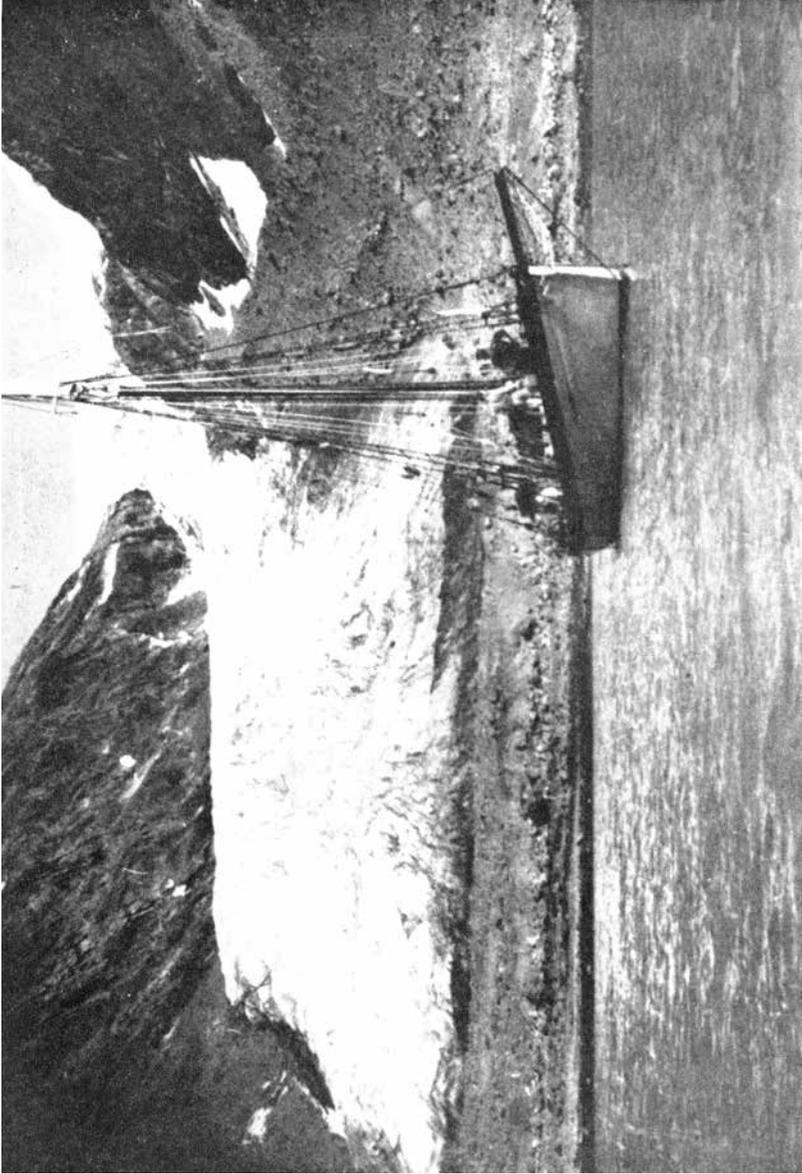


MISCHIEF
IN GREENLAND

H. W. TILMAN



First anchorage off glacier in Evighedsfjord

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TILMAN

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Mischief

Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter built at Cardiff 1906 by Thos. Baker, East Canal Wharf. Length 45 feet. Beam 13 feet. Draught 7 feet 6 inches. Net tons 13.78. T.M. 29 tons.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1906–1919 | Working pilot boat owned by William Morgan or ‘Billy the Mischief’ | |
| 1920 | Sold for £450 to a Mr Unna who sailed her to Takoradi | |
| 1927 | First appears in the Yacht Register and had subsequently in 27 years ten different owners | |
| 1954 | Bought at Malta by Ernle Bradford who sailed her to Palma, Mallorca and sold her to her last owner, H. W. Tilman | |
| 1954 | Palma—Gibraltar—Oporto—Lymington | 2000 m. |
| 1955–56 | Las Palmas—Monte Video—Magellan Straits—Valparaiso—Callao—Panama—Bermuda—Lymington
(<i>Mischief in Patagonia</i> , 1957) | 20,000 m. |
| 1957–58 | Las Palmas—Bahia Blanca—C. Town—Durban—Beira—Comoro Is.—Aldabra—Aden—Port Said—Malta—Gibraltar—Lymington
(<i>Mischief Goes South</i> , 1968) | 21,000 m. |
| 1959–60 | Las Palmas—C. Town—lies Crozet—Kerguelen—C. Town—St Helena—Lymington
(<i>Mischief among the Penguins</i> , 1961) | 20,000 m. |
| 1961 | West Greenland. Godthaab—Umanak Fjord—Godthaab—Lymington
(<i>Mischief in Greenland</i> , 1964) | 7500 m. |
| 1962 | West Greenland. Godthaab—Evighedsfjord—Holsteinborg—Exeter Sound (Baffin Is.)—Lymington
(<i>Mischief in Greenland</i> , 1964) | 6500 m. |
| 1963 | Baffin Bay. Godthaab—Godhaven—Upernivik—Lancaster Sound—Bylot Is.—Pond Inlet—Godthaab—Lymington
(<i>Mostly Mischief</i> , 1966) | 6500 m. |

Surveyed Dec. 1963 and reported no longer fit for long voyages. Two mountains and a cape have officially been named after her—Mont du Mischief, by the French, on Île de la Possession, Îles Crozet; Cap Mischief, also by the French, on Île de Kerguelen; Mount Mischief, by the Canadian Survey, Exeter Sound, Baffin Is. near to Mt. Raleigh.

