

“ . . . But, O Arctic night, thou art like a woman, a marvellously lovely woman. Thine are the noble, pure outlines of antique beauty, with its marble coldness. On thy high, smooth brow, clear with the clearness of ether, is no trace of compassion for the little sufferings of despised humanity; on thy pale, beautiful cheek no blush of feeling. Among thy raven locks, waving out into space, the hoar-frost has sprinkled its glittering crystals. The proud lines of thy throat, thy shoulders' curves, are so noble, but, oh! unbendingly cold; thy bosom's white chastity is feelingless as the snowy ice. Chaste, beautiful, and proud, thou floatest through ether over the frozen sea, thy glittering garment, woven of aurora beams, covering the vault of heaven. But sometimes I divine a twitch of pain on thy lips, and endless sadness dreams in thy dark eye.

“ Oh, how tired I am of thy cold beauty! I long to return to life. Let me get home again, as conqueror or as beggar; what does that matter? But let me get home to begin life anew. The years are passing here, and what do they bring? Nothing but dust, dry dust, which the first wind blows away; new dust comes in its place, and the next wind takes it too. Truth? Why should we always make so much of truth? Life is more than cold truth, and we live but once.

“ Tuesday, December 26th. 36° Fahr. below zero (−38° C.). This (the same as yesterday's) is the greatest cold we have had yet. I went a long way north to-day;