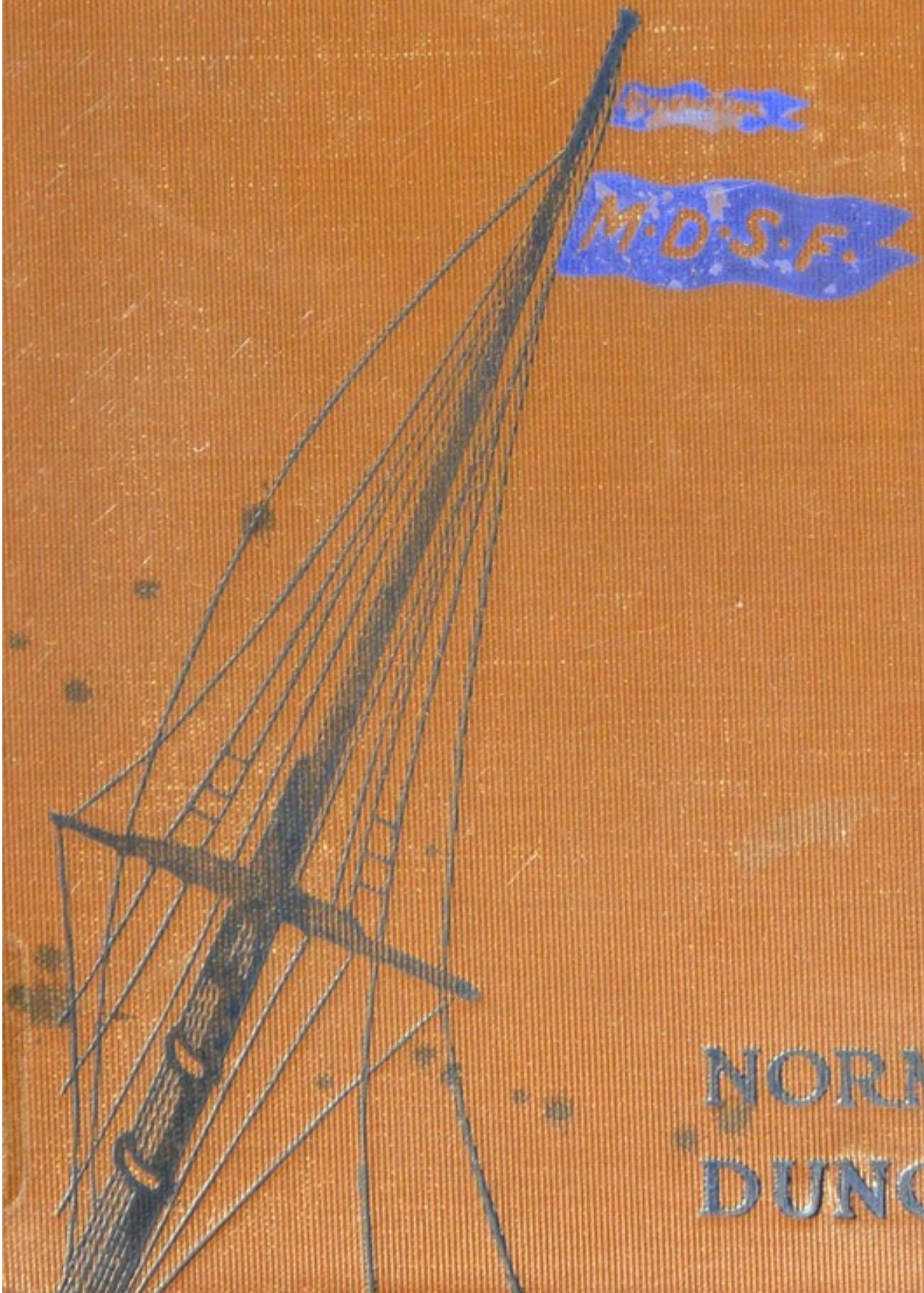
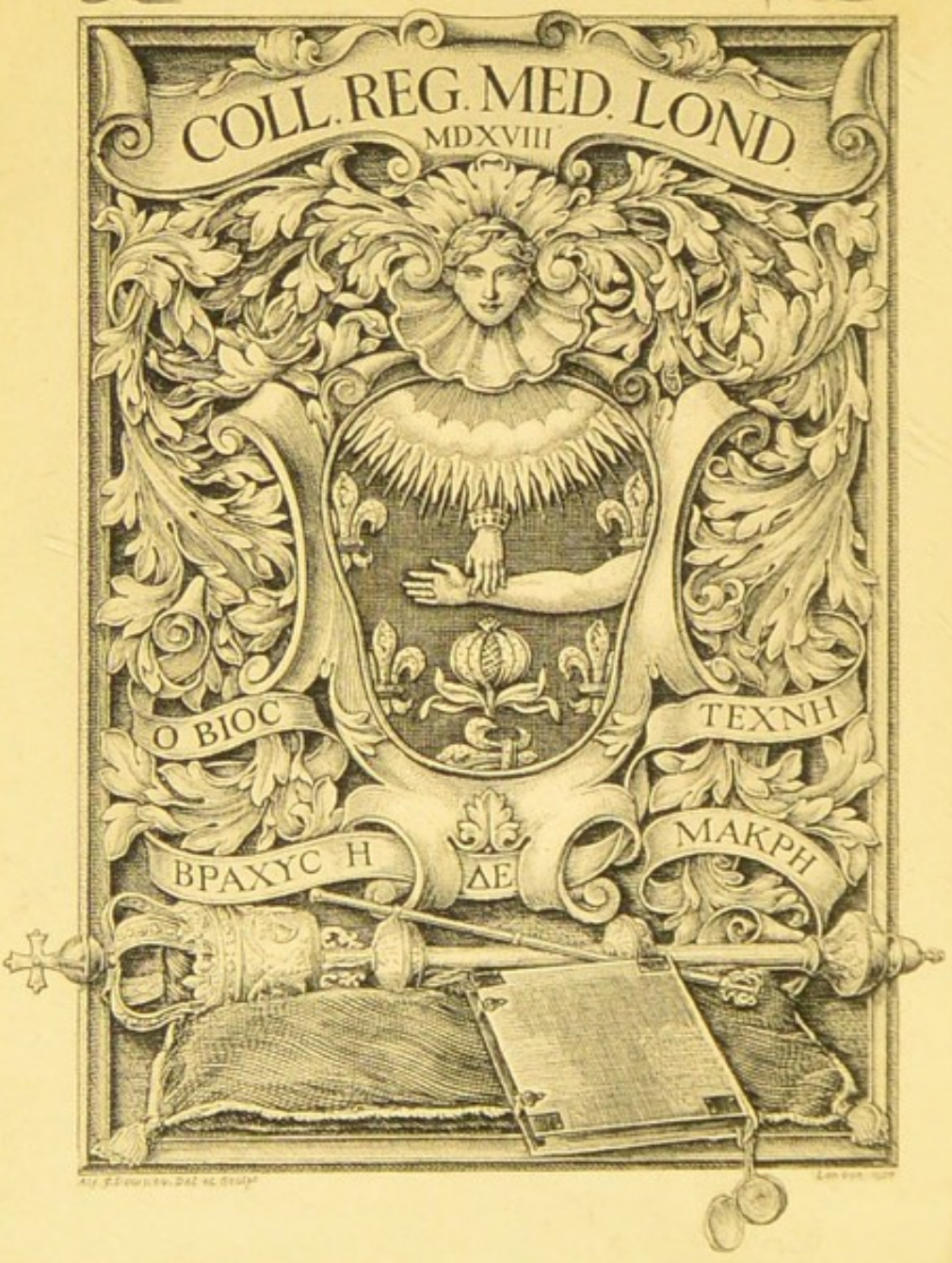
Dr Grenfell's parish : the deep sea fishermen / by Norman Duncan.

