

From The Introduction of
*Antarctic Obsession; A personal narrative of the origins of
the British National Antarctic Expedition 1901-1904*
by Sir Clements Markham, edited and introduced by Clive
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I

THE CAREER of Sir Clements Markham is almost unique in providing a living and active connection between several of the most outstanding periods of British polar exploration spanning nearly three-quarters of a century. As he is swift to point out in this *Personal Narrative*, he was acquainted with members of Sir James Clark Ross's pioneering Antarctic expedition of 1839-43 which discovered Ross Island and Victoria Land – regions which were to become the focus of Markham's attention in later life. He had no other direct connection with this expedition, however, for he was only nine years old when it sailed. His own first experience of polar exploration was in another major period of discovery: the search for Sir John Franklin's missing North-west Passage expedition of 1845-8, during which, over some 12 years, much of the Canadian Arctic archipelago was explored for the first time. His role was a modest one, as a midshipman on the *Assistance* during Captain H. T. Austin's search expedition of 1875-6, but the experience was evidently enough to confirm his enduring interest in the polar regions. His next Arctic role, to which he also refers in the *Personal Narrative*, was in the organization of the British Arctic Expedition of 1875-6, the primary objects of which were the attainment of the North Pole and the exploration of northern Greenland and Ellesmere Island. Markham accompanied the expedition as a guest as far as south-west Greenland. Finally came his long campaign for the renewal of Antarctic exploration, which had lapsed since Ross's voyage. The culmination of that campaign was the launching of the National Antarctic Expedition of 1901-4 – the subject of this *Narrative* – and of its sequel, the British Antarctic Expedition of 1910-13 (better known as Scott's last expedition). Few men of his time could claim such prolonged involvement in polar affairs. His direct experience of the polar regions was sparse beside that of such contemporaries as Sir Leopold McClintock or Sir Vesey Hamilton, or of Sir William Parry or Sir George Back of an earlier era, all of whom, like Markham, became distinguished advisors on polar exploration in later life: but none quite had Markham's campaigning instincts or his flair for background organization and intrigue, and none wrote so prolifically

as he on polar matters. Thus, when we are confronted with Markham's previously unpublished, indeed largely private, reminiscences on the organization of the expedition closest to his heart, they merit our attention not only as a new and detailed account of the planning of this major Antarctic expedition, but also as an illuminating record of the thoughts and workings of one of the most remarkable of all promoters of polar exploration. It is with that in mind that Sir Clements Markham's *Personal Narrative* of the National Antarctic Expedition of 1901-4 has now been prepared for publication.

Clements Robert Markham was born 20 July, 1830 at Stillingfleet in Yorkshire, second son of the Reverend David F. Markham, Vicar of Stillingfleet, and of Catherine Frances Nannette Markham, née Milner. In 1838 the family moved to Great Horkeley in Essex, where Markham's father had become Rector. When nearly nine years old Markham was sent to preparatory school at Cheam. There, according to his biographer and cousin, Albert Hastings Markham, he read the narratives of Parry's Arctic voyages which instilled in him his great interest in polar exploration. There, too, he first exercised a lifelong practice by writing a short description of each of his fellow pupils and masters; later he would continue the habit with potted biographies of all his shipmates in the navy, with *Arctic Navy List* (London and Portsmouth, 1875), and in this present narrative with a short account of all the men of *Discovery*.

Markham left Cheam in April 1842 and in the following month he entered his secondary education at Westminster School. He remained at Westminster for only two years, for in May, 1844 Rear-Admiral Sir George Seymour, a Lord of the Admiralty and a friend of Markham's aunt, the Countess of Mansfield, invited him to join the Royal Navy. Markham accepted, and on 28 June, 1844 he travelled to Portsmouth to enrol as a Naval Cadet. His first ship was Sir George Seymour's flagship HMS *Collingwood* which, on 20 July, Markham's 14th birthday, set sail for a tour of the Pacific station, where Seymour was Commander-in-Chief. The voyage lasted four years and took in visits to Chile and Peru, the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), Tahiti and Mexico. Halfway through the voyage, on 28 June, 1846, Markham was advanced to the rank of midshipman. The voyage appears to have left Markham with a mixture of both pleasurable and disagreeable impressions. On the one hand he enjoyed the comradeship of his messmates and made many friends; he also revelled in the experience of visiting distant places and developed a keen interest in geography. On the other hand he was less than content with some of the harsher aspects of naval discipline, not least when they rebounded against him. At times when particularly angered by some incident he would become moody, rebellious and neglectful of his duties, which in turn more than once earned him a rebuke from his commander. Those characteristics of moodiness and rebelliousness in the face of some real or imagined injustice seem to have stayed with him for the rest of his life. So, indeed, did his distaste for excessively harsh discipline: some 40 years later he initiated a campaign for the abolition of flogging in the navy. On his return home in 1848 he told his father of his dissatisfaction and expressed a wish to leave the

service, but for the time being he was persuaded not to.