FOREWORD

Tilman's Influence

Colin Putt

I LEFT SCHOOL IN 1943 to work as a surveyor's assistant in the field, making Ordnance maps of previously uncharted country in New Zealand. This led naturally to an interest in exploring difficult country and in mountaineering as a means to that end. The leading New Zealand mountaineer Danny Bryant, a member of the 1935 Everest reconnaissance expedition with Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman, provided my introduction to their books. To us in New Zealand, Shipton and Tilman were the perfect exemplars, their small low-cost expeditions to explore unknown mountain country, climbing virgin peaks as a secondary objective, seemed a perfect fit to our own situation and ambitions.

Then at the end of the 1950s, a French report on Antarctic activities and achievements described how Tilman had more recently adopted a seaborne approach to the problem of accessing remote mountains. From his more recent books, it became clear that he had quickly become a leading authority on sailing very small ships in high latitudes.

In 1964 I was involved in preparations for a joint mountaineering and scientific expedition to Heard Island, a remote Australian Antarctic Territory with unclimbed peaks and a challenging lack of safe anchorages. A ship, crew, finances and supplies had been acquired but we were lacking that most important item of all, a sailing master. Warwick Deacock, our expedition leader was a firm believer in always going straight to the top of any organisation, always asking for the best available. So, as expedition secretary I was instructed to write to Tilman as the best man for the job, inviting him to take command of our ship, the schooner *Patanela*. He accepted, writing that he had long viewed Heard Island as a worthy destination but that *Mischief* was too

small to carry both the shore party and the sailing crew necessary to take the ship off to the nearest sheltered anchorage at Kerguelen some 200 miles to windward*.

Arriving straight from the airport in Sydney, he reviewed our state of preparation, at once saw what was needed, asked for a marine spike and set about splicing wire ropes. He lived on board and quietly assumed control of the final fitting out, loading and departure. Here was a man who really knew what he was about, one from whom you could learn all about small sailing ships, yet one who stuck closely to his doctrine of the minimum which had been so successful in the mountains. His practical seamanship went far beyond the conventional knowledge found in yachting books and magazines into areas I had not previously recognised; fundamentally he was a Victorian master mariner rather than a mid-twentieth century yachtsman.

Tilman's choice of route from Sydney to Heard Island went of necessity westward against the prevailing wind across the Great Australian Bight using *Patanela's* engine. At Cape Leeuwin on the South-East corner of Australia he stopped the engine and reached North up the West Australian coast into the variable winds of the horse latitudes. He used the variables expertly to sail West toward South Africa until we were past the longitude of Kerguelen, then went reaching down across the Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties to Kerguelen, running back before them to Heard Island. 'Only a fool will sail to windward on a passage' he remarked, 'you go where the wind is going your way.'

From time to time in the variables we were headed by the wind. If the wind was moderate Tilman would sail close hauled on whichever tack placed our course closer to the chosen direction. In this way we might make slow progress but we didn't lose any ground. If the contrary wind became strong enough to make the ship pitch violently and slam into waves he would heave to on the more favourable tack. If ever she heeled far enough for water to run up on to the lee deck he would come up on deck, take a good look at the situation and call all hands to shorten sail. He never cracked on in a way which would subject the ship or the crew to an excessive beating but he never slowed her down more than was necessary. He had a simple rule that if in a

* *Mostly Mischief* – Published by Tilman Books, June 2016

light wind our speed fell to less than three knots we could start the engine and bring the speed up to no more than a fuel-efficient seven knots. He made clear to us the duties of the watch on deck and gently but firmly corrected any neglect of those duties. He explained what he did, usually in the course of conversation at mealtimes, and those who wished could learn a tremendous amount about sailing as distinct from yachting.

The Heard Island expedition was successful in every way; it taught me more than I had known there was to learn. On our return to Sydney, I went back to my work in the heavy chemical industry and the Skipper, as we had come to call him, returned to England to take *Mischief* to sea on her next West Greenland voyage.

Four years later, I heard that *Mischief* had been lost, had been replaced by *Sea Breeze*, and that her first voyage toward Scoresby Sund had been ruined by a 'polite mutiny'. Feeling that I had earned a holiday, I wrote to the Skipper offering my services to *Sea Breeze* on her next voyage, offering to help put down any mutiny that might arise. Tilman accepted my offer, my benevolent employer gave me leave with pay and my long-suffering wife gave me leave of absence.