DR. GRENFELL'S PARISH



NORMAN DUNCAN



Transcript. Apr. 18, 1905.

Dr. Grenfell's Parish

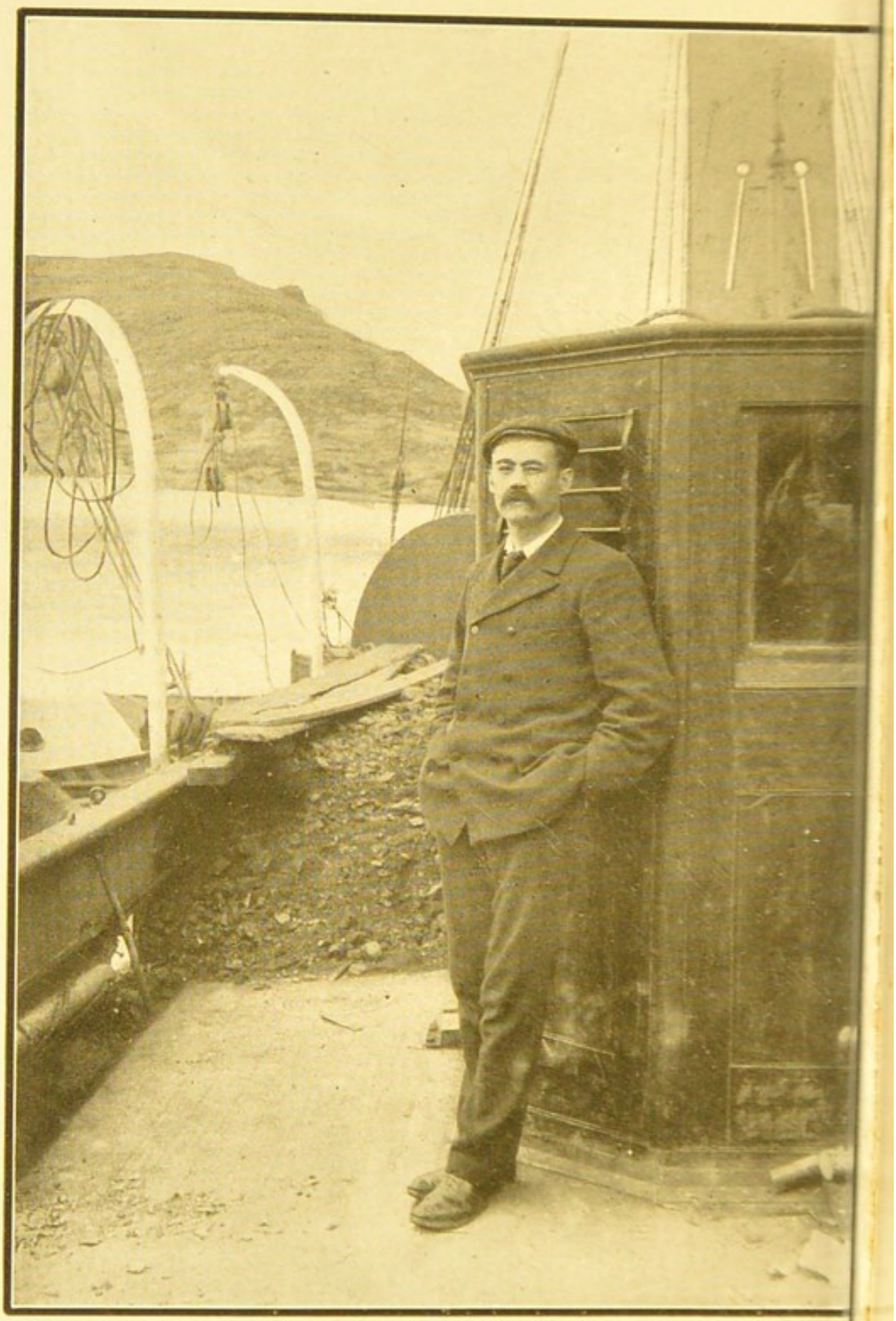
Dr. Grenfell's Parish. By Norman Duncan, Author of Dr. Luke of the Labrador. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co.

These are pen pictures of real life as it is experienced by the Labrador fisherman, eking out his precarious and colorless existence on his barren shores and islands. The romancing and the love story of Dr. Grenfell are realistic as life itself, and the author finds no need to put his story in novel form to create in his readers a staying interest in the life and adventures of this friend of the fisherman; though, judging from this book's results, Mr. Duncan could easily write a story on this theme that would hold its own with some of Jack London's best Alaskan stories. Certainly these sketches can prove nothing less than a revelation to cosy city and inland people who may perhaps be absolutely unaware that there is anything more cheering or interesting than fields of ice and snow along the coasts of Labrador.

The subject of the book is Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, an intrepid philanthropist and physician, and missionary of the Royal National Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen. The volume describes the man and his remarkable mission, as well as the character and the condition of the people for whose amelioration he surrenders all his days and talents. Though not the hero of the author's previous book, "Dr. Luke," Dr. Grenfell is indeed a hero in his own right, self-sacrificing, courageous, and more fearless of the sea and its perils than most of the Labrador fishermen. The description of this beloved doctor and his tireless work in a parish of three thousand miles in extent and the narration of many a stirring incident of bravery and unerring sympathy for the sick and needy, will serve to call a world-wide attention to the little known though wonderful labors of a man who actually has "taken up his cross and followed him." Herein, too, is offered an insight into the desolate and unambitious lives of almost undreamed of communities of fishing folk.