Markham's next appointment was on HMS *Sidon* on the Mediterranean station, but his service there was of only short duration and by the end of March 1849 he was back at Portsmouth. There then followed a full year of inactivity on board HMS *Superb* lying at anchor at Spithead and in Cork Harbour. The experience served only to strengthen Markham's resolve to leave the navy. While at Cork, however, he had the pleasure of meeting Sherard Osborn, an old messmate from the *Collingwood*, who was then awaiting an appointment to command HMS *Pioneer* on an expedition to the Canadian Arctic in search of Sir John Franklin. Osborn succeeded in firing Markham's enthusiasm for the venture, and promised to use such influence as he had to secure an appointment for Markham also. In consequence, Markham was appointed as midshipman to HMS *Assistance*, Captain Erasmus Ommanney, in a fleet of four ships commanded by Captain Horatio Austin.

The expedition sailed on 4 May, 1850. In preparation for his forthcoming experience Markham read every Arctic book that he could lay hands on, and soon became known as an authority on Arctic history. The ships wintered in Barrow Strait in the heart of the Canadian Arctic islands, and in the spring of 1851 man-hauling sledge parties searched in all directions for traces of the Franklin expedition. Though unsuccessful in its main object, the expedition discovered several hundred miles of new coastline, and in any other circumstances might have been considered an outstanding success. For Markham, few experiences could have been better suited to his tastes. There was not only the excitement of discovery but also, just as important to him, there was the camaraderie and enthusiasm of colleagues united in a common cause, the team spirit and discipline of the sledge parties, and a winter routine which gave full rein to his creative talents. He contributed regularly to the winter newspaper, took part in the theatricals, and played a leading role in the programme of school lessons and lectures. There is no doubt that this expedition permanently shaped Markham's thoughts on how a polar expedition ought to be conducted, and consequently shaped the organization of Antarctic expeditions that were still 50 years in the future.

Despite his evident enjoyment of the Arctic expedition in all its aspects, after his return home in October 1851 Markham determined to carry out his resolve to leave the navy. There may appear to be something contradictory in his choosing to leave at a time when his enjoyment of the service was at its height, but A. H. Markham advances the view that it was just at this point that the prospect of returning to the harsher discipline of regular service must have appeared most oppressive to him. He valued the many good friends he had made in the navy, and to the end of his days he was to champion the belief that the only proper polar expedition was one conducted by highly skilled and disciplined naval officers, yet the unpleasantness of some aspects of routine naval life – A. H. Markham cites in particular the excessive punishments inflicted on the men – were clearly not to his liking. So, after passing his gunnery examinations on 24 December, 1851, he withdrew from the navy.

1852-3 Markham conducted an expedition to Peru to study both its geography

and the history of the Incas. For several years thereafter he worked at the India Office in London. In that period he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society on 27 November, 1854, and on 23 April, 1857 he married Minna Chichester. His work at the India Office drew to his attention the prevalence of malaria on the subcontinent, which led, him to conceive a plan to carry seeds and saplings of the cinchona tree from South America to India in order to provide a local source of quinine. Consequently, at the request of the Secretary of State for India, Markham and four companions left for different parts of South America to collect the plants in December, 1859. Markham himself chose to return to Peru, and remained there for the first six months of 1860 successfully gathering cinchona in the face of much hardship and local opposition: he had virtually to smuggle his precious collection out of the country. The cinchona venture might have been the high point of any man's career. It was the first major step towards the control of malaria in India, and would alone have secured his place in history. Yet at its conclusion Markham was still only 30 years old and he still had some 50 years of achievement before him.