The 1970 voyage was to the west coast of Greenland, between Cape Farvel and the Arctic Circle where there are continuous ranges of mountains within easy distance of the coast. In that year, 1970, the heavy *storis** pack-ice coming out of the Arctic ocean down the East coast of Greenland, round Cape Farvel and up the west coast was much denser than usual and prevented us from getting to the coast at all for much of the time. We did comparatively little climbing but learned a great deal about sea ice. On our first attempt to get through the *storis* to the clear water inshore, the engine failed just as the wind changed and closed up the ice; we stayed there beset for ten days while icebergs came ploughing through the *storis* like icebreakers, tossing thousand-ton floes aside like autumn leaves and compressing the ice ahead of them so as to nip us and make the hull creak, pop and groan.

Beset in the *storis* and watching for icebergs which might be bearing down on us, the Skipper's chief worry seemed to be that somebody might see us and forcibly rescue us against our will. He was opposed to

* A floating mass of closely crowded icebergs and floes

the prospect of rescue believing that ‘Every herring should hang by its own tail’; we should be prepared and able to rescue ourselves should the need arise. The rest of us, weaker mortals, were more concerned about the risk of the ship being crushed by the ice; I even raised the subject of putting aside a grab-bag of essentials to take with us if we had to abandon ship in a hurry. The Skipper’s view was more considered, ‘When a ship is crushed it takes a while for her to sink and in our situation there is ice alongside to step off on to.’

I had long known that the Skipper was a brilliant survivor, he had fought right through the First World War at the front in France and survived where thousands didn’t; he had escaped to Dunkirk from behind the advancing Panzers, then fought right through WW-II in the real shooting areas, much of the time behind the enemy lines. Between the wars and after WW-II he had explored and made notable ascents in the world’s highest mountains, then sailed worldwide to the most remote and difficult seas in a little, old unstrengthened pilot cutter. On the 1970 Greenland voyage I began to learn how he did it.

On the way home across the North Atlantic some of the latent damage to the hull turned into a serious leak, the gaff broke so that the ship could no longer work to windward off the lee shore of Ireland and we had three small fires on board. All these incidents were dealt with suitably and we returned to England safe and happy*.

Tilman never panicked, remaining calm in seemingly desperate situations, always thinking things through to a rational conclusion, making his decision and announcing what was to be done, clearly and completely. He had been well and truly battle-hardened in two world wars and this, together with his very high intelligence and abundant common sense allowed him to take the best action in any situation. It dawned upon me that the worst thing you could do for your own survival in a sticky situation would be to doubt and oppose him. To be reasonably sure of surviving you must place complete faith in him, obey, help and support him.

Before heading back to Sydney after the 1970 Greenland trip, I paid a productive visit to my employer’s London headquarters. Within a year, I was back in the UK with my family and spent the next three

* *In Mischief’s Wake* – Published by Tilman Books, December 2016

years working within easy reach of Lymington, the home port for the Skipper's pilot cutters. My weekends were often spent climbing in North Wales and the Peak District, dinghy sailing in the Channel and, during the winter lay-up months, working weekends on *Sea Breeze* and her successor, *Baroque*. These weekend sessions started as visits by myself alone but grew into social occasions with my children and their friends, crew from former voyages such as Bob Comlay and Simon Richardson, and last but not least Sandy Lee of Lymington, the most skilled master of many crafts I've ever known.

The Skipper, always the perfect gentleman, was also the perfect host at these working bees. Where was the fabled misogynist recluse? I never met such a person. Certainly Tilman didn't always suffer fools gladly, male or female. Sometimes he failed to notice uncomfortable conditions which others saw as hardships, but in congenial company he could be the life and soul of the party and he was always concerned and caring to his friends, although a little shy with strangers. He did have a horror of commercialisation of adventure, any attempt to involve him in such would turn him away, so would any suggestion that his volunteer crews should be paid or that he should install a two-way radio with which to cry for help and rescue. People who had tried to open these ideas with him may well have left with an impression of a laconic recluse, for he was too polite to enter into argument with them.

Tilman not only learned to sail, navigate and command late in life, but he was also largely self-taught. When he did get himself into trouble at sea he was remarkably good at fighting his way out of it and, like Shackleton, never lost a crew member through any fault of his own. He was not unlike the Polynesian sailors on this side of the world, of whom David Lewis was one, rushing into disaster and then surviving through superhuman strength and endurance. We should remember too that the expectation that a small sailing ship's master will do everything perfectly and that the crew will be perfectly safe is a very recent phenomenon. When I first went to sea in working sailing vessels seventy years ago, the smaller ones, and the yachts of the time, had no bulwarks or guard rails, just a toe rail. The big ketch *Lena* had good solid bulwarks but we had to climb along on the outside of them to get past the deck cargo of horned cattle.

