

## Wonders of the Arctic Night.

From "Farthest North," by Fridtjof Nansen.

Nothing more wonderfully beautiful can exist than the arctic night. It is dreamland, painted in the imagination's most delicate tints; it is color etherealized. One shade melts into the other, so that you cannot tell where one ends and the other begins, and yet they are all there. No forms; it is all faint, dreamy color music, a far-away, long-drawn-out melody on muted strings. Is not all life's beauty high, and delicate, and pure, like this night? Give it brighter colors, and it is no longer so beautiful. The sky is like an enormous cupola, blue at the zenith, shading down into green, and then into lilac and violet at the edges. Over the ice-fields there are cold violet-blue shadows, with lighter pink tints where a ridge here and there catches the last reflection of the vanished day. Up in the blue of the cupola shine the stars, speaking peace, as they always do, those unchanging friends. In the south stands a large, red-yellow moon, encircled by a yellow ring, and light golden clouds floating on the blue background. Presently the aurora borealis shakes over the vault of heaven its veil of glittering silver, changing now to yellow, now to green, now to red. It spreads, it contracts again, in restless change; next it breaks into waving, many-folded bands of shining silver, over which shoot billows of glittering rays, and then the glory vanishes. Presently it shimmers in tongues of flame over the very zenith, and then again it shoots a bright ray right up from the horizon, until the whole melts away in the moonlight, and it is as though one heard the sigh of a departing spirit. Here and there are left a few waving streamers of light, vague as a foreboding; they are the dust from the aurora's glittering cloak. But now it is growing again; new lightnings shoot up, and the endless game begins afresh. And all the time this utter stillness, impressive as the symphony of infinitude. I have never been able to grasp the fact that this earth will some day be spent and desolate and empty. To what end, in that case, all this beauty, with not a creature to rejoice in it? Now I begin to divine it. This is the coming earth—here are beauty and death. But to what purpose? Ah! what is the purpose of all these spheres? Read the answer, if you can, in the starry blue firmament.

Later in the evening, Hansen came down to give notice of what really was a remarkable appearance of aurora borealis. The deck was brightly illuminated by it, and reflection of its light played all over the ice. The whole sky was ablaze with it, but it was brightest in the south; high up in that direction glowed waving masses of fire. Later still, Hansen came again to say that now it was quite extraordinary. No words can depict the glory that met our eyes. The glowing fire-masses had divided into glistening, many-colored bands, which were writhing and twisting across the sky both in the south and north. The rays sparkled with the purest, most crystalline, rainbow colors, chiefly violet-red or carmine and the clearest green. Most frequently the rays of the arch were red at the end, and changed higher up into sparkling green, which

quite at the top turned darker and went over into blue or violet before disappearing in the blue of the sky; or, the rays in one and the same arch might change from clear red to clear green, coming and going as if driven by a storm. It was an endless phantasmagoria of sparkling color, surpassing anything that one can dream. Sometimes the spectacle reached such a climax that one's breath was taken away; one felt that now something extraordinary must happen—at the very least the sky must fall.

But, as one stands in breathless expectation, down the whole thing trips, as if in a few quick, light scale-runs, into bare nothingness. There is something most undramatic about such a denouement, but it is all done with such confident assurance that one cannot take it amiss; one feels one's self in the presence of a master who has the complete command of his instrument. With a single stroke of the bow he descends lightly and elegantly from the height of passion into quiet, every-day strains, only with a few more strokes to work himself into passion again. . . . For a final there is a wild display of fireworks in every tint of flame—such a conflagration that one expects every minute to have it down on the ice, because there is not room for it in the sky.

For Dominion Presbyterian.

## Dae Richt an' Ye'll Dae Weel!

BY JOHN IMRIE.

Tho' others tak' the easy road,  
Be yours in patience aye to plod,  
Trust less in man and mair in God —  
Dae richt and daur the deil!  
Ne're lippen to the tempter's snare,  
O' a' his wiles an' bribes beware,  
Wale out your staps wi' muckle care —  
Dae richt an' ye'll dae weel!

Let conscience clear as crystal shine,  
The "gowden rule" keep aye in min',  
An roon your heart let love entwine —  
An' ye'll aye happy feel;  
Ye'll fin' this aye the safest plan  
Dae richt an' aye the best ye can,  
God helps the honest upright man —  
Dae richt an' ye'll dae weel!