When he had finally completed his part in the project and returned to England in April, 1861, Markham was appointed private secretary to the Secretary of State for India. He also rose to prominence at the Royal Geographical Society, where in 1863 he was made Honorary Secretary. He retained that position for 25 years until his retirement in 1888. For several years after his return from India he was fully occupied by his work at the India Office and by the publication of various geographical works, and his next appointment overseas was not until 1867-8, when he was engaged as geographer to a British military expedition to Abyssinia. For his services in that campaign, and for his work in India, he was created a Companion of the Bath on 17 May, 1871. He became a KCB in 1896 in recognition of his geographical work.

On his return from Abyssinia Markham again devoted much of his spare time to geographical and historical matters, in particular his work for the Royal Geographical and Hakluyt societies. Increasingly, now, his attention was drawn by the polar regions, and especially by a plan to revive British interests in polar exploration, which had lapsed since the ending of the Franklin search in 1859, by sending out a major new Arctic expedition. The build-up towards this expedition has several interesting parallels with the organization of the National Expedition of 1901-4. Both, for example, were preceded by a prolonged campaign to arouse national and government interest, though in this case the prime mover was not so much Markham as his old friend Sherard Osborn, who first read a paper at the Royal Geographical Society in 1865 arguing for the exploration of the unknown region around the North Pole by way of Smith Sound. In both cases, too, the campaign was supported by the Royal Geographical Society which unsuccessfully approached the government for financial support. Then came the organization of a joint committee of the Royal Geographical and Royal societies, on which Markham served for both expeditions, followed by a final and successful appeal for government support. In the case of the Arctic expedition of 1875-6 the government decided upon a full-scale naval expedition financed entirely by the Treasury, so its final preparation was taken out of the hands of the

two societies and entrusted to a committee of three naval officers and Arctic veterans, Osborn, F. L. McClintock and G. H. Richards. Markham nevertheless continued to busy himself with details of equipment and manning, and he was rewarded for his perseverance by an invitation from the officers to accompany the expedition as far as Greenland. The expedition, commanded by Captain George S. Nares on HMS *Alert* and *Discovery*, sailed on 29 May, 1875. Markham left it at Disko Island and returned home on the tender *Valorous*. The two expedition ships wintered at the northern end of Ellesmere Island, and in spring 1876 sledge parties explored the northern coasts of Ellesmere Island and Greenland. An attempt on the North Pole, led by A. H. Markham, failed badly, reaching only 83°20'26"N. Moreover, by the summer of 1876 the expedition was badly afflicted with scurvy, so on its return home later that year its undoubted successes were somewhat overshadowed by its shortcomings. In retrospect, its lack of greater success is hardly surprising. The restraining hand of the Arctic veterans on the organizing committees, Markham among them, ensured that the expedition was almost a carbon copy of those fine old expeditions of the 1850s, with little advance in either equipment or technique. There were the same great, heavy man-hauled sledges that rendered impossible any hope of reaching the Pole. There was the same old winter routine, the same sledge flags and mottoes to invoke the same rather laboured esprit de corps so beloved by Markham. And there was scurvy, the curse that had destroyed the Franklin expedition of 1848, a result of overdependence on preserves and too much faith in lime juice. It was as if nothing had been learned in the intervening 25 years, and the longevity of some of those Arctic veterans of the '50s was to ensure that little more would be learned in the next 25 years before the despatch of the National Antarctic Expedition.

Administration and scholarly works were now increasingly Markham's main preoccupations, though he still travelled widely, and still had time to indulge in other interests. In the early 1880s he launched his ultimately successful campaign aimed at the ending of flogging in the Royal Navy. It was in the 1880s, too, that he quietly began to lay his plans for the renewal of Antarctic exploration, though it was not until he was rather unexpectedly elected President of the Royal Geographical Society, on 13 November, 1893, that those plans began to take their final shape. On becoming President he almost immediately announced his determination to launch an Antarctic expedition during his term of office, and at his first Council meeting he appointed a committee to report on matters bearing on the despatch of an expedition. The progress of his plans are the subject of his *Personal Narrative*, and some aspects of them are discussed later in this introduction, so there is no need to enlarge on them here.

