

OBITUARY

The Polar Record does not appear frequently enough, nor has it the space, to publish obituaries of all the important men whose passing leaves the polar world the poorer every half-year. In this issue, however, mention must be made of no less than three who contributed largely, both by deeds and by character, to recent polar history.

SIR EDGEWORTH DAVID, who died at the ripe age of 76 last August and was accorded a State funeral with imposing military honours, was perhaps the most distinguished of all polar explorers who were not actual leaders. The press has done justice to his name both as explorer, as geologist and as soldier, but it may be recalled here that he, joining Shackleton's *Nimrod* Expedition at the last moment, was made chief of the scientific staff, and was second only to his leader in the inspiration which he sowed in the minds of his colleagues. He reached the South Magnetic Pole in a long and arduous sledge journey with Mawson and Mackay, a feat in itself apart from the fact that he was at the time over fifty years of age. From that time he was the firm and active supporter of all polar ventures which sailed from, or were organised in, Australia, and the writer of this obituary well remembers how his geological lectures in 1909 were not merely an inspiration to geology itself, but to geology in the polar regions. It was largely due to his efforts also that the results of the *Nimrod* Expedition were suitably published, and he was one of the prime movers behind the two Mawson expeditions. Though not as well known in Europe as his friends would have wished, he was for many years the most outstanding figure in Australian academic and geographical circles.

BARON A. DE GERLACHE DE GOMERY, who died recently at the age of 69, was the first of the band of leaders who commenced the siege of the Antarctic in the closing years of last century. He promoted and commanded the *Belgica* Expedition, which was the first ever to winter in the Antarctic regions, in 1898, and his ship was one of the few which have survived a whole winter drifting in the southern pack-ice. The expedition was not only a pioneer one of its kind, but brought back very useful results, most of which have been published under the leader's supervision.

A third notable man was CAPTAIN JOSEPH E. BERNIER, a French-Canadian, who had been a sailor all his life, and had made innumerable voyages to the Canadian Arctic. He took a prominent part in urging the Canadian Government to claim and to occupy its Arctic islands, and most of his visits were semi-official, and undertaken either to relieve parties in the field or deposit depôts ready for future exploration.