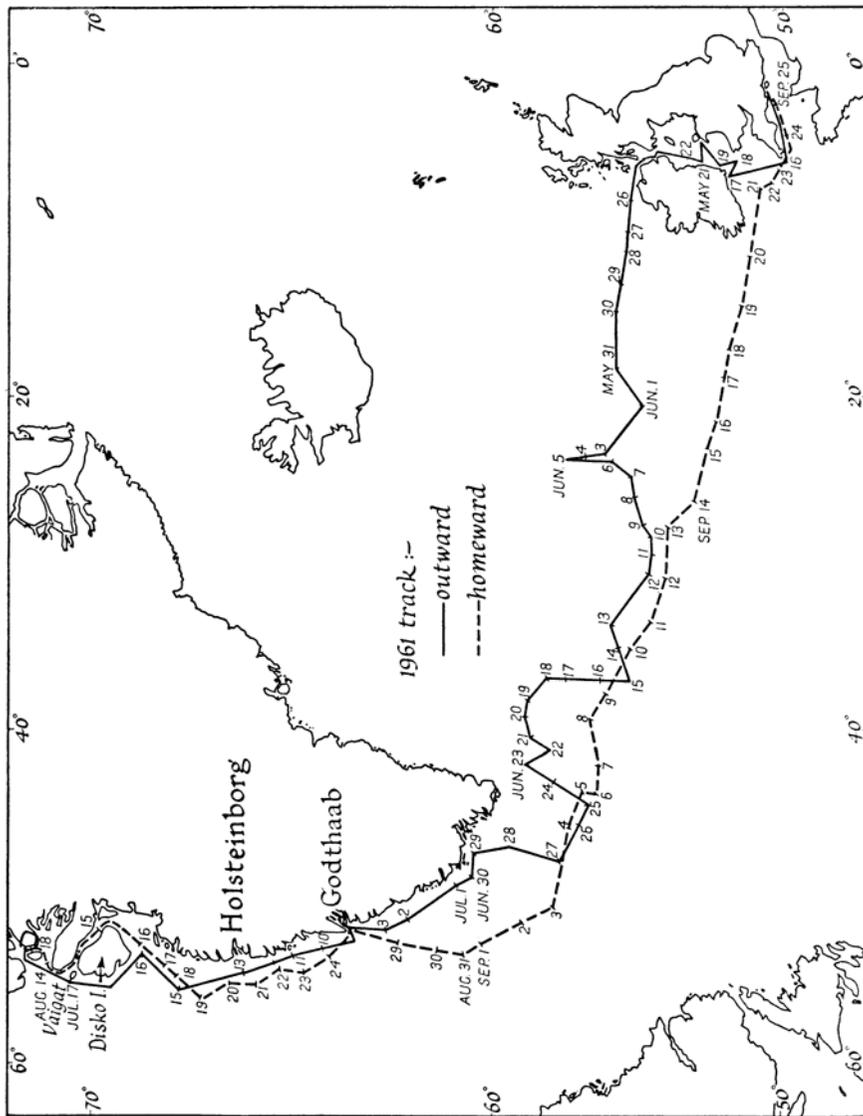
For me, Tilman stands at the head of the list of great men whom I have been privileged to know and have tried, humbly, to make my exemplars, with Heinrich Harrer, David Lewis, Trevor Kletz, Warren Bonython and Sir Geoff Allen.

Colin Putt

6 March 2015

PART ONE





Map 1: Mischief's Track in 1961

THE OBJECTIVE AND THE CREW

THIS THIRD BOOK ABOUT MY OLD PILOT-CUTTER *Mischief* is a description of two successive voyages to Greenland and Baffin Island in search of mountains. All that is needed by way of introduction is to state the reasons for choosing those particular objectives. To give reasons for wishing to sail or climb, though often attempted, is difficult and in my opinion is best left alone. If pressed to give reasons for doing such things, perhaps the best answer is found in Stevenson's words: 'In the joy of the actors lies the sense of any action. That is the explanation, that the excuse.'

In the long night watches at sea, or when lying tediously becalmed, even a man whose mind is generally a blank is more or less obliged to think of something. In such circumstances, when homeward bound from Cape Town, with the Crozet Isles and Kerguelen behind us and over 6000 miles of ocean ahead, it occurred to me that there might be cruising grounds equally exciting but far less distant than the southern ocean. In northern waters, for example. So far *Mischief's* three voyages, each of about a year's duration and each covering some 20,000 miles, had all been to the Southern Hemisphere. A cruise in that direction has several points in its favour. One enjoys, for instance, three summers in a row, leaving England in August, arriving in the south at the beginning of the southern spring, and reaching home in time for the fag-end of yet another northern summer. Then the course followed by a sailing ship bound south by way of the Atlantic ensures having for the most part favourable winds, reducing to a minimum the unprofitable and uncomfortable business of beating against head winds. Furthermore, until the vessel reaches the latitudes of the Forties, the crew can count on soaking themselves in sunshine. Starved of sun as we are in England this is no small thing and no doubt accounts for the fact that almost every yachtsman contemplating a long cruise confines his choice to the Mediterranean, the

West Indies, or the South Sea Islands, places of sun and warmth, blue seas and skies, palm trees and hula-hula girls. And since these voyages are supposed to be pleasure cruises, the fact that one can drink wine almost throughout the voyage is not to be overlooked. One may stock up in the first place at the Canaries or the Azores, and replenish in Brazil or Chile if bound west, or at Cape Town if bound eastwards. True, the wine will be cheap and will not much benefit by keeping or by being well shaken up every day. But, as they say in Spain, cursed bad wine is better than holy water.