The expedition was organized very much in the pattern of the large naval expeditions of the 1850s and 1870s with which Markham was so familiar, despite urgent demands from some quarters for a more modern scientific approach. It was led by Commander Robert Falcon Scott, RN, on the specially built ship *Discovery*, and it sailed on 6 August, 1901. Markham had selected as its destination the Ross Sea sector of the Antarctic discovered by James Ross in 1839-43, and it was there, at Hut Point on Ross Island, that Scott set up his winter quarters in January, 1902. From there, sledging parties explored to the south-west

and to the north and one, led by Scott, travelled south over the Ross Ice Shelf to achieve a latitude of 82°17'S, a record for that time. In the summer of 1902-3 *Discovery* remained immovably fast in the ice and, instead of returning to New Zealand as planned, Scott was obliged to spend a second winter in the Antarctic. Further sledge parties explored in Victoria Land in summer 1903. *Discovery* was freed from the ice in February 1904 and joined the relief ships *Morning* and *Terra Nova* for a triumphant return home. Its main results were geographical, geological and biological discoveries in the Victoria Land region, and Markham was later to claim that 'never has any polar expedition returned with so great a harvest of results!' It was, nevertheless, conducted with a minimal scientific staff and its scientific results were modest beside those of some smaller and more efficient expeditions of the same period.

In 1905, after the winding up of the expedition, Markham resigned as President of the RGS. He was now 75 years old and entitled to a less stressful role in the world of exploration and discovery. Yet he continued to write prolifically to the last and to express his views on Antarctic affairs. He willingly collaborated with Scott in the preparations for his second Antarctic expedition, the British Antarctic Expedition of 1910-13, and he lived to learn of its tragic outcome. Markham died on 30 January, 1916 following an accident in which he set light to his bedding while reading by the light of a candle.

II

The *Personal Narrative* which forms the subject of this book is, as readers will quickly realize, more than just an account of the organization of the National Antarctic Expedition of 1901-4; it is a revelation of the inner mind of Markham himself, with all its affection and loyalty for those whom he liked, and all its venomous contempt for those he did not. His cousin Albert Hastings Markham writes endearingly of 'his personal charm and lovable disposition' and of his 'wondrous kindness and sympathy for those in trouble and distress'¹ and the evidence leaves little doubt that he possessed all those qualities. But in matters of polar exploration, when some instinct invariably told him that only he was right, he could be as obsessive, obstinate and cantankerous as any man in pursuit of his own ends. One could even agree with Roland Huntford's assessment that 'he had developed mild *folie de grandeur*. He believed he had a prescriptive right to control Antarctic exploration'², except that in this case it was not all Antarctic exploration he sought to control, but just one expedition. (Although he certainly did aspire to a wider control, and was brutally scornful of such men as Borchgrevink, Bruce, Shackleton and Amundsen who saw fit to organize Antarctic expeditions without his authority.)

Thus it must be stated, though the warning is hardly necessary, that this is very much a one-sided view of the origins of the expedition. That is not to say that it is inaccurate, and it is not the purpose of this introduction to redress the balance in every instance where Markham appears to express his mind unfairly. The necessary balance is provided in the appendices to this book, where Markham's

adversaries are allowed to have their say.

Much of Markham's narrative is an occasionally tetchy but otherwise straightforward account of the planning and first stages of the National Antarctic Expedition. The rest is given over to a very personal view of the various committees appointed to organize the expedition, most notably the Joint Committee of the Royal Society (RS) and the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). If Markham's colourful account leaves the impression that there was much dissension and bad feeling within those committees, then the impression is most certainly correct. Even the otherwise rather conservative Dr H. R. Mill, librarian of the RGS at the time, was forced to concur with Markham's opinion that the dissensions 'nearly wrecked the expedition'.³

At the heart of the matter was a fundamental disagreement between the representatives of the RS and the RGS over the relative roles of the naval staff and the civilian scientific staff of the expedition. Markham, and most of the 'Arctic Admirals' of the RGS, all veterans of Arctic exploration in the 1850s and 1870s, took the traditional view that the naval interests should predominate both at sea and on land, though conceding that a small scientific staff should take charge of geological, biological and physical studies on land. The Royal Society's representatives took the opposing view that the scientific staff should have absolute responsibility for research on land under the leadership of their chosen scientific director, John Walter Gregory, a distinguished geologist. The naval staff would have been reduced to little more than ferrymen under their plan, though they accepted that the naval leader, Commander Scott, would have overall command of the expedition. The main crisis, and its outcome, were summed up by H. R. Mill in 1930. Referring to the events of February-May, 1901, he wrote:

The *Discovery* was launched at Dundee by Lady Markham and brought round to the Thames to be fitted out. Then a storm broke which nearly wrecked the expedition. The members of the Joint Committee split on the functions of the Scientific Director. Those of the Royal Society held that a man of Gregory's scientific standing and long experience as an explorer should be the unfettered leader of the land parties of the expedition, while, of course, subordinate to Scott when on board ship. The Admirals on the R.G.S. side would not hear of this, and Markham supported them. The naval leader, he said, must be in absolute command on land as well as at sea, and must never be called upon to entrust the safety of his naval ratings to any civilian. The representatives of the Royal Society rose as one man in defence of the dignity of Science. Markham became ill with the strain and worry, and the Council of the Royal Geographical Society passed resolutions in his absence which pleased him so little that on his return he secured a vote rescinding them and cancelling the Minutes. For a moment it seemed as if the Council of the Society was to split like the Joint Committee, but here the team spirit asserted itself and the President was brought to see that the conciliatory methods quietly concerted by Goldie and Darwin were the wisest. Then at the eleventh hour the crisis passed. Gregory resigned from the expedition, the centre of gravity of which shifted from research to adventure.⁴

The 'storm' described by Mill is a reference to the Joint Committee's re-writing of the instructions to the commander of the expedition which Markham himself had drafted. Markham mentions the 'mangling' of those instructions in his

narrative, but he presents only his own draft and the final version. The 'mangled' version, or more correctly the modified 'mangled' version as finally accepted by the Joint Committee, is therefore presented in Appendix I. If it had prevailed, it would certainly have profoundly altered the nature of the expedition in a manner which Markham would never have approved. His vision of a primarily naval expedition placed the greatest emphasis on tasks in which his chosen naval staff were most skilled: geographical discovery, surveying and charting, and magnetic, meteorological and astronomical observations. He envisaged the whole expedition wintering in the Antarctic, employing the skills of naval personnel in exploration and discovery on land as well as at sea, just as in the Arctic expeditions of old. The Joint Committee's instructions, on the other hand, gave predominance to the landing and wintering of the civilian scientific staff, and particularly enjoined the naval commander not to risk wintering in the Antarctic with his ship, thus taking away from him most of the glory of Antarctic exploration and discovery.

It is certainly arguable that the amended instructions, with Gregory as leader of the land party, might have ensured a more successful expedition. Whereas Scott went to the Antarctic without previous experience of exploration or expedition leadership, Gregory had a sound record not only as a scientist but also as an explorer and leader. In 1892 he had taken part in an expedition to explore northern Kenya; when that expedition was ruined by transport difficulties and dissensions, Gregory stepped in to reorganize it as a private venture and successfully completed a pioneering study of the Great Rift Valley and the glaciers of Mount Kenya. Four years later, he took part in the first crossing of Spitsbergen with Sir Martin Conway. Gregory was also a mountaineer with experience in the Alps and a knowledge of glacier travel. There is little doubt that he could successfully have led a land party that might have achieved more scientifically, and also perhaps more in terms of exploration, than the expedition was to do without him. As Mill has said, his resignation, which followed the reinstatement of Markham's original instructions, shifted the emphasis from research to adventure. Roland Huntford, in his *Scott and Amundsen*, has gone a step farther to suggest that it damaged more than just one expedition. He claims that, by manoeuvring Gregory's resignation,

Sir Clements Markham had changed the course of British Polar exploration. Had Gregory got his way, scientists and civilians would have taken over, and a breath of fresh air would have entered. Sir Clements upheld naval domination and ensured, at a critical time, the rule of regimented mediocrity.⁵

Certainly an opportunity had been lost to change from the pattern of unwieldy and expensive naval expeditions which had been the primary feature of British polar exploration since the 1820s, to more lightweight and more scientifically-based ventures which had been preferred for some decades by other exploring nations. But it can also be argued that this was neither the right expedition, nor the right stage of its preparation, with all the other details almost completed, to make such a major change. As Markham was later successfully to argue, it would have been a fundamental departure from the style of expedition for which funds had already been attracted from subscribers, and the RGS would hardly have been willing to

invest a large portion of its own capital in an expedition which no longer had exploration and discovery as its primary objectives.

