

Bitter Experiences.

The experiences of the party in Adelie Land will never fade from the memory of any one member. Their stay there, Dr. Mawson explained, had greatly added to the scientific value of their work, but a year in such a place was about as much as any man could stand. "We should almost have committed suicide rather than stay there for another twelve months," he added. "The climate is not like that of any other part of the world. In the winter it was worse than the summer, and we had to reorganise all our equipment to meet the circumstances. Terrific winds were blowing continuously at an average rate of 63 miles an hour. Our instruments recorded steady gales of up to 116 miles, and hours in duration. The gust velocity went up to the phenomenal speed of 200 or 300 miles an hour. Such puffs as those possessed an incredible power of destruction. If a similar cyclone were to sweep through Adelaide every building would be destroyed. They came down like the willy-willies you have here, only on a much larger scale, being about a quarter of a mile in diameter, and anything exposed in their path stood no chance. Our huts were buried deep in snow, but the exposed sides were wrenched and cracked with every such

puff that passed them. Our first experiences were very bitter. Having no knowledge of the conditions under which we were to live we proposed to proceed with the usual tents and light equipment, but they were no use at all, and we very nearly lost the lives of some of our number before we reorganised our equipment to suit the local conditions. We sent some parties out with the usual gear to see what could be done. That in Mr. Madigan's charge was the most successful, but they came back with their gear all shattered, and every man a mass of frost bites. Madigan's toes were swollen so that they could be hardly recognised as toes. The nails were almost off, and the feet were covered with great blisters."

"Would the men go back again if the opportunity offered? Dr. Mawson was asked.

"It is difficult to say," he replied. "Some of them would. The climate at the main base was exceedingly trying, but there is a fascination about the work that would make them forget the hardships."

"And what about yourself?"

"I should want a lot of attraction before I should go again. But there, again, I cannot tell you how I should feel if the opportunity arose. Shackleton said he wouldn't go a second time, but me went."

Invaluable Wireless.

When asked why it was that the Aurora did not get into communication with Australia by wireless on her way up from the Antarctic, Dr. Mawson stated that the wires had been fitted up from the start, and they had been able to hear all the messages from Australia as soon as they came out from the ice; but they had not troubled to get out the heavier transmitting gear, because it would not have meant a very great advantage to them, and it was imperative that they should economise their space. The room that would have been required for a wireless apparatus was urgently needed for laboratory work. "Our wireless plant," he added, "on the whole, was remarkably successful, but we were disappointed in the amount of stuff we transmitted. The hurricanes hampered us very much, and even this year, when we got the masts up early, the drifting snow which is just like one of the severe dust-storms of the north, came along charged with electricity, and the wires were fizzing and sparking so that you could not tell the message from the other dots and dashes. Sometimes the outside interference would stop, and everything would go on splendidly for half an hour, but then it would come on again, and many of our messages to you and your messages to us never reached their destination. Our experiences, however, demonstrated unquestionably the value of wireless under such circumstances, and no expedition should ever dream of going out without an equipment. Had the ship been stuck in the pack we could have got out our wireless and informed everybody in Australia that we were all right, and they need not worry; or if we had been in danger we could have summoned assistance. On some nights down there you could send a message over tremendous distances, and on one occasion the Macquarie Island station was heard off Cape Horn. Twice while we were in the pack we encountered very severe hurricanes, and we were fortunate to get out of them as we did. Our motor launch was carried away, and the bulwarks of the ship were stove in, but Captain Davis knew everything there was to be known about navigating a ship, and we

had every confidence in him. One night, however, we bumped into an iceberg, which we could not see even when we were grinding along its side. We always felt safer then because of the knowledge that we had a wireless instrument on board."

Vast Deposit of Coal.

One of the objects of the expedition was to investigate the mineral wealth of the little-known lands to the south, and Dr. Mawson was asked if he could give the result of those investigations. He explained that only scattered patches of rock were exposed throughout the 1,500 miles of country through which they had travelled, and, of course, where such a small area was exposed, it was almost hopeless to seek a payable deposit. "We did not find anything like that," he said, "but we did find small shows of great variety and were able to secure some good specimens. Taking the areas examined into consideration, the specimens obtained would seem to indicate that the land was even richer than any ordinary country. The rocks met with were very similar in character to those found in South and Western Australia. Copper was the most abundant of the ores found. Coal was discovered in one place in a visible outcrop, and the fact that we dredged it up in many places along the whole stretch of the coast would seem to indicate that there is a large formation running through the land."

A Visit to England.

Referring to his future plans, Dr. Mawson said he had a lot of work ahead of him, and he would have to go to England some time or other in connection with it. The University had been very generous in allowing him to be absent so long, and he hoped the expedition would be a credit to that institution.

A PUBLIC WELCOME.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL INVITED.