Still, even when accompanied by fair winds, sunshine, wine, flying fish, and all the other blessings of tropical seas, 20,000 miles is a long way to go for the sake of a month or so spent climbing some obscure mountains, the more so, if, as had happened on that last voyage, mountains reputed to be 5000 feet high prove to be only 3000 feet high. To misquote Prince Hal, this had seemed to me an intolerable deal of sea to one half-pennyworth of mountains. But, it may be asked, what have mountains to do with long sea voyages? Well, in my opinion, a voyage is the better for having some other objective beyond that of crossing an ocean or making a landfall on another continent, and what better objective could a man have than a mountain? This is not to underrate the satisfaction they yield or to belittle the difficulties or even dangers of voyages in small boats. In these respects a cruise in home waters may chance to provide challenge enough. But when crossing oceans or sailing in remote, lonely seas, or on unlit coasts, a man accepts the fact that no help will be at hand. The hazards of being overwhelmed by a storm or of stranding must be faced by himself and his crew alone. If overwhelmed by a storm that is the end of the matter. The consequences of running aground might be worse in some respects, for in such case one would have leisure to reflect upon the loss of one's ship and the carelessness or negligence which had brought about the loss. The amateur sailor, or haphazard navigator, should ponder a remark of the editor of the new edition of Lecky's *Wrinkles*, 'There is nothing more distressing than running ashore, unless it be a doubt as to which continent that shore belongs.'

Provided, however, that the voyage is planned with due regard to seasons, carried through with seamanlike prudence, and attended by a reasonable amount of luck, the risks are small and the voyage comes

to be regarded as merely a step towards the final objective. The latter, I feel sure, is an added incentive to the crew, takes their minds off the voyage, and finally gives them a sense of achievement. Moreover, it helps the amateur sailor to adopt a more professional attitude towards the sea and his ship, regarding them as means to an end rather than ends in themselves. There are, indeed, many amateurs who have such an affection for ships and the sea that for them it is enough to be afloat, even if they never go out of sight of land. Whether they are amateur or professional, I suppose all sailors begin their sea careers because of a love for the sea and ships, and the romance of a sea-life. No doubt the professional's first love may soon dwindle into respect, as a sweet-heart may dwindle into a wife, while the amateur is rarely at sea often enough or long enough for his ardour to cool.

But to hark back to mountains. The sole object of the three long voyages I had made in *Mischief* had been to combine sailing with climbing, the obvious solution for a man who liked both and was reluctant to give up either. To wish to follow two such enjoyable pursuits at the same time may lay one open to the charge of being too greedy of pleasure, almost gluttonous. Sydney Smith's notion of bliss, his acme of pleasure, was the eating of *paté de foie gras* to the sound of trumpets. Sailing and climbing are not, of course, comparable with that, but pleasures they must be called, if of a robust kind. To combine the two pursuits might appear to be impossible, just as it is proverbially difficult to blow and swallow at the same time. True, the great mountain ranges, the Alps, the Himalayas, the Andes, are remote enough from the sea, but there are lesser mountains that are almost washed by the sea or closely linked to it and readily accessible by the glaciers they send down into the sea. For example, some of the New Zealand Alps, the Patagonian Andes, mountains in Tierra del Fuego, and several mountainous islands in the Antarctic or sub-Antarctic such as South Georgia, the South Shetlands, Heard Island, or the Crozet and Kerguelen that we had already visited. Some of these places can be reached only by sea. They are all in the Southern Hemisphere, possessed of rude, cold climates, and are remote and not easily accessible.

Though remoteness and inaccessibility are to my mind desirable features they are scarcely compatible with short voyages. One can't have everything. Voyages in the Northern Hemisphere are obviously

going to be shorter, for the mountains that can be reached by sea in a small boat lie in Spitsbergen, on both coasts of Greenland, and on the Canadian side of Davis Strait. One might add the coast range of Alaska were it not almost as distant by sea as the Southern Hemisphere; for owing to adverse winds and currents a vessel might have to sail far out into the Pacific before turning north. The hurricane season, too, would have to be considered; in avoiding it one might be bogged down in the Lotus Land of the West Indies and lose one's crew.

Nowadays Greenland can easily be reached by air, but only a man in the devil of a hurry would wish to fly to his mountains, forgoing the lingering pleasure and mounting excitement of a slow, arduous approach under his own exertions. In fact the approach to these sort of places by sea in a small boat will take up most of the time available, will probably be more exacting than the mountaineering itself, and may be the more rewarding part of the enterprise. But a voyage to northern waters, unlike one southwards, has little to offer in the way of pleasure to a yachtsman beyond a bracing climate and spectacular scenery—icebergs, ice floes, ice mountains. There is no care-free Trade Wind sailing to be enjoyed. On the outward voyage at any rate head winds are likely to be the rule rather than the exception. Sunshine, too, may well be less than that of an average English summer, for the North Atlantic on the whole is a region of cloud. Instead of the crew delighting in the freedom of shorts and a shirt, or complete nudity, they may be pent up in winter woollies. As for basking on deck, only the helmsman will spend any time there and he will be wrapped up in sweaters and oilskins.

