

WITH MAWSON'S EXPEDITION.

An Adelaideans' Impressions.

The following interesting letter has been received from Mr. Morton Moyes, an Adelaidean, who is accompanying the Mawson expedition:—"Aurora, Friday, January 5, lat. 66, long. 145.—We are now nearing the destination of the first party. We had a strenuous time on Macquarie Island, having to go hard hauling wireless telegraph posts, dynamos, and all kinds of apparatus and provisions up a steep hill. We finished on December 22, but the Aurora could not send a boat on shore for us owing to the heavy sea, and in fact had the motor launch stove in. Finally on Saturday we got the sheep rounded up and got on board with difficulty, and left for Caroline Cove, at the south end of the island, to get water. We started watering on the Sunday, but on Christmas morning a heavy gale blew us on the rocks, and we were bumped out of bed and had to haul wire greasy ropes on deck in pyjamas at 2.30 a.m. for over an hour in wind at 45 deg. We got her off safely with the loss of an anchor, and had to leave without water. We then struck good weather for a few days. No one was able to have a wash, and we were only allowed one cup of liquid per meal. The cooking was far from good also. We were divided into watches of four hours a time, and are all now quite used to getting up at 12 p.m. and 4 a.m. for watches, and hauling away on sails at all times and all places. The temperature gradually lowered, and we felt it less than we thought, and even now I have only an extra thick singlet, ordinary singlet, sweater, and coat, and the temperature is below freezing point. You never saw such a dirty looking crowd in a few days. Capt. Davis and Dr. Mawson were easily the dirtiest. My beard is a treat to look at, and I had to have it trimmed and my hair cut by Dr. Xaver Mertz, LL.D. The lazy life for the last few days has given me another boil on the neck, in fact they are fairly prevalent now. Cleaning teeth in salt water at 32 is not too good, but the only way. While making man sledge harness on the 29th the cry was raised of 'berg on the starboard bow,' and what-oh, the rush. It was a lovely berg, too, and soon we were in the midst of plenty. At 6.30 we ran into a huge ice pack.

—Navigating an Ice Pack.—

"It is strange seeing the ice thick, and the ship just pushing her way through, leaving a huge wake. As for the bergs, they are indescribable. All of different sizes and shapes, of from 20 ft. to half a mile long, and the biggest estimated at 300 ft. high. They are of all colours of blue and green. Tints which cannot be painted, and the caverns in them show out dark, and in the distance like huge gateways. The ice pack varies from fresh frozen water to small bergs, and it is fine standing in the bows while the ship is bumping up on them and breaking or driving them off. The pack was too thick, and we took three or four days trying to dodge it. Gradually we got further south, and three days ago sighted a huge ice barrier, on the place where Admiral Wilkes, in 1841, reported land, so making our first discovery, besides proving him the liar he has been thought. We sailed about 50 miles southward, and had to stay, as the barometer went down to 28.6, and we have had a blizzard ever since. We left at 8 to-night for Adalie Land, which we should reach to-morrow. It was sighted by the French Admiral D'Urville, in 1841, but not landed on yet. There is still a heavy swell on and a strong wind. The lowest temperature we have had is 24, and it has been under 30 for some days. On duty last night we had the heaviest fall of snow yet, and the ship was quite white. The ropes all have a coating of ice on them, and are very chilly to handle. We pulled up and shot a sea leopard on a floe one day. Its skin is a rarity. One of the sailors got excited, fell in, and was only just rescued in time. At this temperature any one falling in goes straight to the bottom. We pulled up to ice one day in the pack, but just got a tank of ice aboard when the heavy swell drove the ship away, and we have not got any more yet. A school of 'Orca' whales came by two evenings ago—about 20 in it. There are myriads of snow birds, like pure white penguins, and Antarctic petrels, around the ship, and occasionally stray Emperor or Adalie penguins, standing majestically on isolated ice floes. We are just bumping up and down now with the ship hitting the ice blocks. It is daylight the 24 hours. One night we played bridge on the poop until 11.30 p.m.

—The Day's Work.—

"I have been doing a fair amount of meteorological reading, as I will be specialist at the third base if we have one, which is doubtful, owing to the coal supply being short; if not, at the second base. Salt beef is not appetising, and we long to get off to get our own food. Cocoa and toast in the galley at midnight is the best meal we get. It is now 12 p.m., and the watch is over, so I am off to bed, as the next watch is at 8 a.m., when we have to kill and dress four sheep.

—Further South.—

"January 23.—Lat. 65, Long. 133—All in bed, too chilly outside, and very uninviting on deck. Glass falling fast, and we are in for a good gale. Well, we got to Adalie Land all right; but had nothing but blizzards for two weeks. The one we sheltered from at the ice barrier blew at 80 miles per hour in the lee. The barrier has been named, and is the second biggest yet seen, being at least 100 miles long. We found a good landing place, and, working in two shifts of eight hours on and off without a break, soon got plenty of stores ashore and sledged them to the hut side; but hurricanes kept us quiet, and 16 of us were marooned for three days, as the launch could not get off. The experience of sleeping bags was novel and not too pleasant at first. We had to have sledging sleeping bags, as we had to sleep on ice in a hut we made of benzine cases. They are of reindeer skin. The fur is beautifully thick and warm. The second two nights we had two little tents up, three in each, with three-man sleeping bags. They of course are warmer. The worse work was getting 20 tons of coal brickettes ashore, and the aeroplane was heavy, too. We dug out a landing place in the ice, and rigged a derrick over it. Owing to coal shortage the parties were re-divided, and Mr. Wilde was given a picked party of eight all told, and I am satisfied we are a good lot. Most of the first party would have liked to be with us. We all have separate work. Wild, leader; Watson and Hoadley, geologists; Dovers, surveyor; Alec Kennedy, Magneto work; Harrison, biologist; Moyes, meteorologist; and Dr. Jones. Dr. Mawson gave me some hints on the instruments, and I also have to get through notes on the Aurora Australis for his book. We got away on the Friday night, after a toast in Maderia wine presented by H.M.S. Challenger. It was bought at Maderia by the Challenger in its famous voyage in 1874, and has been kept for the next expedition in these waters. It did not seem right leaving 18 men, so it will appear worse for eight. We have been going west ever since dodging icepack and bergs. We have passed Cape Clarie, so called by D'Urville, but have not sighted land. The Aurora has been rolling terribly owing to a huge swell from the north, and is doing over 30 deg. each way. It shows