A New Book of the

DR. GRENFELL'S PARISH



"A DOCTOR . . . THE PROPHET AND CHAMPION OF A PEOPL

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The Deep Sea Fishermen

By
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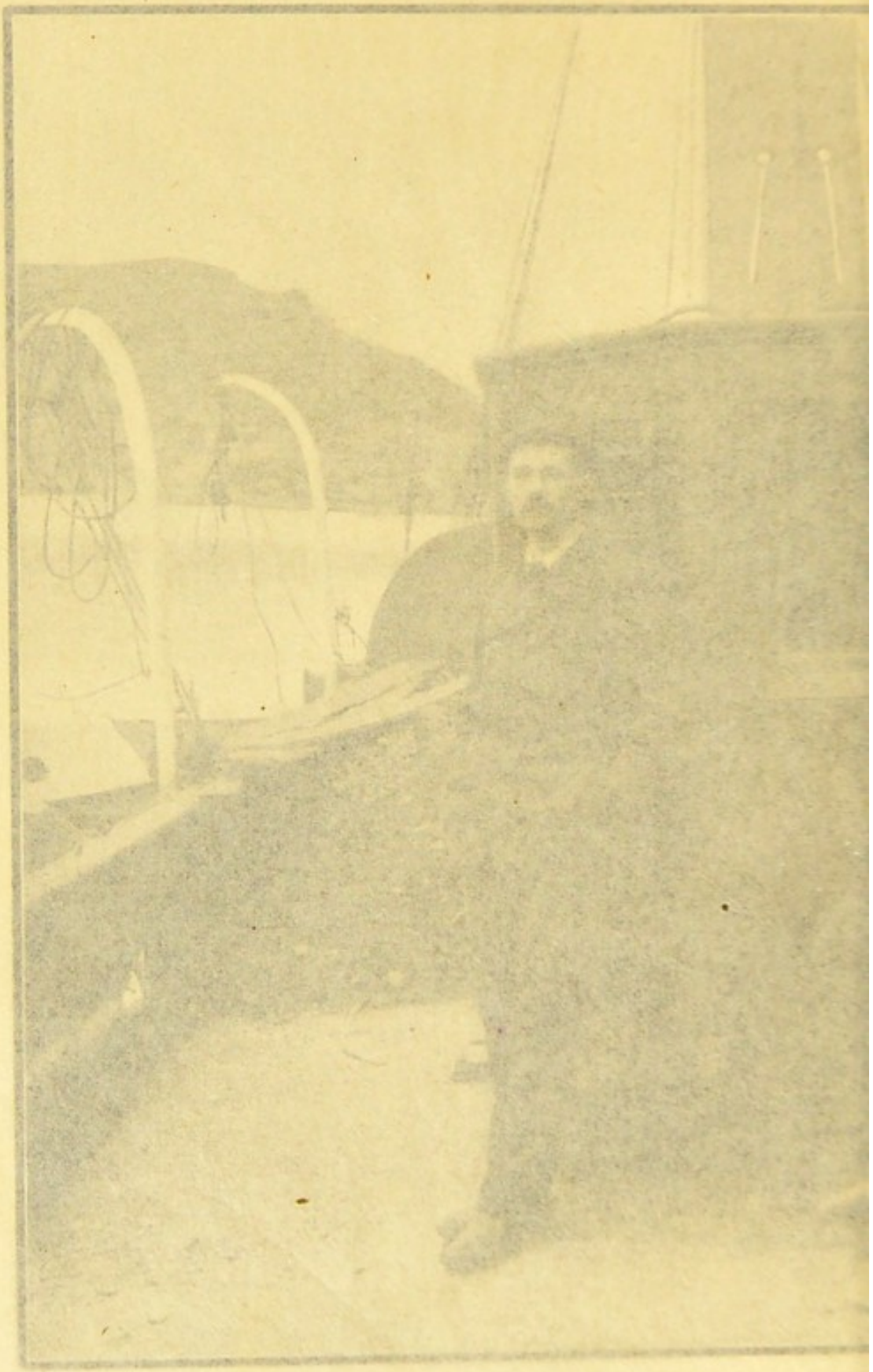

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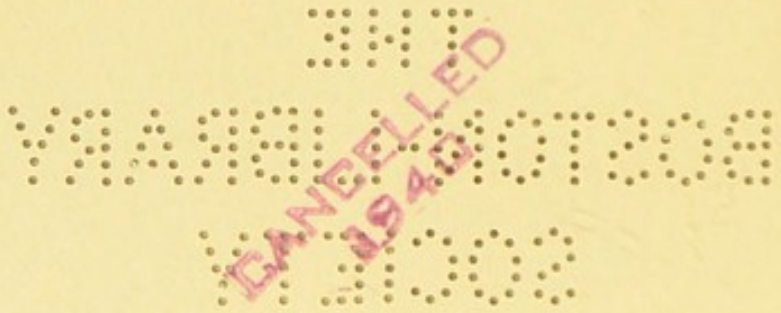


New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 63 Washington Street
Toronto: 27 Richmond Street, W
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

TO

THE CREW OF THE "STRATHCONA"

Henry Bartlett,	*Skipper*
Munden Clark,	*Second Hand*
William Percy,	*First Engineer*
John Scott,	*Second Engineer*
Archie Butler,	*Hospital Hand*
James Hiscock,	*Cook*
Alec Sims,	*Ship's Boy*

TO THE READER

THIS book pretends to no literary excellence; it has a far better reason for existence—a larger justification. Its purpose is to spread the knowledge of the work of Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, of the Royal National Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen, at work on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador; and to describe the character and condition of the folk whom he seeks to help. The man and the mission are worthy of sympathetic interest; worthy, too, of unqualified approbation, of support of every sort. Dr. Grenfell is indefatigable, devoted, heroic; he is more and even better than that—he is a sane and efficient worker. Frankly, the author believes that the reader would do a good deed by contributing to the maintenance and development of the doctor's beneficent undertakings; and re-

grets that the man and his work are presented in this inadequate way and by so incapable a hand. The author is under obligation to the editors of *Harper's Magazine*, of *The World's Work*, and of *Outing* for permission to reprint the contributed papers which, in some part, go to make up the volume. He wishes also to protest that Dr. Grenfell is not the hero of a certain work of fiction dealing with life on the Labrador coast. Some unhappy misunderstanding has arisen on this point. The author wishes to make it plain that "Doctor Duke" was *not* drawn from Dr. Grenfell.

N. D.

College Campus,
Washington, Pennsylvania, January 25, 1905.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Dr. Grenfell's Parish

I

THE DOCTOR

DOCTOR WILFRED T. GRENFELL is the young Englishman who, for the love of God, practices medicine on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador. Other men have been moved to heroic deeds by the same high motive, but the professional round, I fancy, is quite out of the common; indeed, it may be that in all the world there is not another of the sort. It extends from Cape John of Newfoundland around Cape Norman and into the Strait of Belle Isle, and from Ungava Bay and Cape Chidley of the Labrador southward far into the Gulf of St. Lawrence—two thousand miles of bitterly inhospitable shore: which a man in haste must sail with his life in his hands. The folk are for the

most part isolated and desperately wretched —the shore fishermen of the remoter Newfoundland coasts, the Labrador "liveyeres," the Indians of the forbidding interior, the Esquimaux of the far north. It is to such as these that the man gives devoted and heroic service—not for gain; there is no gain to be got in those impoverished places: merely for the love of God.

I once went ashore in a little harbour of the northeast coast of Newfoundland. It was a place most unimportant—and it was just beyond the doctor's round. The sea sullenly confronted it, hills overhung it, and a scrawny wilderness flanked the hills; the ten white cottages of the place gripped the dripping rocks as for dear life. And down the path there came an old fisherman to meet the stranger.

"Good-even, zur," said he.

"Good-evening."

He waited for a long time. Then, "Be you a doctor, zur?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Noa? Isn't you? Now, I was thinkin' maybe you might be. But you isn't, you says?"

"Sorry—but, no; really, I'm not."

