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, and welcomed the central figure, the intrepid Antarctic explorer who was thus being enthusiastically welcomed back to his native land. He is safe, he says, and for the first time in his career, he is happy and free. The distinguished audience that gathered to do him honor included Dr. Mawson’s former colleagues and friends, as well as many others from all walks of life. As an explorer, he is in his element, and as a public speaker he is at his best. He has been called the ‘Lion of Antarctica,’ and his speeches are always a delight to hear.

But, then, Australia—and particularly South Australia—is proud of her home town, and the welcome was as fitting as it was hearty. It was particularly fitting that Dr. Mawson should first be welcomed home by the university with which he has been associated for so many years, and to the latter of which he has so signally added. Then, Mr. Cecil Madigan is a graduate of the university, and 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 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 university, and not as quiet and unassuming as they were. 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 assembly. In the eyes of many was a surging emotion 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, it is 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. Mawson 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 Neill, took his seat. The Governor-General was welcomed at the steps outside 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 professors 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. O. Buss), the Speaker of the House of Assembly (Hon. L. O’Leary), President of the Legislative Council (Sir Benjamin Stirling), the Chairman of the Education Commission (Mr. T. Ryan), Mr. W. J. Denny, M.P., and Professor, Orme Mason, of the Melbourne University, who represented the Australian Society for the Advancement of Science. Included in the audience were representatives of art, literature, and science, the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. J. E. Attwood), and members of the city and suburban councils and municipalities, in addition to representatives of various religious denominations.