Of course, some of these friends hadn't seen each ~~one~~ other in five or six months and it was a grand welcome. But there was no party. We were faced with the ~~impossible~~ tough job of unloading and getting settled as quickly as possible so everyone could do his full share of the heavy summer workload.

Ob couldn't hang around very long because she had lots of oceanographic work to do along the edge of the continent. Lena was already somewhere to the west of us on this program; Ob would work the area a bit farther out.

But here we were. This was Antarctica and I was a little apprehensive—apprehensive ~~isn't~~ ~~isn't~~ quite the word. I had come to feel somewhat at home on the ship; now I'd be faced with a lot of new Ivans and Alexanders and ~~Borises~~ **Borises** and a new set of problems. The next day—I guess the same night, since it was light all night—several of our men went ashore meeting old friends and getting the lay of the land, as it were. They came back and I saw them next day saying they had seen my room which they said was very nice and when was I going ashore? I didn't quite ~~know~~ know, I assumed I should wait until the chief told me to go ashore. It was a matter of several days before everything was in order. I'd like to talk about that a little further on the next side of this tape.