

ANTARCTIC PERILS.

Sad and stern lessons are conveyed by the narrative of the Mawson expedition brought to Hobart by the explorers who have returned in the Aurora. Climatic conditions in Australia are usually so genial and pleasant that some people, in their ignorance, imagined that the "trip south" would partake of the nature of a picnic. Since then five members of the British Antarctic Expedition, including its gallant leader, Capt. R. F. Scott, perished in a blizzard while returning from the South Pole, and two members of the Australian Expedition lost their lives, one by falling down a crevasse and the other from malnutrition. These mournful tragedies show that, in spite of being provided with the best modern equipment and having the benefit of the experiences of earlier navigators and explorers, Dr. Mawson has undertaken exceedingly hazardous tasks. The pleasure of welcoming home the majority of his party after their year's sojourn in the land of perpetual ice, is, therefore, attended with anxiety regarding the welfare of Dr. Mawson and his six companions, who are doomed to stay 12 months longer in

Commonwealth Bay, Adelie Land. Capt. Davis has explained why the Aurora failed to pick up the little party at the main base. He adopted the only course which appeared to him prudent, and, having taken on board Wild's party, returned to Hobart. He was in a most trying situation, and his conduct apparently meets with the approval of all the brave men who came back with him. In the circumstances, however—despite an extraordinary criticism passed upon the leader by the Secretary of the expedition—it is disquieting to know that the climate of Adelie Land is "probably the most severe of any place on earth;" that "the average wind velocity for the complete year has been 50 miles an hour;" and that Dr. Mawson has lost two of his most trusty companions, and himself narrowly escaped death. Severe trials must be undergone during the long Antarctic night, and the explorers will need a large stock of provisions and home comforts, as well as a strong and well-built hut, to enable them to keep in good health. The latest wireless news from Dr. Mawson is cheering, and indicates that he and his companions are resigned to the idea of spending another year at the base. If the wireless apparatus shall remain in working order, the public will have the satisfaction of learning at intervals how the party is faring. At present there is no reason why we should not hope for the best.