

# The People Welcome Antarctic Explorers.

Merrily the Albert bells chimed, pealing out the invitation to the people's welcome to the returned Antarctic heroes. No invitation was needed. Long before the town clock chimed the hour of three, the Town Hall was filled in every part with an expectant throng, eager for a sight of the men who had fought the Ice King and conquered, wresting from the Antarctic snows Nature's most treasured secrets. The day previous, what might be termed the academic welcome was tendered; yesterday was the people's day. Every Australian is a hero-worshipper. Those hero-worshippers gathered in their hundreds in the Town Hall. Is not Dr. Mawson "our very own" explorer? His connection with the Adelaide University and the work he has accomplished in this State make him, in very truth, South Australian property. Then that crowd did not forget that, associated with him, was Cecil Madigan, the distinguished young South Australian Rhodes' Scholar. Thus did they rightly regard it as a fitting occasion to welcome back countrymen of their own who had carved for themselves a niche in the hall of fame. The fierceness of the battle with Nature in her wildest and cruellest moods appealed but dimly to the majority in that gathering; what concerned them most was the fact that Dr. Mawson and his gallant companions, about whose deeds they had read with a thrill and a quickening of the pulse, was actually in their midst, back from the eternal ice.

The welcoming home of a hero, be he from the battlefield or the frozen wilds may be a pleasurable experience to the looker-on, but to the hero himself, the ordeal palls a little after a time, and this is just the experience of the members of the expedition. Indeed, said Dr. Mawson, so numerous had been the welcomes that he had not had time to keep his private engagements. Now, however, the public portion of the welcome is over.

Cheer upon cheer rang out as the tall, bronzed leader, accompanied by the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. A. A. Simpson), walked down the aisle and took their places on the platform. The large organ, presided over by the City Organist (Mr. W. R. Pybus) pealed out the note of welcome, in which the citizens so heartily joined. The interior of the hall was gay with bunting, and the front of the platform was decorated with a purple panel, bearing a sprig of golden wattle, the national emblem of the land of the leader (Dr. Mawson). One missed the colors of the Aurora, that stout little ship that "braved the battle and the breeze" so finely amidst adverse conditions.

The mayor presided, being supported by Dr. Mawson, Captain Davis, Mr. Cecil Madigan, and Mr. A. H. Hodgeman, members of the expedition, the Commissioner of Public Works (Sir Richard Butler), the Minister of Customs (Hon. E. L. Groom), the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. F. W. Young), Professor Masson, Dr. J. C. Verco (president of the Royal Society), Mr. Crawford Vaughan (Leader of the Opposition), and Mr. A. M. Simpson. The other members of the expedition also occupied seats on the platform. Just in a homely sort of way, Dr. Mawson, Captain Davis, and Mr. Madigan talked of life in the Antarctic.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S ROLL OF HONOR

### HER PART IN POLAR EXPLORATION

#### CITIZENS WELCOME RETURNED EXPLORERS.

The Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. A. A. Simpson) said he regretted that his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor was unable to be present that afternoon owing to his judicial duties. Mr. Douglas Reid had written to him that Sir George Reid was unfortunately too unwell to attend any public meeting. He, however, expressed the opinion that the State should be everlastingly proud of Dr. Douglas Mawson—a sentiment with which all agree. (Applause.) The president of the South Australian branch of the Royal Geographical Society (Hon. J. Lewis, M.L.C.) had also intimated his inability to be present.

#### HEROES OF THE PAST.

As Australians they might now be proud that Australian exploration was no longer confined to the territories of the Commonwealth, of which, indeed, only a few scattered areas in the interior and part of their possession in Papua remained to be explored. It was true that another hero (Sir John Franklin), who they might regard as almost as much an Australian by adoption as Dr. Mawson, over 60 years ago perished, but succeeded in the futile discovery of the Northwest Passage through the Arctic Ocean. And in the Antarctic Professor David and other Australians shared honorably the expedition of Sir Ernest Shackleton and the late Captain Scott. It was with the former of those that Dr. Mawson served his polar apprenticeship. (Applause.)