"Well, zur," he persisted, "I was thinkin' you might be, when I seed you comin' ashore. They *is* a doctor on this coast," he added, "but he's sixty mile along shore. 'Tis a wonderful expense t' have un up. This here harbour isn't able. An' you isn't a doctor, you says? Is you sure, zur?"

There was unhappily no doubt about it.

"I was thinkin' you might be," he went on, wistfully, "when I seed you comin' ashore. But perhaps you might know something about doctorin'? Noa?"

"Nothing."

"I was thinkin', now, that you might. 'Tis my little girl that's sick. Sure, none of us knows what's the matter with she. Woan't you come up an' see she, zur? Perhaps you might do something—though you isn't—a doctor."

The little girl was lying on the floor—on a ragged quilt, in a corner. She was a fair child—a little maid of seven. Her eyes were deep blue, wide, and fringed with long, heavy lashes. Her hair was flaxen, abundant, all tangled and curly. Indeed, she was a winsome little thing!

"I'm thinkin' she'll be dyin' soon," said the mother. "Sure, she's wonderful swelled in the legs. We been waitin' for a doctor t' come, an' we kind o' thought you was one."

"How long have you waited?"

"'Twas in April she was took. She've been lyin' there ever since. 'Tis near August, now, I'm thinkin'."

"They was a doctor here two year ago," said the man. "He come by chance," he added, "like you."

"Think they'll be one comin' soon?" the woman asked.

I took the little girl's hand. It was dry and hot. She did not smile—nor was she afraid. Her fingers closed upon the hand

she held. She was a blue-eyed, winsome little maid; but pain had driven all the sweet roguery out of her face.

"Does you think she'll die, zur?" asked the woman, anxiously.

I did not know.

"Sure, zur," said the man, trying to smile, "'tis wonderful queer, but I *sure* thought you was a doctor, when I seed you comin' ashore."

"But you isn't?" the woman pursued, still hopefully. "Is you sure you couldn't do nothin'? Is you noa kind of a doctor, at all? We doan't—we doan't—want she t' die!"

In the silence—so long and deep a silence—melancholy shadows crept in from the desolation without.

"I wisht you *was* a doctor," said the man. "I—*wisht—you—was!*"

He was crying.

"They need," thought I, "a mission-doctor in these parts."

And the next day—in the harbour beyond—I first heard of Grenfell. In that place

they said they would send *him* to the little maid who lay dying; they assured me, indeed, that he would make haste, when he came that way: which would be, perhaps, they thought, in "'long about a month." Whether or not the doctor succoured the child I do not know; but I have never forgotten this first impression of his work—the conviction that it was a good work for a man to be about.

Subsequently I learned that Dr. Grenfell was the superintendent of the Newfoundland and Labrador activities of the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, an English organization, with a religious and medical work already well-established on the North Sea, and a medical mission then in process of development on the North Atlantic coast. Two years later he discovered himself to be a robust, hearty Saxon, strong, indefatigable, devoted, jolly; a doctor, a parson by times, something of a sportsman when occasion permitted, a master-mariner, a magistrate, the director of certain commer-

cial enterprises designed to "help the folk help themselves"—the prophet and champion, indeed, of a people: and a man very much in love with life.

II

A ROUND of BLEAK COASTS

THE coast of Labrador, which, in number of miles, forms the larger half of the doctor's round, is forbidding, indeed—naked, rugged, desolate, lying sombre in a mist. It is of weather-worn gray rock, broken at intervals by long ribs of black. In part it is low and ragged, slowly rising, by way of bare slopes and starved forest, to broken mountain ranges, which lie blue and bold in the inland waste. Elsewhere it rears from the edge of the sea in stupendous cliffs and lofty, rugged hills. There is no inviting stretch of shore the length of it—no sandy beach, no line of shingle, no grassy bank; the sea washes a thousand miles of jagged rock. Were it not for the harbours—innumerable and snugly sheltered from the winds and ground swell

of the open—there would be no navigating the waters of that region. The Strait Shore is buoyed, lighted, minutely charted. The reefs and currents and tickles[1] and harbours are all known. A northeast gale, to be sure, raises a commotion, and fog and drift-ice add something to the chance of disaster; but, as they say, from one peril there are two ways of escape to three sheltered places. To the north, however, where the doctor makes his way, the coast is best sailed on the plan of the skipper of the old *Twelve Brothers*.

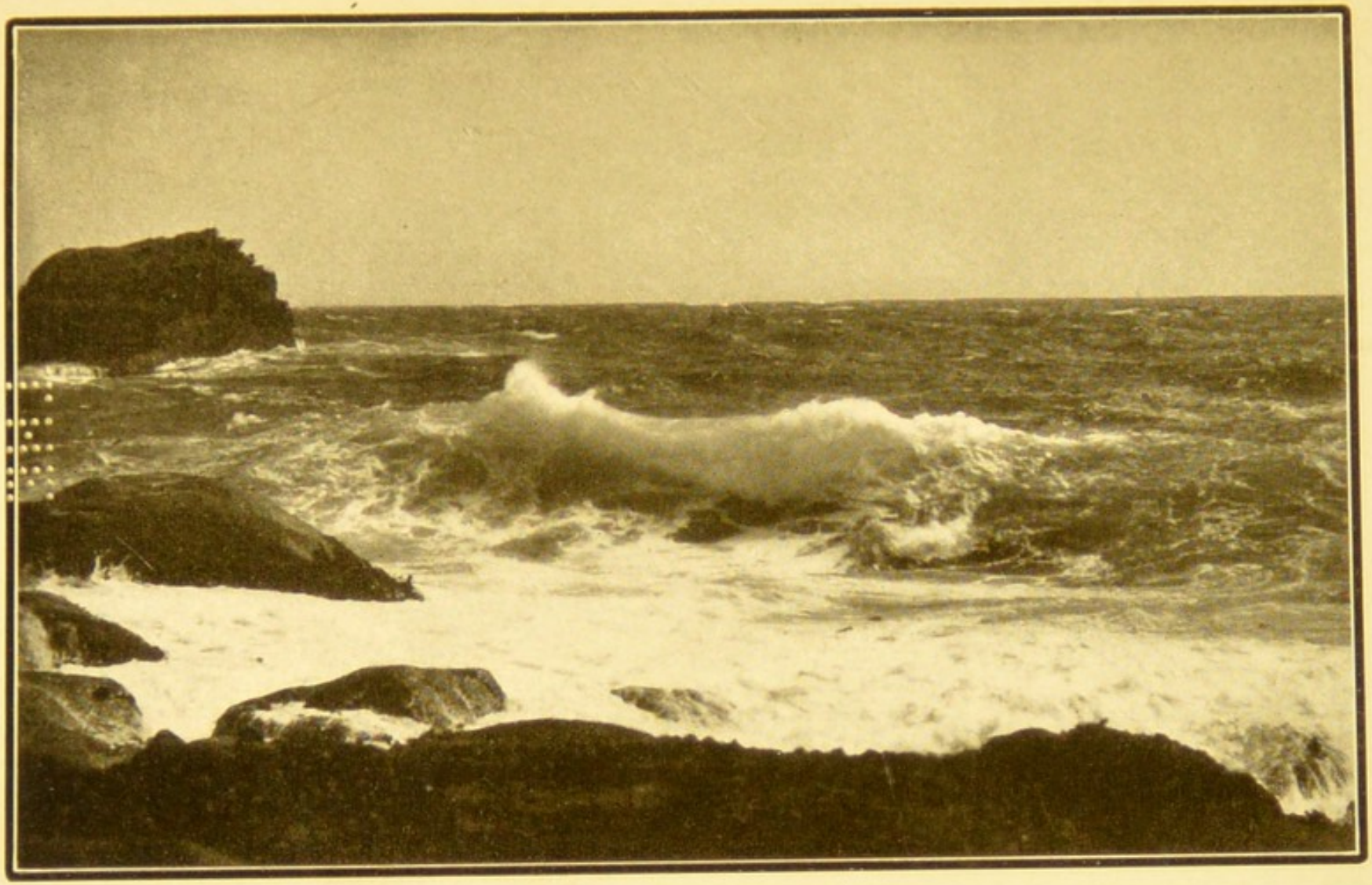
"You don't cotch *me* meddlin' with no land!" said he.

