

begun here and there. I was stopped at last by a broad open lane lying pretty nearly north and south; at places it was 400 to 500 yards across, and I saw no end to it either north or south. The surface was good; one got along quickly, with no exertion at all when it was in the direction of the wind.

“ This is undeniably a monotonous life. Sometimes it feels to me like a long dark night, my life’s ‘Ragnarok,’* dividing it into two. . . . ‘The sun is darkened, the summers with it, all weather is weighty with woe’; snow covers the earth, the wind whistles over the endless plains, and for three years this winter lasts, till comes the time for the great battle, and ‘men tramp Hel’s way.’ There is a hard struggle between life and death; but after that comes the reign of peace. The earth rises from the sea again, and decks itself anew with verdure. ‘Torrents roar, eagles hover over them, watching for fish among the rocks,’ and then ‘Valhalla,’ fairer than the sun, and long length of happy days.

“ Pettersen, who is cook this week, came in here this evening, as usual, to get the bill of fare for next day. When his business was done, he stood for a minute, and then said that he had had such a strange dream last night; he had wanted to be taken as cook with a new expedition, but Dr. Nansen wouldn’t have him.

“ ‘And why not?’

* “Twilight of the gods.”