But a man need not be an ascetic, devoted to hair shirts, to relish a voyage under the moderately adverse conditions that prevail in the North Atlantic, or even in the Arctic, in summer. We amateur sailors are of necessity summer sailors, taking our punishment in mild doses, seldom or never likely to experience what professional seafarers, particularly trawlermen, have to contend against when the sea is in its savage winter moods. Men who go to sea or climb mountains for fun derive some of their satisfaction—a lot of it retrospective—in facing and overcoming rough weather and rough terrain, cold, fatigue, and occasionally fright. When undergoing these self-inflicted minor hardships, feeling cold and frightened, eating biscuit and pemmican, they

may comfort themselves with the thought that while many non-participants will write them down as asses, there are others to whom their modest sufferings will afford a little vicarious pleasure. A favourite moral reflection of Mr Pecksniff was that if everyone were warm and well fed we should lose the satisfaction of admiring the fortitude with which others bear cold and hunger.

Of the several possible cruising grounds in the north I felt inclined first towards Spitsbergen or its near neighbour Northeastland. I was soon put off by a letter from Roger Tufft, one of the crew who had sailed with me to the Crozet, and who within ten days of our return had joined a party in Spitsbergen. He told me that there were no less than eleven other expeditions in the field. Owing to its being so far north (N. lat. 80°) and at the same time easily accessible from Norway, over the past thirty years Spitsbergen has been overrun with expeditions, mainly from the universities. Northeastland and Edge Island, lying close to Spitsbergen, are less easily approachable on account of ice, but from a mountaineering point of view they are of no interest. Although there may be little left for a climber to do in Spitsbergen, an ambitious sailor might undertake to sail round it. This difficult feat was accomplished by Commander Worsley, one of those who made the famous boat journey with Shackleton from Elephant Island to South Georgia. In 1925, in the auxiliary bark *Island* of about 100 tons, strengthened against ice, with an amateur crew of twelve, he succeeded in sailing anti-clockwise round Spitsbergen in spite of damage to both rudder and propeller from the pack-ice.

Instead of Spitsbergen I began thinking of Greenland. I may be wrong, but I suspect that an average man's knowledge of it begins and ends with the well-known hymn, 'From Greenland's icy mountains'. Supposing him to be a man who has forgotten, like Falstaff, what the inside of a church looks like or who in youth was not addicted to 'hol-laing and singing of anthems', he may not know that much. A brief outline of it may therefore be welcome. If we except the continent of Australia, Greenland is the largest island in the world. Geologists, by the way, darkening counsel as they sometimes do, now say it may be two islands.

They think that at one point beneath the ice-cap there is a trough which is below sea-level. Assuming, however, that it is one island it is so

large that if plunked down over Europe it would extend from the north of Scotland to the Sahara and from the Bay of Biscay to the Po valley. The whole is covered with an ice-cap thousands of feet thick except along the coasts where there is a strip of ice-free country varying in width from one mile to one hundred miles. The ice-cap covers more than nine-tenths of the land and at one point rises to a height of 10,000 feet. In 1950 the population of Greenlanders was about 22,000, confined to small towns and settlements along the coastal strip, mainly on the west coast. They are of mixed European and Eskimo descent. The country belongs to Denmark, and there are neither roads nor railways.

For mountaineers the east coast of Greenland, where the mountains are higher and less known, is the more attractive. In recent years an increasing number of climbing expeditions have gone there. But in a small boat, unstrengthened for working among ice, this coast is virtually unapproachable. According to the American Pilot Chart:

East Greenland has much more pack-ice than West Greenland, and no ship should attempt to navigate in its waters unless it is specially designed. The East Greenland ice is usually broken and rafted into heavy floes of various sizes often with a thickness of 20 to 30 feet. It is too great to cut with the prow of a ship. The ice belt is traversed by seeking out the leads of open water, thus the course is tortuous, the ship twisting and turning, worming its way between the floes and fields. A high premium is placed on short turning circles and the manoeuvrability of vessels such as the Norwegian seal-hunter type. Experienced navigators on meeting the ice edge off north-east Greenland are said to insist on clear weather and a steady barometer before attempting passage to the coast.

On the other hand, West Greenland, according to the same authority, is not regarded as requiring a vessel built especially strong to withstand ice, except possibly so far north as Melville Bay and the approaches to Thule. In West Greenland there are three principal mountain regions. In the south in the vicinity of Cape Farewell (N. lat. 60°); half-way up the coast round about N. lat. 66°; and in the Umanak fjord region in N. lat. 71°. Although it is 800 miles north of Cape Farewell and inside the Arctic Circle I was strongly advised to go to the Umanak region by a

friend, Dr H. I. Drever of St Andrew's University. He had himself been there twice and had been completely captivated by it. In his opinion half-measures were a waste of time. I must go the whole hog and sail really far north where the scenery was grander, the icebergs bigger and better, and where the sparse inhabitants still followed to some extent the Eskimo way of life.