Past the Dead Islands, Snug Harbour, Domino Run, Devil's Lookout and the Quaker's Hat—beyond Johnny Paul's Rock and the Wolves, Sandwich Bay, Tumble-down Dick, Indian Harbour, and the White Cockade—past Cape Harrigan, the Farm-yard Islands and the Hen and Chickens—

[1] A "tickle" is a narrow passage to a harbour or between two islands.

far north to the great, craggy hills and strange peoples of Kikkertadsoak, Scoralik, Tunnulusoak, Nain, Okak, and, at last, to Cape Chidley itself—northward, every crooked mile of the way, bold headlands, low outlying islands, sunken reefs, tides, fogs, great winds and snow make hard sailing of it. It is an evil coast, ill-charted where charted at all; some part of the present-day map is based upon the guesswork of the eighteenth century navigators. The doctor, like the skippers of the fishing-craft, must sometimes sail by guess and hearsay, by recollection and old rhymes.

The gusts and great waves of open water —of the free, wide sea, I mean, over which a ship may safely drive while the weather exhausts its evil mood—are menace enough for the stoutest heart. But the Labrador voyage is inshore—a winding course among the islands, or a straight one from headland to headland, of a coast off which reefs lie thick: low-lying, jagged ledges, washed by



"IT IS AN EVIL COAST"

the sea in heavy weather; barren hills, rising abruptly—and all isolated—from safe water; sunken rocks, disclosed, upon approach, only by the green swirl above them. They are countless—scattered everywhere, hidden and disclosed. They lie in the mouths of harbours, they lie close to the coast, they lie offshore; they run twenty miles out to sea. Here is no plain sailing; the skipper must be sure of the way—or choose it gingerly: else the hidden rock will inevitably "pick him up."

Recently the doctor *was* "picked up."

"Oh, yes," says he, with interest. "An uncharted rock. It took two of the three blades of the propeller. But, really, you'd be surprised to know how well the ship got along with one!"

To know the submerged rocks of one harbour and the neighbouring coast, however evil the place, is small accomplishment. The Newfoundland lad of seven years would count himself his father's shame if he failed

in so little. High tide and low tide, quiet sea and heavy swell, he will know where he can take the punt—the depth of water, to an inch, which overlies the danger spots. But here are a hundred harbours—a thousand miles of coast—with reefs and islands scattered like dust the length of it. The man who sails the Labrador must know it all like his own back yard—not in sunny weather alone, but in the night, when the headlands are like black clouds ahead, and in the mist, when the noise of breakers tells him all that he may know of his whereabouts. A flash of white in the gray distance, a thud and swish from a hidden place: the one is his beacon, the other his fog-horn. It is thus, often, that the doctor gets along.

You may chart rocks, and beware of them; but—it is a proverb on the coast—"there's no chart for icebergs." The Labrador current is charged with them—hard, dead-white glacier ice from the Arctic:

massive bergs, innumerable, all the while shifting with tide and current and wind. What with floes and bergs—vast fields of drift-ice—the way north in the spring is most perilous. The same bergs—widely scattered, diminished in number, dwarfed by the milder climate—give the transatlantic passenger evil dreams: somewhere in the night, somewhere in the mist, thinks he, they may lie; and he shudders. The skipper of the Labrador craft *knows* that they lie thick around him: there is no surmise; when the night fell, when the fog closed in, there were a hundred to be counted from the masthead.

Violent winds are always to be feared—swift, overwhelming hurricanes: winds that catch the unwary. They are not frequent; but they *do* blow—will again blow, no man can tell when. In such a gale, forty vessels were driven on a lee shore; in another, eighty were wrecked overnight—two thousand fishermen cast away, the coast littered with splinters of ships—and, once (it is but

an incident), a schooner was torn from her anchors and flung on the rocks forty feet above the high-water mark. These are exceptional storms; the common Labrador gale is not so violent, but evil enough in its own way. It is a northeaster, of which the barometer more often than not gives fair warning; day after day it blows, cold, wet, foggy, dispiriting, increasing in violence, subsiding, returning again, until courage and strength are both worn out.

Reefs, drift-ice, wind and sea—and over all the fog: thick, wide-spread, persistent, swift in coming, mysterious in movement; it compounds the dangers. It blinds men—they curse it, while they grope along: a desperate business, indeed, thus to run by guess where positive knowledge of the way merely mitigates the peril. There are days when the fog lies like a thick blanket on the face of the sea, hiding the head-sails from the man at the wheel; it is night on deck, and broad day—with the sun in a blue sky

—at the masthead; the schooners are sometimes steered by a man aloft. The *Always Loaded*, sixty tons and bound home with a cargo that did honour to her name, struck one of the outlying islands so suddenly, so violently, that the lookout in the bow, who had been peering into the mist, was pitched headlong into the surf. The *Daughter*, running blind with a fair, light wind—she had been lost for a day—ran full tilt into a cliff; the men ran forward from the soggy gloom of the after-deck into—bright sunshine at the bow! It is the fog that wrecks ships.

"Oh, I runned her ashore," says the castaway skipper. "Thick? Why, *sure*, 'twas thick!"

So the men who sail that coast hate fog, fear it, avoid it when they can, which is seldom; they are not afraid of wind and sea, but there are times when they shake in their sea-boots, if the black fog catches them out of harbour.

III

SHIPS in PERIL

IT is to be remarked that a wreck on the Labrador coast excites no wide surprise. Never a season passes but some craft are cast away. But that is merely the fortune of sailing those waters—a fortune which the mission-doctor accepts with a glad heart: it provides him with an interesting succession of adventures; life is not tame. Most men—I hesitate to say all—have been wrecked; every man, woman, and child who has sailed the Labrador has narrowly escaped, at least. And the fashion of that escape is sometimes almost incredible.

The schooner *All's Well* (which is a fictitious name) was helpless in the wind and sea and whirling snow of a great blizzard. At dusk she was driven inshore—no man knew

where. Strange cliffs loomed in the snow ahead; breakers—they were within stone's throw—flashed and thundered to port and starboard; the ship was driving swiftly into the surf. When she was fairly upon the rocks, Skipper John, then a hand aboard (it was he who told me the story), ran below and tumbled into his bunk, believing it to be the better place to drown in.

