

VICTORIA CROSS HERO.

Capt. Blackburn's Arrival.

The South Australian hero and Victoria Cross winner, Capt. Arthur Blackburn, returned to Adelaide on Sunday morning. In company with a large detachment of wounded and sick soldiers, he arrived by transport in Melbourne on Friday, and came on to Adelaide by the special train carrying the South Australian quota which left the Victorian capital on Saturday. The train was scheduled to arrive at the North Terrace Station at 10.30 a.m., but long before 10 o'clock, the station and the quadrangle at the rear were thronged with an eager crowd. The platform was kept clear by a military guard drawn from the 8th Reinforcements of the 50th Battalion, under Lieut. Ditchburn, and the spectators were not allowed within the close precincts of the platform entrance. The fact that they were kept at this distance, however, did not lessen their enthusiasm, and a crowd which rapidly grew larger as the time of arrival drew nearer, waited patiently to give Capt. Blackburn and the other returning warriors a fitting welcome. The absence of tram and train services made it difficult for many people to reach the city. Vehicles of all kinds were pressed into service, although the crowd did not equal, in proportions, that which welcomed a previous V.C.—Lieut. Throssel. The college boys were not present as they were on that memorable occasion, but it should be mentioned that in connection with Capt. Blackburn's return, a formal welcome at St. Peter's College has been arranged, and compelled to wait by the absence of travelling facilities, the college boys are doubtless keeping their spirits bottled up for this ceremony.

—A Hearty Welcome.—

There was a gathering of representative citizens awaiting Capt. Blackburn's and the other soldiers' arrival. The Premier (Hon. C. Vaughan) represented the Government, the State Military Commandant (Brig.-Gen. G. H. Irving) the Department of Defence, and the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. I. Isaacs), and other civic authorities attended in behalf of the city. Others present were:—Lieut. H. R. d'Éclanger, representing His Excellency the Governor, Lieut.-Col. R. S. Rogers, Sen. Chaplain Metters, Capt. Doyle (Assistant D.A.A.G.), and Provost-Marshal Capt. Roche, Messrs. H. C. H. Denton, H. P. Moore, and A. E. H. Evans, representing the Board of Governors of the St. Peter's College, and Mr. R. H. Wallmann, the Old Collegiate



CAPT. BLACKBURN, V.C.

Association. The train drew in shortly after 10.30, and Capt. Blackburn, who is known for conspicuous modesty, was being forced to the front of the platform by his comrades as his coach swept into the station. He was quickly identified by the Commandant, who saluted as the train was brought to a standstill, and before the crowd had had an opportunity to recognize the hero, he had stepped into the midst of a circle of friends, and was being heartily shaken by the hand by intimate admirers. Finally the Mayor espied him in the centre of the group, and at his suggestion three hearty cheers were given, and three more for the other returned men.

—A Brave Man.—

Capt. Blackburn is of slight stature. He is a little below the average height, of very light build, and by no means conforms to the generally accepted type of the stalwart Australian soldier. He is quick and agile, however, and his very deportment suggests enterprise and vivacity. His eyes are of that fiery blue quality which support the appearance of intense energy and determination in his bearing. Glancing at him after reading of his exploits at Pozieres on July 23, when he captured and held 370 yards of German trench with a handful of men, one is quite convinced that he is just the type of man who could do such a thing. There is something about him which readily reveals the power to lead, and make men follow in confidence, and while his is a face full of human kindness and invariably lit up with open smiles, in repose there is striking evidence of that indomitable pluck and perseverance which won him the Victoria Cross while one after another his supporters were shot down around him.

—A Retiring Disposition.—

Capt. Blackburn was congratulated on all sides immediately after his arrival, but he accepted the tributes of his friends with quiet modesty, and although questioned concerning his experiences, showed no desire to talk about them. "I don't know that I have had any experiences I could talk about," was his reply to the newsmen when they sought an interview. When this remark has been quoted there is nothing more to be said about his retiring disposition. Although pressed for an interview, Capt. Blackburn pointed out that he was still a military officer, and must be guided by regulation. Consequently he would not like to make a statement until he had had time to realize what his position was. On reaching the outskirts of the crowd waiting in the quadrangle the captain was vociferously cheered, and when he subsequently took his seat in a motor car and was driven through the throng, it was the signal for a continuous outpouring of plaudits. The V.C. winner was cheered until he turned the corner and was out of sight.

—A Promising Career.—

Capt. Blackburn is only 24 years of age. His father was the late Rev. Canon Blackburn, who was a noted South Australian entomologist, and for many years rector of Woodville Church. He was born in Adelaide, was educated at St. Peter's College, and after a distinguished career there studied law at the Adelaide University. He served his articles with Messrs. Fenn and Hardy, solicitors, graduated in 1913, and joined the firm of Messrs. Nesbit and Nesbit, with which he was associated when war broke out. While at the University and also after leaving it he was a prominent lacrosseur and tennis player, and also showed his bent for matters military by joining the South Australian Scottish regiment. He had three years' training with that corps. His next-of-kin are Dr. J. B. Blackburn, of Sydney, and Miss Margaret Blackburn, Wagin, Western Aus-