

which was the greatest feat of personal endurance in all that voyage, he mentioned; but he described the killing of his two faithful dogs as the most trying ordeal he had to face in those three years. "I could not verra well kill my own dog. I kill Yohansen's an' Yohansen he kill mine." Can't you just hear Eric Erickson say it?

Months of marching over ice hummocks in frozen clothing, dragging heavy sledges, he described as "verra hard work." I don't believe the man has a superlative adjective in his vocabulary. He seems better acquainted with big deeds than big words. A hero is a fine thing, but a modest hero is almost too good to be true.

The story of his lecture is too well known to need repetition. Here, however, is a bit of the descriptive part of his talk, taken down in short hand and done into rather more conventional English than he used. His lecture throughout was illustrated by stereopticon pictures which were so beautiful that they quite overcame one's prejudice against that sort of thing.

"Sometimes we had a smoking concert. Some of the men sang, or played the accordion or some other musical instrument on board. We had an excellent library. We had plenty of time to read, and I believe that many of the men on board have no reason to regret they spent those days in reading, as they learned more during those three years than during the whole of the rest of their lives. We had plenty of games on board—chess and dominoes and cards.

Of course, three years spent in such surroundings, becomes a little monotonous. But these places in the north have their attractions. There was one long polar night that lasted for months, and many of the men would get tired of the perpetual darkness and would long for the daylight again, and spring came like a fairy tale laid in frost and snow. The ship was covered from the top to the deck with snow and everything was pure and clean, and then the sun arose from the horizon and would circle around the sky day and night for five months, perhaps, without a break. The snow would melt away to some extent, and the ship would be surrounded with ice, and the ice was so white, and the sun rises higher and higher in the sky, and the sky loses its color—only a pale blue sky—and you long for some colors. There is nothing to rest your eye upon, and you have to protect your eyes against the dazzling light by help of snow glasses in order to avoid snow blinding.

You get tired of the long polar days, and then perhaps you begin to long for the polar night with the stars again. But the fall comes, the sun sinks to the horizon again, and then at midnight you have a most wonderful sky. The sun sinks deeper, and the evening sky gets clearer and the ice world is dreaming in the light of the northern stillness. At last the sun disappears under the horizon, and then the dawn in the south grows fainter and fainter every day. But it was wonderfully beautiful, this twilight of the dying, disappearing polar day. It is like dreamland, painted in the imagination's most delicate tints. It is a far away, faint clear music, a distant, subdued melody. It is a sad scene of the dying day."

Dr. Nansen said, in a conversation at the hotel before the lecture, that he had read a great deal of Browning during that voyage. I suppose it was in the desperation of a Polar night that he read Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau. Heaven knows it would take nothing less to take most of us through the Prince!

His peroration was almost pathetically earnest. He made a plea for those glorious follies of adventure without which the health and virility dies out of a nation. He urged that money and material things were not all of life—sad heresy to utter in Pittsburgh. And, like every poet, every painter, every actor, he humbly apologized to the Philistine for being great. The old apology that only Whistler refuses to make. He quoted some lines from Tennyson's "Ulysses" that

must seem to carry a special meaning from one of the world's wanderers to its last:

"One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate,
but strong in will
To strive to seek, to find
and not to yield."

As he quoted the same poem in his toast, he must have a particular weakness for it. He closed with the closing lines of Browning's Epilogue:

"At noonday in the bustle
of man's work-time,
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and
back as either should be,
'Strive and thrive!' cry 'Speed—
fight on fare ever there as here!'"

Next week I want to write of some of his opinions on American and Norwegian literature.
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