Dr Drever, I may as well admit, is a geologist. Many geologists are mountaineers, either of necessity because their studies have obliged them to visit mountainous regions, or because as budding mountaineers they have chosen a profession that seemed likely to furnish excuses for visiting mountains. In one or two earlier books about climbing I may have made some disparaging remarks about geologists and no doubt these were heartily reciprocated. Before the war, and indeed today, parties of climbers intent on visiting far distant ranges such as the Himalayas liked to clothe their more or less frivolous aims with a thin mantle of science. The small party of friends then became an expedition, acquired some standing, and with luck might acquire some cash assistance—a slight token of approval sometimes accorded by various learned societies to those who appear eager to enter what Goethe called the 'charnel-house of science'. For such a party the obvious scientific cloak to assume was the study of geology because it was generally easy to include in the party a man well qualified to geologize as well as climb.

On rare occasions, as might have been foreseen, this dual role led to a conflict of interests or involved the leader in a difficulty such as the following. It happened on the way back from Everest through Tibet where in those days (the 'twenties and 'thirties) one of the conditions of travel, clearly stated in the official pass, was that no stones should be turned over or bits chipped off living rock lest thereby some evil spirit might be released. It was futile to think of our geologist, a single-minded chap like N.E.O., complying with that sort of rule, so I had to shut my eyes and ultimately to pay out of expedition funds for a yak or a mule to carry homewards the fruits of two or three months' diligent chipping. One night the box of specimens (which N.E.O. used as an anchor for the guy of his tent) disappeared, the thieves no doubt judging from its weight that it could hardly contain anything but rupees. That put me in a fix. If I complained to the local headman that a box

of rock specimens had been stolen we should be confessedly guilty of having broken the rules; while if I said that rupees had been stolen the search might be pressed with such vigour that the box would be found and no doubt opened, proving us to be liars as well as breakers of rules. So I did nothing, thereby convincing N.E.O. that I was both conniving at theft and an enemy to science.

Dr Drever (whose name has provoked these geological reminiscences) put me in touch with a Commander Stamphøj of the Danish navy who gave me charts as well as welcome advice. The next thing was to find a crew. I needed five men and simple though this may sound the finding of a crew is the stumbling block upon which such ventures are likely to come to grief. And even though the crew problem is finally solved the solution often remains doubtful to within a few days before sailing. The long time involved is one great hindrance and for that reason it is easier to find a crew for a voyage of only five months than for one of twelve. There are probably hundreds of men knocking about who would welcome such a chance and who might be suitable; the difficulty lies in making the project known to them. There are also hundreds of sailing clubs and associations a few of whose members might be interested, but an individual like myself can make his wants known only to two or three. So far I have not had any volunteers from the yachting fraternity as represented by clubs. This in no way indicates a lack of enterprise. Such men have their own boats or crew regularly in friends' boats; most are probably interested in racing rather than cruising; long voyages do not appeal to all yachtsmen, and, as I have said, a voyage is more likely to appeal if it is in search of sun and warmth, of exotic faces and places, instead of to cold, barren, uninhabited regions. So in the end one may have to advertise, and those who reply, though they will certainly be keen on the sea and sailing, may know little about it. They may be too young to have settled down; or men who have settled down and found it a mistake; or possibly those who will never settle down—the cankers, as it were, of a calm world and a long peace.

A crew of six all told may seem large for a boat like *Mischief*. As a working boat, a pilot-cutter, the pilot who owned her would have had with him two men, or a man and an apprentice, and after the pilot had boarded the ship that needed his services the two of them would have

sailed her home. This was in the years before the First World War when there were still numbers of real sailors about. In 1956 when returning from South America four of us sailed her home from Colón via Bermuda without feeling overworked; and with only four aboard there is plenty of room and more comfort below. The point of having six is that when the climbing party of two goes ashore enough are left on board to handle the boat. She might, for example, have to clear out of an anchorage in a hurry on account of wind or drifting icebergs. With six the work is easy, but ease has to be paid for by having less elbow-room below, stricter rationing of water, and the cost of extra food.

When preparing for this voyage in the autumn of 1960 I had a stroke of luck in hearing from two eager volunteers almost before I had decided where to go. Most people would think that the B.B.C. programme 'Down Your Way', which at that time was going strong, would be heard by only local listeners. They would be wrong. Barmouth, where I live, had a visit from Mr Franklin Engelmann, the maker of that programme. Although merely an English settler and no representative of the Principality, I had to utter a few vocables. I said something about the Crozet Islands voyage and the trouble I had had in finding a crew and as a result had letters from two men, one living in Birmingham and the other in Norwich, offering their services. If this method of making one's wants known were normally available the crew problem would soon be solved.

One of these letters came from David Hodge, a tanker officer on shore temporarily on sick leave. It is not often that among a yacht's crew there is a man with a First Mate's Ticket. David Hodge was about to sit for his and passed the examination before we sailed. He knew nothing of sailing boats but with his sea training he was soon at home on board *Mischief*. I appreciated having with me an adept at navigation, someone who would check my results, keep me up to the mark, and repress any leanings towards carelessness. At the end of the voyage David confessed that on the whole he preferred a 20,000-ton tanker, but I have no doubt that he enjoyed the voyage as much as we enjoyed his company.