Use weel the talents God has lent  
Let lika hour be wisely spent,  
In a ye dae hae good intent,  
As up life's hill ye spell:  
An' tho' the way be steep an' bare,  
Aye onward press wi' faith an' prayer,  
Till aince you hear Our Father there,  
Say out—"YE'VE DONE GY WEEL!"

Toronto, Can.

## More Worlds to Conquer.

It has been well said that "where bread grows on trees, we find the weak race." This suggests why it is that the Bible speaks so highly of him "that overcometh." It is only by being an overcomer that we can grow into worth. Man "becomes something," says Burroughs, "only by overcoming something." The athlete loses interest in a feat that has become easy. Alexander sighed for more worlds to conquer; he was too big a man to enjoy going out of business. No manly man likes to feel himself shrivel; this is why many rich men keep on toiling and making money. They object to shriveling, and therefore keep on in the struggle of overcoming. There can be no moral Alexanders among us. In the religious and moral life there are always more worlds to conquer. Before us always lies the joy of the privilege of growing through overcoming.—Sunday School Times.

## Literary Notes.

A reproduction in fac-simile of the manuscript of Milton's minor poems is about to be published in England. It consists of forty-seven pages, mostly in Milton's own hand, and it includes the "Arcades," "Comus," "Lycidas," several of the Sonnets, and the first sketch of "Paradise Lost" as a drama.

A leading London publisher says that his house does not accept one per cent of the novels submitted to it. The difficulty in most cases is that the writers set themselves to deal with conditions of life of which they have no knowledge. The man of the lower middle class is determined to depict the ways of the aristocracy; or a woman who has led a quiet and sheltered life undertakes a military romance, and the publishers' reader does not have to pursue the work far before he finds it utterly unavailing.

For *Three Alone, Poems of Love*, selected by Grace Hartsborne. This delightful collection of poems of the heart contains many old favorites and a very large number of poems not so well known. Among the poets represented are Byron, Coleridge, Burns, Hood, Thomas Moore, Shelley, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, Austin Dobson, Lowell, Whittier, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich. The book, which comes in a box, is well printed, with rough edges, and the binding is a dainty white. The many illustrations add to the value of a volume that must appeal to all lovers of pretty books. — Dana, Estes & Company, Boston.

Laura E. Richards, the author of "Queen Hildgarde," is a favorite with all young girls—and they are always delighted to welcome a book from her pen. "Peggy" is a charming little story of life at a boarding-school, that theme which is irresistible especially to those who have never been at school away from home. Peggy is a somewhat shy girl, and in many of her studies is not at all clever, but she is very fond of mathematics and anatomy. She has a high sense of honor, and is altogether a very lovable girl. The other characters in the story are equally interesting and are very well delineated. The volume is a beautiful one, well printed and bound in pretty green linen. Any girl would be charmed with this book as a Christmas gift. — Dana, Estes & Company, Publishers, Boston.

The Hon. J. K. Ward, of Montreal, a Manx-Canadian sends to the Witness his copy of the leading Isle of Man paper containing the following:

"I see from this week's 'Christian World' that there is a paper carried on by the very same lines as the imaginary one described in 'In His Steps.' It is the Montreal 'Daily Witness,' and it is said to be the only one of the kind in the world. That can hardly be said to be a very creditable thing for the Christian Church. Can anyone doubt that such a paper must be an enormous force on the side of purity, righteousness, and every good and noble cause? I can imagine few greater blessings that could come to any community than the presence of such a paper in its midst. Just imagine what it would be to have in this island (the Isle of Man) a newspaper absolutely free from personalities, stories of petty scandal, betting news, and advertisements of anything that could be to the moral detriment of the people. I am aware for such a task a man of enormous courage and faith would be needed. But if such a man did arise in our midst it would be such a call to duty to all Christian people as has hardly ever come to us yet. He would have great difficulties to fight with, but I wonder what right any of us would have to call ourselves followers of Jesus if we did not stand by him and see him through. Surely this is no mere utopian dream. It ought to be perfectly feasible. If our Christian profession is a reality and not a sham; if all, or even a large portion of the Church members, were to be governed by the rule 'What would Jesus do?' they would make it quite possible for such a paper as the one described as existing in Montreal to live and flourish among us. Christ begins His work with the individual, making a new man, and out of that new creation, all other good things are to come for others and for society at large. Reformation must begin with ourselves." — Rev. D. Inglis, B. A. in 'Mona's Herald,' Isle of Man.