"Well, lads," said he to the men in the forecastle, "we got t' go this time. 'Tis no use goin' on deck."

But the ship drove through a tickle no wider than twice her beam and came suddenly into the quiet water of a harbour!

The sealing-schooner *Right and Tight* struck on the Fish Rocks off Cape Charles in the dusk of a northeast gale. It is a jagged, black reef, outlying and isolated; the seas wash over it in heavy weather. It was a bitter gale; there was ice in the sea, and the wind was wild and thick with snow; she was driving before it—wrecked, blind,

utterly lost. The breakers flung her on the reef, broke her back, crunched her, swept the splinters on. Forty-two men were of a sudden drowned in the sea beyond; but the skipper was left clinging to the rock in a swirl of receding water.

"Us seed un there in the marnin'," said the old man of Cape Charles who told me the story. "He were stickin' to it like a mussel, with the sea breakin' right over un! 'Cod! he were!"

He laughed and shook his head; that was a tribute to the strength and courage with which the man on the reef had withstood the icy breakers through the night.

"Look! us couldn't get near un," he went on. "'Twas clear enough t' see, but the wind was blowin' wonderful, an' the seas was too big for the skiff. Sure, I *knows* that; for us tried it.

"'Leave us build a fire!' says my woman. 'Leave us build a fire on the head!' says she. 'Twill let un know they's folk lookin' on.'

"'Twas a wonderful big fire us set; an' it kep' us warm, so us set there all day watchin' the skipper o' the *Right an' Tight* on Fish Rocks. The big seas jerked un loose an' flung un about, an' many a one washed right over un; but nar a sea could carry un off. 'Twas a wonderful sight t' see un knocked off his feet, an' scramble round an' cotch hold somewheres else. 'Cod! it were—the way that man stuck t' them slippery rocks all day long!"

He laughed again—not heartlessly; it was the only way in which he could express his admiration.

"We tried the skiff again afore dark," he continued; "but 'twasn't no use. The seas was too big. Sure, *he* knowed that so well as we. So us had t' leave un there all night.

"'He'll never be there in the marnin',' says my woman.

"'You wait,' says I, 'an' you'll see. I'm thinkin' he will.'

"An' he was, zur—right there on Fish Rocks, same as ever; still stickin' on like the

toughest ol' mussel ever you tasted. Sure, I had t' rub me eyes when I looked; but 'twas he, never fear—'twas he, stickin' there like a mussel. But there was no gettin' un then. Us watched un all that day. 'Twas dark afore us got un ashore.

"'You come nigh it *that* time,' says I.

"'I'll have t' come a sight nigher,' says he, 'afore *I* goes!'"

The man had been on the reef more than forty-eight hours!

The *Army Lass*, bound north, was lost in the fog. They hove her to. All hands knew that she lay somewhere near the coast. The skipper needed a sight of the rocks—just a glimpse of some headland or island—to pick the course. It was important that he should have it. There was an iceberg floating near; it was massive; it appeared to be steady—and the sea was quiet. From the top of it, he thought (the fog was dense and seemed to be lying low), he might see far and near. His crew

"BOUND NORTH"

put him on the ice with the quarter-boat and then hung off a bit. He clambered up the side of the berg. Near the summit he had to cut his foothold with an axe. This was unfortunate; for he gave the great white mass one blow too many. It split under his feet. He fell headlong into the widening crevice. But he was apparently not a whit the worse for it when his boat's crew picked him up.

A schooner—let her be called the *Good Fortune*—running through dense fog, with a fair, high wind and all sail set, struck a "twin" iceberg bow on. She was wrecked in a flash: her jib-boom was rammed into her forecastle; her bows were stove in; her topmast snapped and came crashing to the deck. Then she fell away from the ice; whereupon the wind caught her, turned her about, and drove her, stern foremost, into a narrow passage which lay between the two towering sections of the "twin." She scraped along, striking the ice on either

side; and with every blow, down came fragments from above.

"It rained chunks," said the old skipper who told me the story. "You couldn't tell, look! what minute you'd get knocked on the head."

The falling ice made great havoc with the deck-works; the boats were crushed; the "house" was stove in; the deck was littered with ice. But the *Good Fortune* drove safely through, was rigged with makeshift sails, made harbour, was refitted by all hands—the Labradormen can build a ship with an axe—and continued her voyage.

I have said that the Newfoundlanders occasionally navigate by means of old rhymes; and this brings me to the case of Zachariah, the skipper of the *Heavenly Rest.* He was a Newf'un'lander. Neither wind, fog nor a loppy sea could turn his blood to water. He was a Newf'un'lander of the hardshell breed. So he sailed the

Heavenly Rest without a chart. To be sure, he favoured the day for getting along, but he ran through the night when he was crowding south, and blithely took his chance with islands of ice and rock alike. He had some faith in a "telltale," had Zachariah, but he scorned charts. It was his boast that if he could not carry the harbours and headlands and shallows of five hundred miles of hungry coast in his head he should give up the *Heavenly Rest* and sail a paddle-punt for a living. It was well that he could—well for the ship and the crew and the folk at home. For, at the time of which I write, the *Rest*, too light in ballast to withstand a gusty breeze, was groping through the fog for harbour from a gale which threatened a swift descent. It was "thick as bags," with a rising wind running in from the sea, and the surf breaking and hissing within hearing to leeward.

"We be handy t' Hollow Harbour," said Zachariah.

"Is you sure, skipper?" asked the cook.

"Sure," said Zachariah.

The *Heavenly Rest* was in desperate case. She was running in—pursuing an unfaltering course for an unfamiliar, rocky shore. The warning of the surf sounded in every man's ears. It was imperative that her true position should soon be determined. The skipper was perched far forward, peering through the fog for a sight of the coast.

"Sure, an' I hopes," said the man at the wheel, "that she woan't break her nose on a rock afore the ol' man sees un."

"Joe Bett's P'int!" exclaimed the skipper.

Dead ahead, and high in the air, a mass of rock loomed through the mist. The skipper had recognized it in a flash. He ran aft and took the wheel. The *Heavenly Rest* sheered off and ran to sea.

"We'll run in t' Hollow Harbour," said the skipper.

"Has you ever been there?" said the man who had surrendered the wheel.

"Noa, b'y," the skipper answered, "but I'll get there, whatever."

The nose of the *Heavenly Rest* was turned shoreward. Sang the skipper, humming it to himself in a rasping sing-song:

"When Joe Bett's P'int you is abreast,
Dane's Rock bears due west.
West-nor'west you must steer,
'Til Brimstone Head do appear.

"The tickle's narrow, not very wide;
The deepest water's on the starboard side
When in the harbour you is shot,
Four fathoms you has got."

The old song was chart enough for Skipper Zachariah. Three times the *Heavenly Rest* ran in and out. Then she sighted Dane's Rock, which bore due west, true enough. West-nor'west was the course she followed, running blindly through the fog and heeling to the wind. Brimstone Head appeared in due time; and in due time the rocks of the tickle—that narrow entrance to the harbour—appeared in vague, forbidding form to port and starboard. The

schooner ran to the starboard for the deeper water. Into the harbour she shot; and there they dropped anchor, caring not at all whether the water was four or forty fathoms, for it was deep enough. Through the night the gale tickled the topmasts, but the ship rode smoothly at her anchors, and Skipper Zachariah's stentorian sleep was not disturbed by any sudden call to duty.