#### ANOTHER NOTABLE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN.

On February 18 they read in the cablegrams that the Besley expedition had at last returned to New York, and they were gratified and pleased to remember that Captain James Besley was a South Australian, born in Port Augusta and

educated in Adelaide. (Applause.) He had led his party through the forests of Peru across the Brazilian boundary, and returned to civilisation down a tributary of the Amazon. On his journey he found the remains of the members of the ill-fated Cromer expedition. He encountered risks from previously unknown tribes of cannibals and discovered the ruins of the long-lost city of the Incas, which doubtless had been destroyed and forgotten in the invasion of Pizarro.

#### A DESTRUCTIVE EXPEDITION.

But though Australians in a measure have been associated with those explorations, they must regard the expedition of Dr. Mawson's as distinctively their own.—(applause)—not only the leader, but the party and equipment, which was so very largely Australian—and Adelaide might rejoice to be the first to welcome the intrepid traveller on their return from the solitary places of the south. (Applause.) At the proper time they would look forward to the publication of details of the scientific work of the expedition, but at present the people were content to know that something had been done to add to the glory of human achievement, for which no sacrifice was in vain. (Applause.) Perhaps the mass of meteorological data collected might form a nucleus of information to enable them to make weather forecasts further ahead. Perhaps the geological discoveries might not become valuable until their grandchildren visit the Antarctic in their aeroplanes. But enough for them was the privilege of welcoming the illustrious voyagers—Dr. Mawson, Captain Davis, and gentlemen of the Antarctic expedition. In behalf of the corporation and people of Adelaide he bade them a hearty welcome. (Applause.)

## THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S WELCOME

### MONEY WELL SPENT

"WELL DONE, DR. MAWSON."

The Commissioner of Public Works (Sir Richard Butler) extended to Dr. Mawson and his party the warmest welcome back to South Australia on behalf of the Government. He and his party had come from the land of blizzard and crevasses, and perpetual snow. He supposed some of their friends, when in the Antarctic regions, might have thought of the words—"The snow, the beautiful snow," but to them it was perpetual snow. Because of that they welcomed the party back to the land which was unsurpassed for happiness, peace, and contentment. They had only to remember the hardships the party had endured to feel that the explorers were Britishers—(applause)—and that they were among the bravest of the British subjects. There was no fear of the future of the British Empire when they could take from Australia men of the calibre who were before them that afternoon. (Applause.)

#### MONEY WELL SPENT.

The people did not grudge one penny of the money spent on the expedition. They knew that there had been scientific results, and they were prepared to wait until the results were published. But the people were there that afternoon to extend a right royal welcome to the party. The members of the expedition had lifted up to the highest ideals of citizenship, and their accomplishments would never be forgotten so long as Aus-

tralia had a history. They could not but feel a sense of deep regret at the deaths of Lieutenant Ninnis and Dr. Mertz—men who had not reached the meridian of their lives, and had had singularly useful careers before them—who were lying asleep wrapped in the snows of the Antarctic. They could only imagine the feelings of Dr. Mawson when he staggered back alone from the terrible ordeals through which he had passed after the deaths of his two brave companions. The previous day some of them had had the privilege of hearing the manly eloquence of Captain Davis, who took the Australian Titanic to the southern seas. (Applause.) The sojourn—or it was more fitting to say the imprisonment—for 12 months in the ice of that gallant little party was thought heroic.

#### LOYALTY SECRET OF SUCCESS.

He had been told that for a long time the men on Macquarie Island lived on an extraordinary mixture of sago and sea elephant. (Laughter.) The foundation stones of the success of the expedition had been loyalty to its chief, loyalty to comrades, and a determination at all hazards to do their duty. "Dr. Mawson," concluded Sir Richard, "well done! South Australia is proud of you, all Australia is proud of you, and will always remember your glorious achievements." (Applause.)