something for the stability of our stomachs that we are not sick, as we eat all day, and awful food at that. We always have to toss up whether it is jelly or bread we are eating. My beard has been trimmed down, and I get named as George V. by all on board. It gets duller about 11 o'clock at night now for a short time, but it is still very light.

—Gorgeous Sunsets.—

There was a gorgeous sunset about 10.30 last night. Some of the colours would brand the artist as a liar for life if he put them down. The icebergs now are different, more rugged and pointed, as if older than the first ones we met. We have a grand auto harp on board. Much more difficult than the one we used to have. It has 12 keys, giving 38 chords, and we are all learning it. It is now February 2, and we are in lat. 65, long. 110, and still going. We had a few days of tempest last week. A snowstorm on Thursday ended in a hurricane, and we were driven in all directions. On Saturday, going east, we were blown 70 miles west. They could get no observations for three days, as no sun appeared, and even now, one day is lucky. We passed south of where Saorina Land should have been, so it is an island of anything. Too much fog to see very far. We landmen were not too comfortable in the seas we had—the ship rolling through about 70 deg. for two or three days. The weather has been very cold since; in fact, only up to 35 yet since Adalie Land. I have been cracking hardy with only a singlet and sweater, but except in a wind it is not cold. The food is our trouble. The cook is useless, and his mate is worse, so we can get nothing palatable; in fact, we are always crying for tinned stuff, which we know is bad for us. When we get ashore to penguin and seal steaks we will feed. Penguin is very nice, but these meats are very dark—nearly black. The blubber of the seals is from 3 to 4 in. thick, and spoils the taste if left on. We have to get to Knox Land (long. 107-30) to-morrow, and land there. If there is no land I don't know where we

will go. In half an hour last night the deck got covered in 6 in. of snow, and we got several milk-white snow birds, which had got caught in the rigging. On the Tuesday we trimmed coal all day, and on Wednesday we hitched to an ice floe and iced the ship. We went as hard as we could to make the sailors go, and in three hours took on enough ice to get over 1,000 gallons of water. We only had a day's supply left, so needed it. I snared a bucket of ice and got a bath from it later on. We have been going through pack ice for two days, and have seen glorious bergs. One line was about six miles long, and probably was taken for land by some of the very early explorers.

—Looking for Land.—

"Our last hope in front, and it is February 12, lat. 64.30, long. 93.30. Can find no land, and have been making for two days Drygalski's Land, sighted by him when the Gauss was iced in in 1901. The place seems full of pack, and not much chance of getting to it if there. The only thing left is the barrier, so if I don't return, it means we got a safe landing on it. This is a new barrier of 60 to 80 miles in length that we found a few days ago. The voyage has got very monotonous; no books left. Most of us have influenza or a cough through remaining in this poky saloon. It is usually snowing too hard, or blowing too strong, to go on deck. The temperature to-day is 25. We will be glad when it is all decided off at the most three days from now. We either get ashore or get back. It has been a wonderful trip, though. We have done 1,500 miles of this coast now.

—Land at Last.—

"February 15.—We had the greatest luck. On our last day's coal yesterday we ran to an icefloe, 30 miles wide, with land behind, and following it along got to an ice-barrier, where the floe ends, and starting at 2.30 yesterday, have about a third of our goods on top of the barrier. It is heavy work, up a heavy 120-ft. cliff, but we have to get it up quickly. On the floe there are plenty of penguins and Weddell seals, so have sufficient food. It is the most picturesque landing and home of any explorers yet. I am sure. Most wonderful cornices, cliffs, and crevasses. There is no land within 18 miles, and then no exposed rock for hundreds of miles, so not much for geologists, but my work will be the same. Sunday provided a very solid day's work. We have been hauling at the top of our aerial tramway for three days, doing 11 hours a day, and all are ready to drop. We get up 12 tons of coal to-morrow, and the ship leaves Tuesday morning. The glacier is a huge one, and is to be called Shackleton Glacier.

Will you keep all the papers about the landing here? There is sure to be a difference about it, as French, German, and American expeditions missed it, and Drygalski, in the German ship Gauss, in 1901, said it was impossible to land here. To-night (Monday) is the last on the ship. Everything is on top now, except kitbags, and we are looking for a very successful and profitable year. All have worked like niggers, and done a marvellous landing. The temperature on Saturday night was 5, and is the lowest yet. All to-day we worked in a blizzard, not able to see 10 yards because of the driving snow, and eyebrows, eyelids, moustaches, and beards were all frozen stiff. In the 41 days we hauled up 20 tons of timber, about 800 cases of goods, and 12 tons of brickettes. I am sending postcards to all the others. Some may not reach, as they are stolen in the post. You can expect us back about the end of March, 1913, at the earliest, if the Aurora leaves in December. We now sing 'Sweethearts and Wives' together, a weekly affair, and then to bed."