

## —making for Wild's Base.—

Anxious to reach Wild's base quickly Capt. Davis pushed the Aurora at full speed under engines and sail, even right through the iceberg region. He was suffering great anxiety. We scarcely understood the risks underlying the task. One day the captain called me to take the lee wheel. The scales fell from my eyes. A gale of wind abeam projected snow into our faces with stinging force. I could sometimes see with only one eye open, and on occasions had to shut both eyes, and listen for instructions. The officer all this while was threading through narrow leads between vast fields of pack-ice. Few can credit how sharply the ship turned some corners. Haste necessitated full speed. Occasionally we missed our aim. Then would come a loud crash; the ship shivered from stem to stern before rebounding from the impact. Usually the officer saw the blow coming and telegraphed to the engineer, "Full astern," and so the shock was reduced. It was wonderful how many collisions were averted. One icefloe was occupied by five Emperor penguins, standing 4 ft. high, regarding the oncoming prow of the Aurora with mute surprise. We struck the floe, and over went the penguins flat on their backs. Then they became erect once more, and were no longer silent. Putting their heads on their breasts, they vigorously yelled forth their protest as vehemently eloquent as comment on the Thames bank.

[The above message had not been transmitted in time for complete publication in The Register, but the fact is recorded that all the party at Wild's Base were taken off by the Aurora, and are well. They include two South Australians—Messrs. Alex Kennedy and Moyes—some of State school head teachers. The concluding portion of the telegram will appear in The Saturday Journal.—Ed.]

## BACK FROM THE ICE.

## RETURN OF THE AURORA.

DR. MAWSON LEFT  
BEHIND.WILD'S PARTY BROUGHT  
BACK.

Hobart, March 14.

The Aurora entered Esperance Bay this morning, and landed the expedition secretary (Mr. Conrad Eitel), who proceeded to Hobart by the channel steamer Dover. In order to comply with the English press contract the Aurora will not arrive at Hobart until to-morrow morning. Mr. Eitel gives the following account of the trip:—

The Aurora left Hobart on Boxing Day to retrieve the two parties of the Australasian Antarctic expedition which spent a year on the Antarctic Continent. We were shocked to discover that morning the town plastered with placards announcing the wreck of the Aurora. The coffin ship proved to be a namesake of our vessel which had been made the subject of cinematograph pictures, but it caused us to wonder whether history was about to indulge in a hackneyed repetition. This was scarcely auspicious, but good omens were present in legion. There were bright sunshine and not a ripple on the harbor, and King's Pier was crowded by Hobart friends. Everything was so blythe and gay it almost felt like a summer excursion instead of a grayer proposition. As the Aurora steamed down the Derwent River in slow and stately fashion, followed by excursion steamers, launches, signals from shipping and sailing craft, our blue ensign was frequently dipped in answer to farewell signals from the shipping. We had a great send-off at the Tarooma Quarantine station, and embarked 21 Greenland dogs, Captain Amundsen's presentation. The ship was a regular Noah's ark. There were 28 men, 21 dogs, 45 sheep, 2 turkeys, 4 fowls, and 1 pig. At night, when the ship was rolling, the animals gave voice. "If a ship comes near us in a fog," remarked the mate, "they will imagine they have come close to a farmyard." We purchased a large quantity of desiccated barracoota fish feed for dogs, but so many sheep dodged the butcher by dying in the middle of the night that the dogs fared sumptuously on mutton, and landed eventually in magnificent condition. The Aurora was fitted with a wireless receiving apparatus, and was able to secure messages from Dr. Mawson's base, Macquarie Island, until two days before reaching Adelie Land. We had also taken a whaling expert, Captain James Davis, to test the right whaling potentialities of the Antarctic, and we had a harpoon gun, and full equipment. This was done by the request of the Federal Government, but not a single right-whale was observed on the whole voyage. At one stage the presence of innumerable birds impressed us that we were possibly in the vicinity of the elusive Royal Company Islands, but despite a keen watch no land was discerned. We found that the 40 mile long ice barrier charted last year 60 miles westward of Adelie Land had disappeared. The Aurora passed through no less than 30 hours of pack ice before reaching the main base. Even then there were many wide leads, confirming Dr. Mawson's assertion to me in a letter that it was possible to visit the base in an iron steamer.

