

threshold of Nature's great Ice Temple of the polar regions with their endless silence.

Up to this point no insuperable obstacles had opposed the progress of the advancing hosts, which confidently proceeded on their way. But here the ramparts of ice and the long darkness of winter brought them to bay. Host after host marched on towards the north, only to suffer defeat. Fresh ranks stood ever ready to advance over the bodies of their predecessors. Shrouded in fog lay the mythic land of Nivlheim, where the "Rimturer"* carried on their wild gambols.

Why did we continually return to the attack? There in the darkness and cold stood Helheim, where the death-goddess held her sway; there lay Nâstrand, the shore of corpses. Thither, where no living being could draw breath, thither troop after troop made its way. To what end? Was it to bring home the dead, as did Hermod when he rode after Baldur? No! It was simply to satisfy man's thirst for knowledge. Nowhere, in truth, has knowledge been purchased at greater cost of privation and suffering. But the spirit of mankind will never rest till every spot of these regions has been trodden by the foot of man, till every enigma has been solved.

Minute by minute, degree by degree, we have stolen forwards, with painful effort. Slowly the day has approached; even now we are but in its early dawn; darkness still broods over vast tracts around the Pole.

Our ancestors, the old Vikings, were the first Arctic voyagers. It has been said that their expeditions to the frozen sea were of no moment, as they have left no enduring marks behind them. This, however, is scarcely correct. Just as surely as the whalers of our age, in their persistent struggles with ice and sea, form our outposts of investigation

* Frost-giants.