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AN ANTARCTIC HERO

SIR DOUGLAS MAWSON'S RETURN

CONTINENTAL PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

The famous Antarctic explorer, Sir Douglas Mawson, accompanied by Lady Mawson, returned to South Australia from London in the R.M.S. Omrah on Saturday.

In an interview Sir Douglas said he was exceedingly glad to reach his adopted city once more. Referring to his trip to England the Antarctic explorer said he left within a month of the Aurora's return, as he was in haste to reach England and get his book published. He wished to publish a popular account of the trip. There was a big overdraft on the expedition to be met, and the proceeds of the book would go towards defraying that debt. Sir Douglas told the interviewer that he had had the busiest time of his life. Two large volumes had been finished. The last lot of copy was posted to England from Suez. He received a wireless message later on, however, to the effect that the publishers had suspended publication during the war crisis.

While in London Sir Douglas gave an official lecture before the Royal Geographical Society, and then postponed popular lectures in England till November and December, so that he could return to Sydney for the Science Congress, before which he is to lecture on "Past, Present, and Future in the Antarctic." In all probability he will have to cancel his lectures in England owing to the war. He also arranged a visit to Basle, Switzerland, where he met the parents of one of the members of the expedition—Dr. Metz—who lost his life in the Antarctic.

The explorer explained that he travelled to Amsterdam, and down through the Rhine country, along the borders of Alsace and Lorraine. All was quiet there. The German railways were certainly in a business-like condition. Sir Douglas and Lady Mawson passed through such cities as Cologne and Metz, which have as many as 15 parallel lines of rails, and open sidings with wide spaces of country, so that great numbers of troops may be instantly dispatched. The German railway system, said Sir Douglas, was always in a most thoroughly prepared state in case of war. The Dutch seemed particularly busy. They were fortifying and manoeuvring along their border with extraordinary activity. All their bridges were guarded with entrenchments, and thousands of khaki-clad troops were practising. The explorer met a veteran in Dr. Metz's father. He showed the visitor his case of war medals and his accoutrements. The veteran fought with the French in the Franco-Prussian war, and as matters between Austria and Serbia were a little strained then he seemed to think he would have occasion to use his gun again. When near Socotra the officers of the vessel heard German ships speaking by wireless in code. They would not answer the Omrah's operator when he cut in, and, of course, their operator did not understand the coded messages. Wireless from Kurachi at the mouth of the Indus warned the Omrah while she was in the Arabian Sea not to put into any German port. Next day war was declared. They received no news on board on account of the censors, and, of course, all the passengers were excited. Near Colombo the harbor showed up illuminated by night with searchlights from warships and forts. The warships captured many prizes, including a huge cargo of rice which was very valuable. A Russian ammunition ship in the harbor was on fire, and they suspected Germans of incendiarism. The crew was obliged to sink the vessel to save an explosion in the harbor. When he went ashore Sir Douglas found the Indians very loyal to their Sovereign over the seas. A native Cingalese met him in the post office, and said, "We're doing very well, sir, aren't we? Aren't we doing all right?" He was particularly interested with the emphasis on the "we."

After attending the Science Congress in Sydney Sir Douglas Mawson will give a series of popular lectures in Australia. He expects to be back in Adelaide for lectures on September 7, 8, and 9. He is not looking forward to another Antarctic trip just yet. "You see, I have to collate all the scientific data," he explained, "which the last expedition has afforded, and Sir Ernest Shackleton is going southward immediately. He has been hindered somewhat, mostly by the outbreak of war. I am arranging to transfer the Aurora to him at a nominal price for the adventure. Next year I will take up lectures in a normal way again at the Adelaide University."

The registrar of the University (Mr. Hodge) met the party at the wharf.

During the afternoon Sir Douglas and Lady Mawson continued their voyage to the eastern States by train.

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SIR DOUGLAS MAWSON

TRAVELS IN EUROPE.

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW.

(By our Special Reporter.)

After having spent several extremely busy months in England upon the work arising out of the Australian scientific expedition to the Antarctic, Sir Douglas Mawson, D.Sc., returned to the Commonwealth on Saturday by the R.M.S. Omrah, and had a few hours in Adelaide, prior to going for Sydney by the afternoon express, in order to take part in the sittings of the British Association. He was accompanied by Lady Mawson, and at the Outer Harbor was welcomed, on behalf of the University of Adelaide, by the Registrar (Mr. C. R. Hodge). Before continuing his journey Sir Douglas called upon the Chancellor of the University (his Honor Sir Samuel Way) at "Montefiore," North Adelaide.

