

Australia Welcomes the

Returned Antarctic Heroes.

What a welcome it was! Row upon row of Adelaide's leading men—business men, professional men, leaders of thought in the scientific and religious spheres—with their ladies, gathered in the spacious Conservatorium yesterday afternoon. The central figure, the intrepid Antarctic explorer who was thus being enthusiastically welcomed back to his native land, it is safe to assert, faced the terrible perils of the unknown regions back of the icewall in Antarctica with more equanimity than he did that distinguished audience gathered to do him honor. Dr. Mawson is more at home in the ice-bound regions, surrounded by the eternal snows, than in fashionable public gatherings. As an explorer he is in his element; as a public speaker he is not. Obviously he was ill at ease as from the lips of the Governor-General (Lord Denman), Sir Samuel Way, the Minister of Customs (Mr. Groom), the State Premier (Mr. A. H. Peake), and others words of highest praise and admiration poured forth in ceaseless flow.

But, then, Australia—and particularly South Australia—is proud of her hero son, and took the first opportunity to express that pride in tangible form. It was peculiarly fitting that Dr. Mawson should first be welcomed home by the university with which he is connected, and to the lustre of which he has so signally added. Then, Mr. Cecil Madigan is a graduate of the university. Thus that seat of learning had a special claim to the first welcome.

Clad in his academic robes Dr. Mawson occupied a seat on the platform on the right of the Governor-General, who presided. Immediately beneath him and behind the pressmen sat the knot of men, brave companions of the doctor in his journeys up and down the frozen region, tanned, brave, determined fellows, quietly joyful at the heartiness of the reception accorded their leader. One could have been pardoned for imagining them members of the audience, so quiet and inconspicuous were they. Only when their leader affectionately referred to them and their services were the audience aware of their presence.

"The main fact for us to rejoice over is that Dr. Mawson has returned to Australia, home and beauty," declared the Governor-General, and the sentiment was received with thunderous applause. That was the secret of the great assemblage. In the eyes of many was a suspicious moistness as the hero of the Antarctic stepped upon the platform, and later when he rose to speak the walls rang again with the thunders of applause. Of his own deeds he did not talk; that task he left to others. And to his credit, he it said, the Governor-General held the audience as he told again the story of Mawson's unparalleled march back to the main base after the death of his companions, Dr. Mertz and Lieutenant Ninnis.

The first ceremony was the arrival of the Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way) and the members of the senate and council, which was carried out with the customary pomp. The Premier (Hon. A. H. Peake) accompanied the chancellor to the platform. Almost immediately the strains of "God Save the King!" rang out as his Excellency Lord Denman, accompanied by the Minister of Customs (Hon. E. Groom) and Lord Richard Nevill, took his seat. The Governor-General was welcomed at the steps outside of the Conservatorium by the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Dr. Barlow) and Mr. Justice Murray. Next came the Antarctic party in a body. On the platform, in addition to the professorial staff and council and senate of the university and those already mentioned, were the Commissioner of Public Works (Sir Richard Butler), the Chief Secretary (Hon. J. G. Bice), the Speaker of the House of Assembly (Hon. L. O'Loughlin), President of the Legislative Council (Sir Lancelot Stirling), the Chairman of the Education Commission (Mr. T. Ryan), Mr. W. J. Denny, M.P., and Professor Orme Masson, of the Melbourne University, who represented the Australasian Society for the Advancement of Science. Included in the audience were representatives of art, literature, and science, the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. A. A. Simpson), and members of the city and suburban councils and municipalities, in addition to representatives of various religious denominations.