At a well-attended meeting of the council of the University of Adelaide on Thursday afternoon it was resolved to hold a public gathering in the Elder Hall on Monday or Tuesday next to welcome Dr. Mawson and his companions. The Lieutenant-Governor (Sir Samuel Way), as Chancellor of the University, will preside, and invitations have been extended to the Governor-General (Lord Denman), the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth (Mr. Cook), the Minister of External Affairs (Mr. Glynn), the Premiers of South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales (the contributing States), representatives of various public bodies, and many other distinguished public men. The day and hour for holding the meeting will be decided when it is known whether the Governor-General can accept the invitation to come to Adelaide, and, if so, which day will best meet his convenience. It will be a special congregation of the University, and an ad eundem gradum degree will be conferred upon Professor Orme Masson, who represented the Melbourne University on the committee which arranged the Mawson expedition.

THE RETURN VOYAGE.

CAPTAIN DAVIS INTERVIEWED.

SURVEYING THE COASTLINE.

A FINE PASSAGE.

Captain J. K. Davis, the commander of the Aurora, is a tall, ruddy-complexioned, genial man, and he looked as though he might provide good copy. He shook hands cordially with the pressmen, who found him in his cabin.

We want something from you concerning the part you have taken in the expedition, said the reporter.

"Do you," he replied; "well, I really cannot say anything. You see we have just had our orders from Dr. Mawson not to speak. I am sorry we cannot tell you anything."

Can you say what sort of a voyage you had?

"We had a good trip back."

When did you leave for Adelie Land?

He hesitated a moment, and then said—"We sailed from Hobart on November 19, having on board the following members of Dr. Mawson's staff:—J. Hunter, biologist; F. Hurley, photographer; and P. C. Correll, assistant to the official photographer, together with the meteorological party, who were to take over expeditions

stationed on Macquarie Island, consisting of Mr. Power, meteorologist in charge; Mr. Henderson, wireless operator; and Mr. Ferguson, assistant. We experienced very fine weather on our passage to Macquarie Island, and some further oceanographical work was carried out prior to our arrival there on November 28, at 8.20 p.m. The Aurora remained at Macquarie Island for a week landing stores for the remaining party, and taking on board collections secured by the party under Mr. Ainsworth, who, after a residence of two years on the island, were to embark with us. We left the island on December 5. The weather favored us, and we made good progress to the southward. The first ice was sighted on December 9 in latitude 62 deg. south, longitude 151 deg. 41 min. east. The following day we encountered a good deal of loose pack ice, but pushed on with difficulty, and at 7 a.m. on December 13 anchored in Commonwealth Bay, where we found Dr. Mawson and his party of six all well. We left Adelie Land on Christmas Eve. We were blown out in a gale. We continued to carry out the original plans of Dr. Mawson in following the coastline as far west as possible, and completing the work of the two previous cruises as far as possible. We left the ice on February 7, and have had a very fine run up. Personally I am extremely glad to have got back, and to have brought back safely Dr. Mawson and his party."

What are your future plans?

"I cannot say what they are. You must see Dr. Mawson."

Have you brought back a hold full of blubber?

"No, but we've brought back a tremendous collection of specimens?"

What are you going to do with the specimens?

"The collection will be landed with dispatch, and I presume sent to various museums."

Captain Davis has with him the following staff:—J. Blair, first officer; P. Gray, second officer; C. Delamotte, third officer; and F. Gillies, chief engineer. The crew consists of 20 all told.

MEMBERS OF THE PARTY.

SILENT, BUT GLAD TO RETURN.

When Dr. Mawson left the Aurora at the anchorage, pressmen remained on board with the object of interviewing members of the party. Each one, however, courteously, but firmly, declined to make a statement. They were willing enough to talk generalities about the weather, of the warm temperatures into which they had been gradually sailing in their voyage from southern latitudes. But on the question of the stay of the balance of the expedition at Adelie Land they were dumb.

Messrs. Bickerton, Madigan, and Hodgeman, Dr. McLean, and the rest were approached in turn, but the stereotyped reply was, "We are bound by our leader not to give the press information at the present juncture." Mr. Bickerton frankly admitted that "he could a tale unfold," but there it was—he was absolutely unable. The same attitude was manifest throughout the trip, except that Captain Davis readily gave some information respecting the voyage of the Aurora from Hobart to the land of ice, and back again.

Every member of the expedition said he was glad to be back. The experience had been one that no one would have missed. There is a wonderful fascination about the Antarctic Circle which no one who has not been there can adequately describe. Yet, with all this, no one on board the Aurora seemed to regret the return. The temperature—and it was under 90 in the shade at the Adelaide Observatory, and considerably less at the anchorage—weighed oppressively upon systems so long inured to the freezing cold of the ice-fields. A week prior to the arrival of the Aurora in Adelaide the thermometer on board had scarcely begun to show an upward tendency, but in the last seven days it has been steadily rising, and sleeping on deck became general. Some even complained that they had been unable to rest at night.

Trying Change of Climate.

A group, comprising Messrs. Madigan, Hamilton, Bickerton, and Hodgeman, were informed of last week's heat wave, and they said they were thankful that the Aurora's arrival had not coincided with the effort of the mercury to run up fresh records. On Thursday morning the whole of the expedition had been "cooled down," standing in the waist of the ship, while the steam pump forced a stream of sea water upon them through a line of hose. Coming up the Port Adelaide River some