A representative of "The Advertiser" met the distinguished explorer in the city, and had an interview with him concerning his work while away. It will be remembered that Sir Douglas left for London a month after the return of the Aurora from the south, in haste to push on with his book containing a popular account of the expedition. There was a large overdraft to be cleared off, and he hoped that the proceeds from the work would go a long way towards defraying it.

"I have had a tremendously busy time," said Sir Douglas, "and managed to get two large volumes finished with the last of the manuscript I posted back to London from Suez. The next thing we heard was that war against Germany had been declared, and the publishers wirelessly to say that the issue of the book would have to be suspended until affairs became more settled."

You have been lecturing in England?

"Yes, I gave an official lecture before the Royal Geographical Society in London, but popular addresses were postponed until November. I was to return and lecture in November and December in the United Kingdom, and then lectures had been arranged before the geographical societies of almost every country in Europe."

Germany included?

"Yes, and perhaps they were showing more interest there than anywhere else on the Continent."

What is going to happen now?

"Until I hear further, of course, I am not in a position to say. When I left

London later appeared to me with the slightest idea of any serious war at all. I had to catch the mail steamer at Toulon, and proceeded across Europe in order to visit in Switzerland the parents of the late Dr. Mertz, who, it is sad to remember, perished down among the snows. They live at Basle. Lady Mawson and I proceeded via Amsterdam, and thence right along the borders of Alsace and Lorraine to Switzerland, passing through Cologne and Metz. In Germany there certainly appeared to be every preparation in case of war, and their railways looked very business-like, but there did not seem to be any special excitement at the time, except that on the Dutch frontier, near Arnhem, we found the soldiers of Holland had been busy with defensive work and were busily manœuvring. They cheered the train as it speeded past them. I wonder now whether the Dutch had got any hint of the coming disturbance? Their movements were more than ordinary manœuvres. They were all clad in khaki uniforms, and were digging entrenchments near to the large bridges across the Rhine, evidently intending to fortify the bridges and save them from being cut. In Germany down through the country where their strategical railways are placed, I noticed that they do not rely on single and double lines, but have, in some cases, 10 or 15 sets of rails parallel, and large open spaces where they can deploy big numbers of troops quickly.

Did you find Alsace-Lorraine basking in an atmosphere of peace?

"No special war preparations appeared to be afoot. The aged M. Mertz at Basle, is a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war, having fought in the armies of France. He showed me with great pride a large cabinet of war medals, also his bayonets and rifles, and suggested that he might have to use the weapons again. He is a very bellicose old gentleman. We journeyed on to Toulon, and there got the first news of trouble between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, but never suspected that Great Britain would be drawn into it until Port Said was reached. When the Omrah was near Socotra our wireless operator heard a couple of German vessels conversing in code, and was not able to tell what they were saying. They would not answer his calls to them. From Karachi, in the Arabian Sea, wireless news was sent far and wide warning all British ships to avoid German ports, and on the following night we heard definitely that war had been declared. There was great excitement on board, and we were most anxious to hear what was happening, but censorship was instituted, and we could ascertain nothing. It was not an enviable position to be steaming in the high seas, and not know what was occurring at such a time.

"When approaching Colombo we found great searchlights sweeping the horizon on every side from the forts and warships all night long. The British had captured a good many prizes, including a cargo of 7,000 tons of rice, worth at 2d. a lb. about £140,000. There was much excitement in the streets of Colombo, and many Indian troops were there. The place was under martial law, all Germans were under parole, and their business houses were closed. A prominent German broke his parole in some way and was given 24 hours to quit or be shot. Just in time to save himself he got on to a boat bound for Batavia. A few hours before we arrived a Russian merchant craft, containing munitions of war, caught fire in harbor. It was supposed that Germans were responsible, although I do not know if there was any proof. The authorities had to sink her to prevent a tremendous explosion among the other shipping."

You have been looking forward to the meetings of the British Science Association?

"Yes," said Sir Douglas. "I am afraid we are rather late, but it was a case of coming late or not at all in order to get the book finished."

Are you contemplating another expedition to the Antarctic?

"At present I have an exceedingly big task in front of me in clearing up from the last one, and publishing the scientific results, and I am not thinking of anything else. Sir Ernest Shackleton was preparing to start for the South, and was to have left for England with the Endeavor by this time, according to his original programme. I do not suppose he has done so yet, but I daresay he will get away all right. I transferred the Aurora, now at Hobart, to him at a nominal cost with a view to helping him all I could."

Sir Douglas Mawson will lecture in Adelaide on September 7, 8, and 9, before returning to England, and he expects to be back lecturing at the University at the beginning of the next academic year.