

DR. MAWSON'S DREAM.

The most cruel thing in the antarctic is imagination. It produces mental mirages which may be menacing or merely tantalizing. The mind of the explorer in the vastness of the white continent is of necessity charged with dire possibilities. This is part of the grim game when men go out to beat Nature in the frozen battleground of the south. Indomitable wills can conquer that great circumstance. But it is quite another matter to dismiss visions of the banquets of civilization when the menu is down to sago and sea elephant. No wonder Dr. Mawson had a remarkable dream. He told the audience at the Adelaide Town Hall on Tuesday afternoon all about it. Dr. J. C. Verco, in a speech of dainty and cultured felicity, had given the antarctic celebrity the text, taken from Tom Hood's story of the arctic traveller who lamented—

Our food is solid, ere we put
Our meal into our crops,
We use sledge hammers to our steaks,
And hatchets to our chops.

Dr. Mawson and his comrades had a different experience from that. "Our storeman was Murphy," he related in his simple, graphic narrative about the commissariat. "He dealt with the meat question. There was a considerable space under our hut which was an ideal refrigerator. In it were stored a large number of eggs that had been brought from Australia, and penguin eggs that had been collected during the summer season. There were also carcasses of mutton, penguin meat, and so on. Well, a quantity of snow got into the cellar and choked it up. Murphy hit upon a splendid idea of getting the produce out. He used to call a dog and poke him down the cellar. The dog would grab a bit of penguin mutton, and then he had to be caught before he could get away. Otherwise there was a long chase outside. (Laughter.) The method was very successful. (Laughter.) You could play ball with the eggs without the least fear of a breakage. We had our food dreams pretty bad on the sledge journey. As time passed the complaint became more and more acute. (Laughter.) I remember one dream was a very weird affair. I seemed to be travelling in a train in South Australia. Curiously enough I wanted some cake. Somebody in the train whom I had never met before gave me the address of a shop that had something special. I got out at a country centre and found it. The manager was sent for, but it appeared that the cakes were so large that he was alarmed at the fact that I was anxious to tackle one myself. Eventually he told me that I would have to go up on the roof. (Laughter.) I climbed up the fire escape of a three-storey building, and there were the cakes, as big as washing coppers. I was anxious to test them, but the proprietor objected somehow. (Laughter.) He hurried me out of the place, and said he would send one to me. I got down from the roof only to see the fellow driving away in an aeroplane. (Laughter.) The cake came, however, and the instructions with it were to set a match to it and the whole thing would come out ready cooked. And then —" Then Dr. Mawson woke up! And the waiter of the antarctic restaurant cried—"Sago or sea elephant, sir." The imagination is cruel in the antarctic.

MAWSON'S DOGS.

The Commonwealth Chief Director of Quarantine (Dr. Cumpston) has given directions that the Esquimaux dogs, which were brought back from Antarctica with the Mawson expedition, may be handed over to the members of the expedition. If the gentlemen concerned will call on Mr. A. C. Minchin at the Zoological Gardens they will be given possession of the animals, which, however, will remain on view to the public during show week.

DR. MAWSON'S MOVEMENTS.

Among 300 congratulatory cablegrams and telegrams received by Dr. Mawson since his return from the south are messages from the President of the Hungarian Geographical Society (Dr. Loczy) and Lieut. Penell, who was in command of Scott's vessel, the Terra Nova. Dr. Mawson will leave for Melbourne this afternoon to discuss expedition matters with various officials there, and later will proceed to Sydney on a similar mission. "I shall soon have to go to England," he stated on Tuesday night. "The visit cannot long be delayed. Capt. Davis will sail with the Aurora on Saturday afternoon for Hobart where he will await orders."

THE SLEEPERS IN THE ANTARCTIC.

