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THE CALL OF DUTY.

Rhodes Scholar at the Pole.

Why Madigan Stayed Behind.

The Chancellor of the Adelaide University (Right Hon. Sir S. J. Way, Bart.) has received the following letter from Mr. C. T. Madigan, a member of the Mawson expedition to the antarctic. Mr. Madigan was chosen as Rhodes Scholar for 1911, but was granted two years' suspension to enable him to join the expedition. The letter is dated "S.Y. Aurora, Commonwealth Bay, Adelie Land, January 31, 1913," and is as follows:—

—Leader of the Relief.—

"Owing to the non-return of Dr. Mawson and his party from the summer sledging journey, grave anxiety is felt for their safety, and it has become necessary to leave a party down there at the main base to search for them. Capt. J. H. Davis, commander of the Aurora, and second in command of the expedition, has assumed command. He has to take off Wild's party 1,300 miles west along the coast near Gaussberg, and they are in a difficult place, hemmed in by pack ice and bergs, and their relief becomes daily more hazardous. Dr. Mawson is 16 days overdue on January 31, and his instructions to Capt. Davis are that in the event of his non-return the ship will leave here on February 1, which is later than Capt. Davis would have liked. The captain and all concerned are, of course, anxious that the very best should be done for the attempted rescue of Dr. Mawson, and that best is considered to be that I remain here as leader of the relief. Six men are necessary to form two sledging parties, and continue work at the hut, and, in addition, Jeffries, the man who relieves Hannan at the wireless, and the six best have been chosen, and asked to remain. None has refused this duty, difficult though the task is, and weary the long antarctic winter, especially in this fearful place of continual blizzard. I feel that I am losing much by staying here another year, but I must do it, at all costs. I am a member of the expedition, and I cannot desert it when it needs me. Please excuse so long an explanation. Perhaps this will mean that I will lose my scholarship, but I want to make it clear that it is no light matter to me. No one who has not spent a winter in the polar regions can fully understand the anxiety to return, and, in my case, the anxiety is very great.

—"It is Unavoidable."—

"It is most unfortunate that after the Rhodes trustees have been good enough to give me two years' extension I should not even then turn up. I fear they will think I do not value the scholarship. It is unavoidable. I am sure you will realize the situation I was in when requested by Capt. Davis to remain here in charge. No one wished to stay, several even spoke of refusing, and was I to lead the way in this? I am very sorry that it has become necessary to ask for a further postponement of the date of my going to Oxford, but I am writing by the mail per Aurora to Mr. Wylie, asking him what he can do. Knowing, as I do, that you are interested in this expedition, and will understand the circumstances, I would beg you to write for me to the Rhodes trustees, perhaps through the selection committee. I fear you will regret the selection of 1910. I am asking Capt. Davis to write you further explaining my position. The ship will be down early for us again next summer, probably with Government support, and we will be back in Australia early in February with any luck. I could go into residence at the beginning of the summer term, if allowed, and stay up during the long vacation, and thus not lose much time.

—Work of the Summer.—

"You will hear of my experiences down here. We have discovered the windiest place on earth—one continuous hurricane, reaching 90 to 100 miles per hour for hours and days on end. We experienced three fine days in as many months during the winter, but our 10 weeks of sledging was in moderate weather. The year's average wind velocity runs out at 49 miles per hour. We got through a good deal of scientific work during the winter—biological, bacteriological, physical, meteorological, and magnetic. I was meteorologist. There were four parties for the summer sledging—Dr. Mawson over the plateau to the east to attempt to reach the land farthest west sighted by the Terra Nova on her first return voyage in 1912, 500 miles away; he took all the dogs and 10 weeks' provisions; Bayes's party inland; Bickerton's western coastal party, starting with the aeroplane motor sledge, which was unsuccessful; and my eastern coastal party. The southern party got 300 miles inland over a monotonous plateau; Bickerton got 180 miles west over the Barrier. I made a journey of 280 miles along the east coast, mainly over sea ice, discovering many rocky bluffs and several mountains and a glacier 4½ miles wide, and taking observations of magnetic dip and declination, meteorological observations, geological and other data. Dr. Mawson took much the same general direction as myself, but he travelled in a straight line up on the plateau, while I followed the outline of the coast on the sea ice. My knowing this cost is a strong argument for remaining behind, and I must say I took some convincing that I was the man to stay when nine were returning. Except for the delay of Dr. Mawson's return, everything has been very successful here at the main base. All may yet be well with them. They may have gone too far with the dogs and, striking heavy weather, be delayed on the man-hauling return, or one of them may be ill or injured, which would greatly impede them. We still have hope for them. I could write volumes on our experiences here. It is hard to know where to stop. I have been tremendously busy the last week getting provisions and coal from the ship and stowing them, repairing the hut, preparing for sledging and the winter. I will leave winter quarters for a month's sledging or as long as weather permits, as soon as the ship leaves."