

THE MAWSON RECEPTION.

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In order to appreciate the essentially great demonstration of yesterday, commentators need not discuss minutely the question whether the honoured leader of the Aurora expedition should have honoured his engagement with the local branch of the Royal Geographical Society for a friendly private reception before the University demonstration. Nor need they consider whether the magnificent display of the sentiment of the community which was witnessed in the Elder Hall ought or ought not to have preceded what may be regarded as a more popular, because a more unrestricted, manifestation of the citizens' estimation of noble deeds—the assemblage called together at the instance of the Mayor for to-day. Upon these points various people will hold varying opinions. The point of agreement will be reached in a contemplation of the splendid function so finely conducted and organized by the University authorities on Monday. In itself that celebration of a great occasion was, like the occasion, unique. The speeches, on the whole, attained a high level; and even the hesitancy of the chief figure upon the platform was more effective, although entirely unstudied, than any exhibition of fluent and polished oratory would have been in the circumstances. The old idea that men of action are not men of words is not true, but it is popular.

Dr. Mawson indicated clearly that he is becoming tired of eulogy; and that—with his evident modesty, and that of his principal coadjutor, Capt. Davis, and their generous and proper desire to give every one of their companions his due—formed the most pleasantly characteristic features of the meeting. There was little indulgence in heroics; there was none in mock-heroics. The audience were told in plain words as much as they could at this stage be told of what the expedition had sought to do and what it had done; the value of much of the work has yet to be appraised in its detail and its fulness by expert scientific men. Yet, as the Premier indicated in a clever phrase, a feat would have been performed if the party had only discovered that there was nothing to discover. What impressed the great and brilliant audience were not the scientific or the strictly utilitarian aspects of the results achieved, but the "human nature" of the engagement—the soul of the enterprise. Before them stood brave men who had faced death—not perhaps without flinching, but unafraid; and who had been with other brave men whom Death had claimed as hostages. This quiet confronting and enduring of imminent peril, increasing day by day, is immeasurably more heroic than many exploits, performed in a dash of half-mad frenzy upon the battlefield, which have been rewarded by the Victoria Cross for valour. That is the true meaning and essence of the people's demonstration of delight over the achievements of the Mawson expedition and the men themselves; and, within due limits and with reasonable restraint, it is a fine thing, because in reacting it elevates the ideals of the community.

A CANCELLED RECEPTION.

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Dr. Mawson and Geographical Society.

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An Unfortunate Incident.

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It was expected that the Council of the South Australian branch of the Royal Geographical Society was to accord Dr. Mawson a reception on Monday morning, but owing to unforeseen circumstances the ceremony did not take place.

"I understood you were to receive Dr. Mawson at the chambers of the society," said a reporter to the President (Hon. J. Lewis, M.L.C.). "I am sorry to say we did not," was the reply.

"Was it not arranged that you should give him a reception?"—"Yes. We had arranged for Dr. Mawson to meet the council at the rooms of the society at noon just to give him a hearty welcome home."

"Who were the speakers?"—"Nobody, unfortunately. The council met at the appointed time, and at 12.15 p.m. a messenger came from Dr. Mawson to tell us that he regretted very much that his engagement with the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir Samuel Way) and the Governor-General (Lord Denman) prevented him from carrying out his promise. My council very much regrets that the doctor did not fulfil his promise."

The Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way), when shown Mr. Lewis's statement by a reporter, said:—"The matter is not by any means a personal one. Mr. Lewis is an old friend of mine; indeed, he was married from my house. The simple facts are that the Adelaide University had given up the services of one of its professors for nearly four years, and it was largely his connection with that institution which secured Adelaide the honour of first welcoming him back to Australia. At considerable trouble I secured that honour, and also the presence of His Excellency the Governor-General, and I did not consider it was fair to the University or to Dr. Mawson for another function to come on before the great gathering of the afternoon. Dr. Mawson has been spending most of his time since his return calling to London, he was engaged with the Governor-General and myself for a long time on Monday morning, and even without attending at the Geographical Society's rooms at noon he was unable to get any luncheon before he appeared at the University congregation. We had made all provision for organizations such as the Geographical Society to be represented on the platform at Elder Hall, and in the circumstances I think it was unreasonable to expect Dr. Mawson to have attended an earlier engagement. Mr. Lewis, as an experienced public man, knows that not a little preparation is needed before a man can address 1,500 people as the expedition leader had to do on Monday afternoon. In justice to himself, to say nothing of the University's claims, I don't see how Dr. Mawson could have given any of his time to the Geographical Society."

"I have nothing to say in reply to the Chancellor of the University," remarked the Hon. J. Lewis. "Dr. Mawson put the Council of the Geographical Society and myself, as President, to a great deal of inconvenience. He did not keep his promise, and we much regret it."

THE AURORA'S SKIPPER.

The man who had to make the decision which left Dr. Mawson in the antarctic regions for the second year was Capt. Davis. When he went back for the party it was his fifth journey to the antarctic. This time he brought all the men out, and steered a new course to Port Adelaide. He was forced to say a few words at the University gathering, but he spoke like a commander. What he said rang true. He was on the captain's deck, but he told of the great loyalty of the party to Dr. Mawson. His story, related with great emphasis, was interesting. Twice he said he had finished, but the Chancellor persuaded him to say more. He would tell nothing about himself, but he praised Dr. Mawson as a born leader. History has shown that Capt. Davis was right in leaving the leader behind for another 12 months.

NEWS OF THE DAY.

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PUBLIC WELCOME TO DR. MAWSON.

A public welcome, arranged by the Adelaide City Council, will be tendered to Dr. Mawson at 3 o'clock this afternoon, at the Town Hall. Addresses will be given by the Mayor (Mr. A. A. Simpson), the Minister of Trade and Customs (Hon. L. E. Groom), the Commissioner of Public Works (Sir Richard Butler), Professor Mason, and Dr. J. C. Verco (President of the Royal Society). Besides Dr. Mawson, several members of the antarctic party will speak in reply. The doors of the Town Hall will be opened at 2 o'clock, and the City Organist (Mr. W. R. Pybus) will render selections on the organ for an hour previous to the opening of the proceedings. The whole of the main hall and galleries will be available for the general public.