Markham was by no means the only RGS representative to oppose the amended instructions; others opposed them not only for their content but also for the manner of their presentation. At meetings of the Joint Committee between 8 February and 5 March, 1901, the RGS's representatives suddenly found themselves confronted with a series of amendments which had clearly been carefully considered by the RS's side, but of which the RGS had had no warning whatever. Moreover, it became apparent that those amendments were being pushed through as a matter of urgency not only to suit Gregory's requirements, but also to suit his convenience, as he wanted to see the amendments approved before his imminent departure for Australia. To the RGS representatives, Gregory was still a shadowy figure, and they had so far been offered 'not a particle of proof'⁶ of his fitness for the post of scientific director. It now became intolerable for several of them to find that this stranger was virtually promoting himself to the leadership of the expedition through the agency of a small group of allies at the RS. Markham refused to attend any further meetings of the Joint Committee, and three of its leading admirals resigned: Sir Vase Hamilton, Sir Albert Markham, and Sir Anthony Hoskins. Presenting their reasons for resigning, they concluded:

During the recent meetings of the Joint Committee it was only too palpable to us that the interests of Geographical research were subordinated to the personal interest of Dr. Gregory, and to the investigation of scientific matters which, in our estimation, are of less importance than Geographical Exploration for which the ship has been specifically constructed at great expense.⁷

Markham's response was more forceful. He declined to sign the new instructions, which was required of him in his capacity as President of the RGS, and took his complaint to the RGS Council:

It appears that Dr. Gregory went to his R.S. Friends and threatened to resign if his demand was not complied with that he should have command of a landing party. Meetings of the R.S. Members were held, without the knowledge of their R.G.S. colleagues, and the alterations were arranged in the Instructions in compliance with Dr. Gregory's demand. Then the arrangement was sprung upon us, with the intention of forcing it through at one sitting: it was in forced through by the majority at a second sitting. Dr. Gregory was then informed by a deputation that his demand was complied with . . . The protégé was to have his demands complied with *first*, all other considerations to be treated of *afterwards*, or not at all. There can be only one word for such a proceeding.⁸

Markham then persuaded both societies to appoint a Select Committee of six men to re-examine the instructions and that committee, as Markham describes in his narrative, restored the original instructions almost as Markham had drafted them. That information was cabled to Gregory in Melbourne in May, 1901, and Gregory promptly cabled back his resignation.

It is strange that this extraordinary affair should have erupted at such a late stage in the planning of the expedition, for it must have been apparent much earlier that Markham and Gregory were headed on a collision course. As early as 1899 Gregory was expressing his dissatisfaction that 'the scientific staff will be quite subordinate to the naval. The naval people all hang together and regard the scientific work with indifference. The relations of the scientific and naval heads might be like those of Nansen and his captain Sverdrup.'⁹ To see himself as Nansen to Scott's Sverdrup was dangerous thinking which could not possibly have fitted into Markham's scheme. He also disapproved of Scott's appointment as commander; he wrote to Edward Poulton, his closest ally on the Joint Committee, that he found Scott too inexperienced, ignorant of the basics of expedition equipment, a poor organizer, and too ready to interfere in scientific matters which Gregory considered to be solely his affair.¹⁰ In those circumstances he might easily have resigned much earlier, but he preferred instead to seek alterations in the overall plan of the expedition to preserve his scientific work from naval interference. It was he who wanted to prevent the ship from wintering, and to keep the naval men out of the land party altogether, considering these to be necessary preconditions for performing his own duties satisfactorily. He also rejected his title 'Head of the Civilian Scientific Staff' and was prepared to go out only as 'Scientific Director'; that is, director of all science, both civilian and naval. He presented all these conditions to Poulton, who in turn led the inept and ill-fated attempt to have them incorporated in the instructions. (As it was Poulton who most vigorously represented Gregory's point of view, his own lengthy account of the affair, first published in *Nature* in 1901, is printed here in full in Appendix 2.) Poulton himself was eventually to concede that he faced special difficulties when most of the financial resources of the expedition had been raised by the RGS, and when he met with so skilful and energetic an adversary as Sir Clements Markham. It was, in the end, almost inevitable that Markham should win.

But Markham did not have everything his own way, and there was a further episode in the history of the expedition, omitted from his *Personal Narrative*, in which he finally lost control of the expedition to one of the most powerful of all adversaries: government. By winning the battle over the instructions, he had committed the *Discovery* to wintering in the Antarctic, and thereby he had also committed the two societies to purchasing and sending south a relief ship in case *Discovery* should be unable to get free of the ice at the end of winter. That required more funds, so, immediately after seeing *Discovery* on her way, Markham set about raising the sum required by public subscription. By October, 1901 he had enough to buy the ship, *Morning*, a Norwegian sealer. As with *Discovery*, the RGS was made the sole owner of the ship, and Markham, as President, was officially appointed her manager; hence his proud boast of being the expedition's 'Managing Owner'. There was still a shortage of funds for fitting out the *Morning* for her voyage south, so Markham approached the Treasury for a further grant towards the expedition. His request was refused; the government had already granted £45,000 towards the expedition and was not expecting to be asked for more. Fortunately for Markham, the money was found elsewhere, and

