

To learn from the preface that the author of this new work on the Aurora Borealis had made his observations as participator in the work of the International Polar Research Expeditions of 1882-83, with the object of effecting measurements for determining the height of the phenomenon above the earth's crust, may lead the reader to look for a work of profound scientific technicalities too abstruse to give general information. Very slight investigation, however, reveals this beautiful volume, so admirably issued, as one of the pleasantest of books of travel, dealing hardly more than incidentally with the Aurora, and then with such interesting statistics and beautiful illustrations as to make this one of the most entertaining parts of the two volumes. Science is still busy with the Aurora, but has at least convinced herself that it is an electrical phenomenon, and has succeeded in analyzing its elements sufficiently well to be able to manufacture an artificial Aurora, pictures of which are given in the book. The illustrations, of which there are 150, those of costume being in color, add very much to the attractiveness and value of a singularly attractive and valuable work. It would seem as if the author could find little in the desolate cold country of the Lapps, with the exception of his scientific pursuits, to interest either himself or his readers ; but in reality he has accumulated a great quantity of facts as to the life and customs of the people, while his descriptions of the scenery are a wonderfully vivid reproduction of the marvellous effects accomplished by mere black and white in the landscape. He dwells with delight on the midnight sun, which he was fortunate enough to witness in one of its most beautiful exhibitions, but perhaps he is most enthusiastic over one of the simplest scenes in his travels, when the landscape seemed, as he himself describes it, like 'the immense grave of Nature.' A breathless silence reigned, not a sound fell on the ear, no cloud was visible in the blue vault of heaven, whence the sun cast a dazzling splendor over the impressive monotony of outline and of color—ice, hill, and shrub being the sole patterns in the white carpet—black and white being the only colors employed by nature ; and yet of this scene the author could write :

'I have stood on the Monument of London, on the Triumphant Arch of Paris ; I have beheld the desert from the Pyramid of Cheops ; I have gazed on waterfalls, glaciers, forests, volcanoes, geysers, and oceans from the lofty cones of Saxony, Switzerland, Scotland, the Faroe Islands, Scandinavia, and Iceland, but neither the living, animated picture spread before my eyes in the two great hives of civilization, nor the wonderful, picturesque phenomena of Nature I beheld in yonder lands, impressed me as much as the view from the barren top of Gargovarre, looking at all silent Lapland.'

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