And the doctor of the Deep Sea Mission has had many a similar experience.

IV

DESPERATE NEED

IT was to these rough waters that Dr. Grenfell came when the need of the folk reached his ears and touched his heart. Before that, in the remoter parts of Newfoundland and on the coast of Labrador there were no doctors. The folk depended for healing upon traditional cures, upon old women who worked charms, upon remedies ingeniously devised to meet the need of the moment, upon deluded persons who prescribed medicines of the most curious description, upon a rough-and-ready surgery of their own, in which the implements of the kitchen and of the splitting-stage served a useful purpose. For example, there was a misled old fellow who set himself up as a healer in a lonely cove of the Newfoundland coast, where he lived a hermit, verily

believing, it may be, in the glory of his call and in the blessed efficacy of his ministrations; his cure for consumption—it was a tragic failure, in one case, at least—was a bull's heart, dried and powdered and administered with faith and regularity. Elsewhere there was a man, stricken with a mortal ailment, who, upon the recommendation of a kindly neighbour, regularly dosed himself with an ill-flavoured liquid obtained by boiling cast-off pulley-blocks in water. There was also a father who most hopefully attempted to cure his little lad of diphtheria by wrapping his throat with a split herring; but, unhappily, as he has said, "the wee feller choked hisself t' death," notwithstanding. There was another father—a man of grim, heroic disposition—whose little daughter chanced to freeze her feet to the very bone in midwinter; when he perceived that a surgical operation could no longer be delayed, he cut them off with an axe.

An original preventative of sea-boils—with which the fishermen are cruelly afflicted upon the hands and wrists in raw weather—was evolved by a frowsy-headed old Labradorman of serious parts.

"*I* never has none," said he, in the fashion of superior fellows.

"No?"

"Nar a one. No, *zur!* Not *me!*"

A glance of interested inquiry elicited no response. It but prolonged a large silence.

"Have you never *had* a sea-boil?" with the note and sharp glance of incredulity.

"Not me. Not since I got my cure."

"And what might that cure be?"

"Well, zur," was the amazing reply, "I cuts my nails on a Monday."

It must be said, however, that the Newfoundland government did provide a physician—of a sort. Every summer he was sent north with the mail-boat, which made not more than six trips, touching here and

there at long intervals, and, of a hard season, failing altogether to reach the farthest ports. While the boat waited—an hour, or a half, as might be—the doctor went ashore to cure the sick, if he chanced to be in the humour; otherwise the folk brought the sick aboard, where they were painstakingly treated or not, as the doctor's humour went. The government seemed never to inquire too minutely into the qualifications and character of its appointee. The incumbent for many years—the folk thank God that he is dead—was an inefficient, ill-tempered, cruel man; if not the very man himself, he was of a kind with the Newfoundland physician who ran a flag of warning to his masthead when he set out to get very drunk.

The mail-boat dropped anchor one night in a far-away harbour of the Labrador, where there was desperate need of a doctor to ease a man's pain. They had waited a long time, patiently, day after

day, I am told; and when at last the mail-boat came, the man's skipper put out in glad haste to fetch the government physician.

"He've turned in," they told him aboard.

What did *that* matter? The skipper roused the doctor.

"We've a sick man ashore, zur," said he, "an' he wants you t' come——"

"What!" roared the doctor. "Think I'm going to turn out this time of night?"

"Sure, zur," stammered the astounded skipper. "I—I—s'pose so. He's very sick, zur. He's coughin'——"

"Let him cough himself to death!" said the doctor.

Turn out? Not he! Rather, he turned over in his warm berth. It is to be assumed that the sick man died in pain; it is to be assumed, too, that the physician continued a tranquil slumber, for the experience was not exceptional.

"Let 'em die!" he had said more than once.

The government had provided for the transportation of sick fishermen from the Labrador coast to their homes in Newfoundland; these men were of the great Newfoundland fleet of cod-fishing schooners, which fish the Labrador seas in the summer. It needed only the doctor's word to get the boon. Once a fisherman brought his consumptive son aboard—a young lad, with but a few weeks of life left. The boy wanted his mother, who was at home in Newfoundland.

"Ay, he's fair *sick* for his mother," said the father to the doctor. "I'm askin' you, zur, t' take un home on the mail-boat."

The doctor was in a perverse mood that day. He would not take the boy.

"Sure, zur," said the fisherman, "the schooner's not goin' 'til fall, an' I've no money, an' the lad's dyin'."

But still the doctor would not.

"I'm thinkin', zur," said the fisherman, steadily, "that you're not quite knowin' that the lad wants t' see his mother afore he dies."

The doctor laughed.

"We'll have a laugh at *you*," cried the indignant fisherman, "when *you* comes t' die!"

Then he cursed the doctor most heartily and took his son ashore. He was right—they did have a laugh at the doctor; the whole coast might have laughed when he came to die. Being drunk on a stormy night, he fell down the companionway and broke his neck.

Deep in the bays and up the rivers south of Hamilton Inlet, which is itself rather heavily timbered, there is wood to be had for the cutting; but "down t' Chidley"—which is the northernmost point of the Labrador coast—the whole world is bare; there is neither tree nor shrub, shore nor inland, to grace the naked rock; the land lies bleak and desolate. But, once, a man lived there the year round. I don't know why; it is inexplicable; but I am sure that the shiftless fellow and his wife had never an ink-

ling that the circumstance was otherwise than commonplace and reasonable; and the child, had he lived, would have continued to dwell there, boy and man, in faith that the earth was good to live in. One hard winter the man burnt all his wood long before the schooners came up from the lower coast. It was a desperate strait to come to; but I am sure that he regarded his situation with surprising phlegm; doubtless he slept as sound, if not as warm, as before. There was no more wood to be had; so he burnt the furniture, every stick of it, and when that was gone, began on the frame of his house—a turf hut, builded under a kindly cliff, sheltered somewhat from the winds from the frozen sea. As, rafter by rafter, the frame was withdrawn, he cut off the roof and folded in the turf walls; thus, day by day, the space within dwindled; his last fire was to consume the last of his shelter—which, no doubt, troubled him not at all; for the day was not yet come. It is an ugly story. When they were found in the spring, the

"A TURF HUT"

woman lay dying on a heap of straw in a muddy corner—she was afflicted with hip-disease—and the house was tumbling about her ears; the child, new born, had long ago frozen on its mother's breast.

A doctor of the Newfoundland outports was once called to a little white cottage where three children lay sick of diphtheria. He was the family physician; that is to say, the fisherman paid him so much by the year for medical attendance. But the injection of antitoxin is a "surgical operation" and therefore not provided for by the annual fee.

"This," said the doctor, "will cost you two dollars an injection, John."

"Oh, ay, zur," was the ready reply. "I'll pay you, zur. Go on, zur!"