Morning, under the command of William Colbeck, sailed in July, 1902. Colbeck visited Scott early in 1902, returned to Lyttelton, New Zealand in March, and cabled home the unwelcome news that *Discovery* was still frozen in, and very probably faced the prospect of a second winter in the Antarctic; the need for a second relief expedition in 1904 was therefore 'imperative'. This left the two societies with the problem of needing to raise a further £20,000 both to keep the expedition going for another year and to send out yet another relief expedition to evacuate the whole party should *Discovery* still be frozen in. Once again they approached the Treasury for assistance. This time, reluctantly and with evident ill will, the Treasury agreed to relieve the societies of their embarrassing problem, but only on its own stringent terms which implied a complete loss of confidence in the societies' ability to manage the affair competently. Replying to their plea, the Secretary to the Treasury wrote:

. . . after careful consideration of the difficulties in which the Royal and R.G. Societies find themselves, and in view of the necessity of providing for the safety of the officers and men of the Royal Navy who were allowed to volunteer for service on the Expedition undertaken by the two Societies, it has been decided by His Majesty's Government to offer to take over the whole responsibility for the further relief expedition which has unfortunately been rendered necessary—on condition that the existing relief ship, the *Morning*, now in New Zealand, is handed over absolutely and at once to the Board of Admiralty who will control the relief operations on behalf of the Government.¹¹

To have the expedition so peremptorily removed from his control, after a decade spent planning and executing his dream, must have severely wounded Markham's pride. But he had no choice; without adequate funds there was no other way of relieving the *Discovery*. So, together with the President of the Royal Society, he wrote back agreeing to hand over the *Morning*. But in so doing he fell into a trap, for further correspondence revealed that in demanding that *Morning* be handed over 'absolutely' to the Admiralty, they were actually demanding a permanent transfer of the ownership of the vessel in order to offset some of the cost of providing relief. The Council of the RGS was unwilling to contest the issue, and on 7 July, 1903, in Markham's fortuitous absence abroad, they passed a resolution authorizing their Vice-President to transfer ownership of the *Morning* to the Admiralty. Markham was furious when he heard of this; he wrote a long and somewhat self-contradictory memorandum urging the Council to reconsider its action on the grounds that they had no authority to give the *Morning* away.

The money for the relief ship was raised by me; I bought the ship, fitted her out and despatched her, and I am the owner, every step being taken with the full approval of the Council. The *Morning* cost me 11,800*l.*; she is now worth 6,000*l.* or more, with all her stores and provisions now on board, 7,000*l.* This value, this valuable property, is the result of subscriptions from hundreds of sympathisers, and must be used first for the relief, second for the general needs of the expedition. The actual ownership is immaterial because it is a trust. It is not the property of the Council. Indeed, the Council did not subscribe. It is a trust to be expended for the purpose for which it was subscribed. Neither I nor the Council have any right whatever to give it away for any

purpose except that for which it was entrusted to them. I cannot sign away this property, any more than can the Council.¹²

Thus did Markham pathetically cling to his last vestige of control over his Antarctic expedition; but it was to no avail. Without funds he was powerless to contest the government's terms; the relief expedition had to go out with or without his consent; and he had to step aside: the role of the Managing Owner was ended. So, too, was the role of the cumbersome, over-manned and inefficient naval polar expedition. From then on expeditions were to be smaller, cheaper, better organized, and, increasingly, platforms for science rather than adventure.

NOTES

1. A. H. Markham, *The life of Sir Clements R. Markham, K.C.B., F.R.S.* London, John Murray, 1917, pp. vii-viii.
2. Roland Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, p. 128.
3. H. R. Mill, *The record of the Royal Geographical Society, 1830-1930*. London, RGS, 1930, p. 163 (copyright RGS).
4. Ibid. pp. 163-4.
5. Huntford, 1979, p. 128.
6. 'The National Antarctic Expedition 1901-03 and the Royal Geographical Society: a collection of unpublished documents'. Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) Manuscript 367/23, item 19.
7. SPRI Manuscript 367/23, item 19.
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