Two of the brave comrades of the Mawson expedition are sleeping in the antarctic, Lieut. Ninnis and Dr. Mertz, recalling the thrilling phrases of Charcot, "have as their mausoleum the whole fantastic architecture of the vast and silent south." The story that has come from the lips of Dr. Mawson, who was their companion through this tragic period of heroic achievement, is that they were brave souls, who never complained. The joy of the homecoming of the gallant antarctic explorers has been tinged by the fact that the party is incomplete, and that their colleagues, wrapped in the white arms of faraway snows, are not present to share the prestige of a nation's applause. But Dr. Mawson has made their memories live. He has missed no opportunity to bestow upon them the touching panegyrics of a sorrowing leader. "The joy of our return," remarked Dr. Mawson at the memorable public reception on Tuesday afternoon, "is greatly marred by the tragedy that robbed us of two fine companions, two of the finest anybody could wish to have. Although Lieut. Ninnis and Dr. Mertz were not Australians, they were both gallant and devoted members of the Australian expedition. (Applause.) I would like to suggest that the relatives of my two friends should be informed by cable that the people of Australia, amid their enthusiasm for the survivors, have remembered those who gave their lives to the cause. (Loud applause.) I believe the Commonwealth Government would gladly transmit such a message if the Mayor preferred the request." Mr. Simpson immediately bent over and had a conversation with the Minister for Customs, and it was noted that Mr. Groom readily acquiesced. At a later stage Mr. Simpson stated that the Federal Minister had promised to authorize the dispatch of the message suggested by Dr. Mawson to the relatives of the deceased and at the same time to congratulate them on the imperishable fame of their achievements. The announcement was greeted with sympathetic applause. After the meeting the Mayor and Dr. Mawson framed the following cablegram:—"The people of Australia, at a public meeting in Adelaide to welcome return Mawson expedition, condole with you on your great loss, but congratulate you on your son's imperishable fame." The message was dispatched by the Federal Government.

AURORA OPEN FOR INSPECTION.

To-day and to-morrow the Aurora, in which the Mawson expedition returned from the antarctic on Thursday, will be open for public inspection. The vessel is lying at the T head in the South Australian Company's basin. On Friday the ship will coal prior to resuming her voyage to Hobart on the following day. All the specimens gathered by the expedition have been landed.

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"SHAME!"

Dr. Mawson's welcome was referred to at the Methodist Conference yesterday morning. The Rev. W. G. Clarke said that although the Governor-General, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Premier, and a number of the Ministers of the Crown were present at the welcome and many speeches were made not one word of thanks to Almighty God was uttered for the safe return of the party. (Cries of "Shame!") Was it an indication that they were drifting from their recognition of God in their national life? They needed to correct that. (Hear, hear.)

"LOOK AFTER MAWSON."

There were a lot of people thinking about Dr. Mawson when he was sharing with his colleagues of two long years the perils of his ice prison on Adelie Land. Nobody will ever be able to analyse the emotions of the stalwart and indomitable leader when he found the Aurora turning back for home without him. The manly commander of what Sir Richard Butler yesterday called "the Australian Titanic"—although, fortunately, it was hardly that—had no alternative but to sail there and then. It was a case of either get out or be put out—and worse! One of the secrets that have been unlocked from the confidences of members of the expedition is that Capt. Davis nearly cried when he found that he had to leave Dr. Mawson behind. With heroic philosophy the leader settled down to another year amid the ice. When he called for companions every one of his colleagues stood by him. It required no wireless telegraphy to link the thoughts of those in the enjoyment of the amenities of civilization with the brave little band that was keeping the flag flying and carrying it to greater conquests in the uncharted areas of the antarctic. Almost the final words of Professor Henderson before he left for England were—"Mind you look after Mawson." They were addressed to Dr. J. C. Verco. Professor Henderson and the doctor had parted on North terrace, and were walking away when the message was shouted back. "Those thoughts have been the general sentiment for months," remarked Dr. Verco at the big public meeting on Tuesday. There was no doubt about it, and the audience cheered to show that he was right. Dr. Mawson has his side to that affair. He good naturedly objects that "they have been looking after me too well." He would rather be a little less in the limelight, and if he could have managed it he would have succeeded. All the time since his return he has been busy trying to get into the background, and to bring his comrades prominently into the picture.