David was a Norfolk man and so was the second volunteer letter-writer. Terence Ward was an electrician by trade, keen on sailing, unmarried, and therefore ready to take time off for the sake of

making a long voyage. His Broads sailing included experience in the last of the Norfolk wherries so that he was accustomed to handling heavy gear and heavy boats. He knew something about photography and undertook the making of a film with a cine-camera I had on loan from the Royal Geographical Society. As the Bulgarian proverb says: 'A man can go nowhere without money, not even to church.' It had occurred to me that part of the outlay on this voyage might be recovered if we made a successful film. Like many other apparently bright ideas this one proved to be laughably false. There are films and films, and between those made by the amateur and the professional there is a gulf. An amateur film may be judged by friends, or by fellow climbers and yachtsmen, who see it for nothing, to be highly pleasing, and the same film seen by professionals, who are expected to buy it, will be damned as worthless. It will be either technically a mess or lacking in general interest. On the whole I think that to make a successful film of an expedition one must regard the making of it as the main end and not as a by-product.

The third victim I hooked was Major E. H. Marriott, who had sailed in *Mischief* to Patagonia in 1955-6. Knowing him better than the others I can give him fuller notice. Despite a liking for leaving the ship at intervals to become a tourist, Charles Marriott, as he is generally known, had done well on that venture, especially on our crossing of the Patagonia ice-cap. On the crossing his feet had suffered so much damage that he had had to leave us at Valparaiso to come home by steamer. He is one of the 'make-do-and-mend' or 'do-it-yourself' school, both from preference and because, like John Gilpin, he has a frugal mind. On this occasion he had made out of old sailcloth his own wind-proof jacket. He had not made his own boots, though from the state they were in I thought he might well have done and therein, I suspect, lay partly the cause of his foot troubles.

When he joined us on that voyage he had had more sailing experience than I had. He even went to the length of wearing a yachting cap. In a yacht bound for New Zealand he had got as far as the Canaries where he had been marooned and had had to live on bananas until he could raise the wind for a passage home. In another yacht bound for Vancouver he had got as far as Vigo before the owner decided not to proceed and sailed home. On yet another occasion, when in some

Spanish port in a yacht, he had sustained a concussion of the head (not in the bullring) and had spent several weeks there in hospital. As a result of this he can focus only one eye at a time, a severe handicap (as will later appear) when on a mountain.

He was a regular soldier who before the last war made the grave mistake of taking the two-year course at the Military College of Science, with the effect that when war broke out he was a marked man and was given the unsoldierly job of inspecting fuses and generally seeing that munitions contractors fulfilled their contracts. However, there is crust and crumb in every loaf. At the Military College of Nonsense, as Charles called it, they had taught him the theory of navigation and the Astronomer Royal himself would be astonished at some of the things Charles could tell him about the solar, stellar, and planetary systems. As a result of this theoretical teaching he became so addicted to logarithms and haversines that a computing machine would have had difficulty in digesting the data Charles assembled when working a sight. But on that occasion he had come in the capacity of climber rather than navigator and I was glad to have him for he is an experienced mountaineer—so experienced that his movements on a mountain are now, like my own, deliberate. For the present voyage, I had hinted he might have to cook as well as climb. He could not join us before we sailed from Lymington, so, making what turned out to be an unlucky choice of rendezvous, I agreed to pick him up at Belfast.

A fourth volunteer was Dr J. B. Joyce, who in the event, at the last moment, decided reluctantly that he was not fit enough to make the voyage. He came with us only to Belfast. He was a climber, too, but was to have doubled the role of cook and doctor—a suitable arrangement because in the old sailing ships the cook was known as the 'doctor'. I hoped that though none of the crew would offer any scope for Joyce's particular line in medicine—he was an obstetrician—his general medical knowledge would cover the more likely emergencies. In none of my crews had we had a doctor and I suppose we had been lucky in never needing one. On this occasion, when we just missed having one, we did at one time feel the need.

When, some three days before sailing, we finally decided that Joyce could not come, it looked as if we must sail short-handed. But in that time I had the luck to find a substitute in young Michael Taylor-Jones

who, after a brief telephone conversation, boldly took a chance and came down from Cumberland to join us. He had just left Oundle and was due to go up to Cambridge to study physics in October. We soon learnt that Charles, too, had been at Oundle. So from the start, although separated by a generation or two, he and Michael were on the old-boy network. Charles displayed such a recent knowledge of the school, acquired apparently from frequent visits, that I suspected he regretted having ever left.

Lastly there was John Wayman whom I got in touch with through a friend. He was a Rugby stalwart and looked the part, a useful man, I thought, to have around in time of need. He captained, we learnt, one of the lowlier teams fielded by the Wasps. In my eyes he seemed young enough but since he had dropped to that Club's eighth or ninth team he was evidently old for Rugby. He was a cotton salesman and a keen yachtsman in his spare time, sailing every summer holiday in chartered yachts with a crew of fellow Rugby hearties. In the nature of things chartered yachts are not likely to be as well found or as well looked after as privately owned boats. In due time we heard something of these holiday adventures across the Channel, adventures that made my hair stand on end. *Mischief's* voyages may be long but for the most part they are sedately safe.