MORE TRAGEDY IN THE ANTARCTIC

Quite apart from the weirdness of the ideas of Australians in the frozen zone of the South Pole talking by "wireless" yesterday to Australians suffering under the torrid conditions which prevailed in this part of the world there is something exceedingly impressive in the first definite message received from intrepid Dr. Mawson and his valiant comrades. The mode of the intimation is as nothing when compared with the actual perils of the passing of it. The first note is the tragical and, following so closely upon the shocking tidings from the Scott expedition, it raises the question whether the remarkable virtual previous immunity from fatal consequences in the Antarctic may not possibly, however unconsciously, have caused the danger of exploration in that desolate region to have been too far underestimated, and excessive risks to have been taken. The death of two members of the party so prominently as Lieut. Nimis and Dr. Mertz must necessarily seriously weaken the expedition substantially in its personnel, and in the outlook from the standpoint of scientific and other discoveries. The expediens thus far has been in the sledge, and the loss of speciality of the two dead comrades, who were widely noted as experts in the work in which their expert knowledge is most indispensable. The tragic event will also naturally tend to obscure the apprehension being felt concerning the fate of Dr. Mawson and the other members of his party who have not returned by the relief steamer Aurora, but—to the bitter disappointment of their friends—will remain another year in "the region of perpetual ice." Why so few will stay in Antarctica, and why so many are returning to civilization, leaving scores of men behind them, are questions at present apparently involved in some mystery.

Yet the opposite side of the record to the sullenly dictates inflating entries of which the distress and sacrifice may be proud. Foreigners have been blest with the luck—and perhaps also something more solidly based than the luck—of Antarctic enterprise, in that they have discovered and thus mercifully spared the sacrifice of lives, and Britons have merited lives without enjoying the solicitude of being able to sit off the ac-