## The Main Base Sighted.

Early on the morning of Monday, January 13, the Aurora sighted the main base. The crew recognised the piano-shaped berg stranded in the identical position last year. Altogether there were six big bergs in Commonwealth Bay. The channel leaving to the anchorage varies in depth from 20 to 90 fathoms, but on either side ugly reefs were exposed by a rough sea. Through the telescopes it was noted that only one wireless mast was erect. The other was shattered and lying on the rocks, furnishing a reason for the sudden stoppage of wireless news from Adelie Land. Although we clearly discerned the camp no sign of life was visible. The Aurora passed out of view, anchoring under the lee of a ice cliff 100 ft. high. The dogs seeing the ice cliffs howled pitiously, evidently wanting to get ashore. Penguins and seals were discerned on the rocks. Later a strong gale blew, and the windlass being negligently left unfastened the heaviest cable glided into the water, and it not having been made fast we were left dependent on a much lighter cable. This was a serious loss, as events subsequently proved.

## A Remarkable Scene.

In the afternoon, the sea moderating, a motor boat was conveyed on shore. Captain John King Davis, the chief engineer, and myself, as we entered the boat harbor, saw Murphy ascending a hill with a sledge and two dogs. We coo-eeed, but failed to attract his attention. We waved our arms like windmills, screaming, "Ship, ship." The rest of the occupants of the camp poured out like ants, and walked 50 yards to meet us. Nine unkempt, wild-looking men, heterogeneously attired, grasped our hands, cheered, yelled, and danced in their excitement. Many were scarcely recognisable, owing to their hair and whiskers being bleached by snow during the sledging journey.

They needed not to tell us that they had passed through a strenuous and anxious time. The stamp of the hardship they had undergone was indelibly fixed on their faces, though each man was in the pink of condition. Some of the boys had become men. This specially applied to 19-years-old Correll, the baby of the expedition. The severe training of the Antarctic winter has endowed many with stamina and courage, and will be the making of them. The motor boat was made fast, and we entered the camp, where the mailbag was opened, some receiving a hundred letters. Our first question was, "Where is Dr. Mawson?" We were told he was expected to return from a sledging journey in a few days. The other two parties also were shortly due. The winter quarters, which were most comfortable, consisted of a living-room, 24 ft. square, also a smaller workroom, two enclosed verandahs, one being used for the motor sledge.

## A Feast Ashore.

We had brought on shore cases of pineapple, oranges, carcass mutton, fresh meat, and fruit, exactly what "the beleaguered garrison" were craving for. Not that they were faring badly. We were regaled on raspberry sponge made with penguin eggs, tea made with melted snow, which was nectar compared with the stewed ship tea, and custard made with powdered milk, and penguin eggs flavored with vanilla essence. And we even had tinned strawberries! What luxury for the Antarctic! When dinner-time came an appetising aroma filled the camp. "What is it?" we asked. When the door opened a big dish of penguin breast, baked with bacon, was brought forth. It surpassed Christmas turkey. The shore party attacked the mutton, and we tried the penguin. Silence reigned. Then Dr. Maclean exclaimed, "The mutton is a splendid change, but give me penguin breast every time."

## "Windiest Corner of the World."

Beyond doubt the most interesting scientific results will consist of meteorological data. Winter quarters at Commonwealth Bay proved absolutely the windiest corner of the world. The expedition was specially equipped with anemometers indicating the strength, anemograph, records, direction, and a gust recorder showing the maximum velocity. The lay mind cannot conceive the wind velocity when expressed merely in figures. The wind blowing 50 miles an hour constitutes a full gale. The shore party staggered us by records indisputable that the average velocity during the whole 10 months was 52 miles an hour. A maximum of 202 miles an hour actually registered by the gust recorder. The highest average for any one hour was between 90 and 100 miles. Some of the gales lasted several months, with only a few hours' interval. When the gales took the form of a blizzard it was impossible to see a yard ahead. On one occasion Correll was lost for two hours making a journey of ten yards from the camp to the meteorological screen. Hodgman was similarly lost for 2½ hours returning from the