The Love Song of the Wolf in John Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'

By Theodora C. Stanwell-Fletcher

THE LOVE SONG OF THE WOLF

detact from a miracle of sight and feeling. For, as February slips into March, we are being treated to another phenomenon of miraculous beauty. The Northern Lights, which we saw sometimes last autumn when they were not particularly spectacular, have begun to appear now in full glory.

The aurora borealis seems to precede great seasonal change. The lights appear on clear evenings around nine-thirty or ten. A saffron glow behind the forest on the east of Tetana grows gradually so bright that black spires of pines and spruces stand out sharply against it. Then, rising in tall columns of pale, glowing green, higher and higher, toward the zenith, becoming suffused with vivid lavender and rose. Other columns begin in the north and northwest until they all meet, umbrella-wise, in the sky above Tetana. Never-still, ever-changing curtains of waving, swaying color—colors so intense that sometimes the snow across Tetana and the Driftwood Mountains is tinted pink, or green, or blue. Often as the colors bloom and die and bloom again, the air is full of sound. Something—actual noise or electric current—vibrates in our ears. This is what northerners mean when they say, "The Lights crackle." Something great and majestic is alive here in these night skies of late winter.

On such nights how can I bear to sleep and waste time in unconsciousness? But J. claims that Northern Lights are as common in his experience as sunsets and goes serenely to sleep at bedtime just as usual.

A feeling in the air makes one know spring is coming. The world is buried as deeply as ever in snow. Snowstorms still come and go. Snowshoes are as essential a part of moving as ever. Collecting sufficient firewood is a never-ending labor. The cabin roof and windows have still to be dug out, but snow on the ground is settling and crusts are forming. The sun is rising higher in the sky. The nights are as cold as ever. Temperatures still drop 20 or 30 degrees below zero, but we know that the harshness of winter is ended. The singing wolves remind us again and again of returning life and love. The throbbing colors of the aurora give warning of changing atmospheric conditions.