

ON BOARD THE AURORA

THE LAST KNOT OF THE VOYAGE REGISTERED

SHIP'S PASSAGE UP THE RIVER CHEERED

THE EXPEDITIONARY VESSEL BERTHED.

"Look Out for the Dogs!"

The warning greeted the pressman as he clambered over the black bulwark of the Aurora at its Semaphore anchorage. Just forward of the bridge the dogs were chained, and much yeeping and barking resounded over the waters at intervals, which were happily not too frequent. These dogs were naturally proud. They had every reason to be. They had long woolly coats that would have made any ordinary domesticated canine howl with envy. But, beyond the endowments of Nature some of them could in their doggy minds survey with great complacency glorious pasts, and recall exhibitions of Polar prowess that were historical in their way. They were not, however, given to exhaustive consideration of the ego. They paid more attention to their neighbors than themselves; nor were these said attentions always in the nature of brotherly (or sisterly) love. They sought mutual condolence in pairs, and apart from these restricted associations they seemed to look upon any others of their ilk in the light of interlopers. They gave one or two demonstrations of the determined manner in which they support this theory while the Aurora was proceeding towards the port, and these exhibitions generally had detrimental effect upon an ear or other tender doggy part. Twelve panting exiles from the snows were these lithe creatures, 10 from Greenland, some with creditable records in Arctic exploration, and two puppies, born and cradled in the ice hummocks of the far south.

Mawson Leaves.

If these dogs held primary interest by reason of threatened danger, which, after all, might only have been a species of seaman's bluff, there were a hundred and one other things to hold the attention on the Aurora. But the little boat has been often described. She has become an object of fame in the Austra-

lian mind, as her crew and the members of the expedition connected with her have become the objects of respect.

Dr. Mawson did not remain long on board after the arrival at the anchorage. He boarded the pilot's boat and the smaller craft immediately turned her head towards the shore. Captain Davis, with Captain Richardson, the pilot in charge, mounted the bridge of the Aurora and she nosed her slow way through the softly tumbling sea in the direction of the Outer Harbor.

Uncommunicative Explorers.

The pressmen who boarded the expeditionary ship in search of "copy" met with a barrier which could not be torn down. The returning explorers were under orders not to speak, and the inducements of friendly intercourse availed little. Consequently the public at present are denied the history of individual experiences in the south, and the rights of the story are sold to an English journal.

"Three Cheers!"

Passing the Outer Harbor Wharf on the way towards Schnapper Point, the Aurora was made to appear inconspicuous in bulk by the huge P. and O. liner Marmora, lying alongside. The people on the mailboat and also those on the wharf crowded to vantage points from which the Aurora could be observed, and then three ringing cheers came across the water as a token of welcome. The men on the smaller boat replied in a similar fashion, and the ensigns were dipped courteously in accordance with the maritime custom. A moment later the mangroves, which grow profusely about the North Arm, came into sight. The doubtful viridescence of the undesirable growth misled one returning spirit. The feelings of this man from the realm of whiteness were too much for him, and with ecstatic emphasis he exclaimed, "Hooray! It's green grass!"

More Welcomes.

Just below the North Arm the Katoombe was passed, and the boats' sirens shrieked in some bizarre incomprehensible language of sibilants. More rousing cheers went up from the passengers, and again the reply was appreciative. Flags were dipped, and then almost immediately the Aurora's ensign dipped again as the gulf steamer Morialta gave the salute to the accompaniment of more cheers.

Extremities.

Progress became slower as the vessel drew nearer to her destination, and a moment was gained for a glance round. There is no waste space on board the Aurora, and the whole construction of the vessel is most interesting to view. The writer found himself for'ard, and here the cook's galley is situated. It was hot in this quarter, and a smiling individual laughed as he perspired. "It wasn't so bad in here down among the ice," he remarked, "but it was a shock to go out on deck. They sort of had me between two extremities, and to leave the heat of this place and go out into the cold was—er, well, it was sudden." He explained the working of the range. "We struck some rough seas at time, and all the pots had to be lashed on to the stove," he added. "I can tell you I was thrown about a bit occasionally."

Civilisation Again.

General reminiscences had to be left, however, for the end of the Aurora's voyage was at hand. The Telamon, loading opposite the Produce Depot, saluted, and the Wandana and Kumeric followed suit. "Hooray!" The exclamation was followed by a burst of restrained cheering. Enquiring looks resulted in the satisfaction of curiosity. "There's some horses!" came the cry, and eyes were turned in pleasurable anticipation towards the wharf. The eyes were not exercised in vain, for they eagerly watched two tired quadrupeds attached to a lorry proceeding casually along the roadway. "Are you there, Hodgeman?" yelled a stentorian voice from the shore, and then the South Australian boy, grown robust in physique during his sojourn in the Antarctic, stepped forward to recognise a waiting friend. The voice came from the direction of New Dock and a moment or two later McLaren Wharf was reached. A knot of people watched the arrival and then the Governor Musgrave saluted in passing onward. The men grew silent as the wharf

was approached. Their former actions and observations had amply exemplified their eagerness to land once more, but now as the end was in sight they stood in silence, doubtless thinking of the friends whose hands they would soon clasp, and, perhaps, allowing a wandering thought to revert to the icefields and glaciers of the polar regions.

Home at Last.

A tugboat assisted the Aurora through the fairway of Robinson's bridge into the South Australian Company's basin. The southern abutment of the open bridge was lined with people, and as the homecoming vessel passed through the narrow channel bags of fresh fruit, provided by some thoughtful persons, were thrown on board and eagerly seized. But the last knot of the long voyage had been registered. The Aurora swung slowly into her berth on the northern side of the T-head and a rope was thrown on to the wharf. "A line ashore at last!" gleefully exclaimed one member of the Mawson party as he watched it being made fast. A few more moments and leaps were being made on to the wharf. Trains to the city were at once sought by many of the voyagers and the Aurora was left in her berth, the object of the curiosity of a fast-gathering assemblage.

FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE AURORA.

Shortly after the Aurora was sighted the Government launch Conqueror, which was specially engaged for the occasion, put off from the end of the Semaphore Jetty with Pilot Richardson on board, and made a beeline for the approaching vessel, which was flying a sail on the upper yard of her foremast. About 20 people who had friends and relatives on board the exploring party's steamer accompanied the pilot, with a party from

the University, with whom was Mr. T. Ryan, and after half an hour's steaming the two vessels were almost within hailing distance. Five men were observed aloft busily engaged in furling the flapping canvas, while others were seen moving up and down the deck. After her long absence the Aurora, with a slight list to port, presented a weatherbeaten appearance. Her port bulwarks amidships were stove in, while the port bow also showed signs of having been badly knocked about. Her wooden sides, square-cut stern masts and spars all looked as though they badly needed paint; but,

nevertheless, the Aurora and her yacht-like bow, beneath which there is a figure-head, provided a fine spectacle as she moved slowly and stately onward. Near the top of the mainmast was fixed a barrel-shaped crow's nest, from where

many a tedious lookout had been kept. On the mizzenmast fluttered the blue ensign, while the flag of the Royal English Yacht Squadron was observed at the top of the mainmast. As the Conqueror drew nearer necks were craned over the starboard bulwarks of the Aurora, and the sounding of the launch's siren was a signal for cheers, and the greetings ex-



CAPTAIN DAVIS,
Commanding the Aurora.