"But you know my rule, John—no pay, no work. I can't break it for you, you know, or I'd have to break it for half the coast."

"Oh, ay! 'Tis all right. I wants un

cured. I'll pay you when I sells me fish."

"But you know my rule, John—cash down."

The fisherman had but four dollars—no more; nor could he obtain any more, though the doctor gave him ample time. I am sure that he loved his children dearly, but, unfortunately, he had no more than four dollars; and there was no other doctor for fifty miles up and down the coast.

"Four dollars," said the doctor, "two children. Which ones shall it be, John?"

Which ones? Why, of course, after all, the doctor had himself to make the choice. John couldn't. So the doctor chose the "handiest" ones. The other one died.

"Well," said John, unresentfully, the day after the funeral, "I s'pose a doctor haves a right t' be paid for what he does. But," much puzzled, "'tis kind o' queer!"

This is not a work of fiction. These incidents are true. I set them down here

for the purpose of adequately showing the need of such a practitioner as Wilfred T. Grenfell in the sphere in which he now labours. My point is—that if in the more settled places, where physicians might be summoned, such neglect and brutality could exist, in what a lamentable condition were the folk of the remoter parts, where even money could not purchase healing! Nor are these true stories designed to reflect upon the regular practitioners of Newfoundland; nor should they create a false impression concerning them. I have known many noble physicians in practice there; indeed, I am persuaded that heroism and devotion are, perhaps, their distinguishing characteristics. God knows, there is little enough gain to be had! God knows, too, that that little is hard earned! These men do their work well and courageously, and as adequately as may be; it is on the coasts beyond that the mission-doctor labours.

V

A HELPING HAND

WHILE the poor "liveyeres" and Newfoundland fishermen thus depended upon the mail-boat doctor and their own strange inventions for relief, Wilfred Grenfell, this well-born, Oxford-bred young Englishman, was walking the London hospitals. He was athletic, adventurous, dogged, unsentimental, merry, kind; moreover—and most happily—he was used to the sea, and he loved it. It chanced one night that he strayed into the Tabernacle in East London, where D. L. Moody, the American evangelist, was preaching. When he came out he had resolved to make his religion "practical." There was nothing violent in this—no fevered, ill-judged determination to martyr himself at all costs. It was a quiet resolve to make the best of

his life—which he would have done at any rate, I think, for he was a young Englishman of good breeding and the finest impulses. At once he cast about for "some way in which he could satisfy the aspirations of a young medical man, and combine with this a desire for adventure and definite Christian work."

I had never before met a missionary of that frank type. "Why," I exclaimed to him, off the coast of Labrador, not long ago, "you seem to *like* this sort of life!"

We were aboard the mission steamer, bound north under full steam and all sail. He had been in feverish haste to reach the northern harbours, where, as he knew, the sick were watching for his coming. The fair wind, the rush of the little steamer on her way, pleased him.

"Oh," said he, somewhat impatiently, "*I'm* not a martyr."

So he found what he sought. After applying certain revolutionary ideas to Sun-

day-school work in the London slums, in which a horizontal bar and a set of boxing-gloves for a time held equal place with the Bible and the hymn-book, he joined the staff of the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, and established the medical mission to the fishermen of the North Sea. When that work was organized—when the fight was gone out of it—he sought a harder task; he is of that type, then extraordinary but now familiar, which finds no delight where there is no difficulty. In the spring of 1892 he set sail from Great Yarmouth Harbour for Labrador in a ninety-ton schooner. Since then, in the face of hardship, peril, and prejudice, he has, with a light heart and strong purpose, healed the sick, preached the Word, clothed the naked, fed the starving, given shelter to them that had no roof, championed the wronged—in all, devotedly fought evil, poverty, oppression, and disease; for he is bitterly intolerant of those things. And ——

"It's been jolly good fun!" says he.

"SET SAIL FROM GREAT YARMOUTH HARBOR FOR LABRADOR"

The immediate inspiration of this work was the sermon preached in East London by D. L. Moody. Later in life—indeed, soon before the great evangelist's death—Dr. Grenfell thanked him for that sermon. "And what have you been doing since?" was Mr. Moody's prompt and searching question. "*What have you been doing since?*" Dr. Grenfell might with propriety and effect have placed in Mr. Moody's hands such letters as those which I reprint, saying: "What have I been doing since? I have been kept busy, sir, responding to such calls as these." Such calls as these:

Docter plase I whant to see you. Doeher sir have you got a leg if you have Will you plase send him Down Praps he may fet and you would oblig.

Reverance dr. Grandfell. Dear sir we are expecting you hup and we would like for you to come so quick as you can for my dater is very sick with a very large sore under her left harm we emenangin that the old is two enchis deep and tow enches wide

plase com as quick as you can to save life I remains yours truely.

Docker,—Please wel you send me somting for the pain in my feet and what you proismed to send my little boy. Docker I am almost cripple, it is up my hips, I can hardly walk. This is my housban is gaining you this note from

To Dr. Gransfield

Dear honrabel Sir,

I would wish to ask you Sir, if you would Be pleased to give me and my wife a littel poor close. I was going in the Bay to cut some wood. But I am all amost blind and cant Do much so if you would spear me some Sir I should Be very thankfull to you Sir.

I got Bad splotches all over my Body and i dont know what the cause of it is. Please Have you got anything for it. i Have'nt got any money to Pay you now for anything But i wont forget to Pay you when i gets the money.

doctor—i have a compleant i ham weak with wind on the chest, weaknes all all over me up in my harm.

Dear Dr. Grenfell.

I would like for you to Have time to

come Down to my House Before you leaves to go to St. Anthony. My little Girl is very Bad. it seems all in Her neck. Cant Ply her Neck forward if do she nearly goes in the fits. i dont know what it is the matter with Her myself. But if you see Her you would know what the matter with Her. Please send a Word By the Bearer what gives you this note and let me know where you will have time to come down to my House. i lives down the Bay a Place called Berry Head.

"What have you been doing since?" Dr. Grenfell has not been idle. There is now a mission hospital at St. Anthony, near the extreme northeast point of the Newfoundland coast. There is another, well-equipped and commodious, at Battle Harbour—a rocky island lying out from the Labrador coast near the Strait of Belle Isle —which is open the year round; when the writer was last on the coast, it was in charge of Dr. Cluny McPherson, a courageous young physician, Newfoundland-born, who went six hundred miles up the coast by dog-team in the dead of winter, finding shelter where he might, curing whom he could

—everywhere seeking out those who needed him, caring not a whit, it appears, for the peril and hardship of the long white road. There is a third at Indian Harbour, half-way up the coast, which is open through the fishing season. It is conducted with the care and precision of a London hospital —admirably kept, well-ordered, efficient. The physician in charge is Dr. George H. Simpson—a wiry, keen, brave little Englishman, who goes about in an open boat, whatever the distance, whatever the weather; he is a man of splendid courage and sympathy: the fishing-folk love him for his kind heart and for the courage with which he responds to their every call. There is also the little hospital steamer *Strathcona*, in which Dr. Grenfell makes the round of all the coast, from the time of the break-up until the fall gales have driven the fishing-schooners home to harbour.

"APPEARED WITH A LITTLE STEAM-LAUNCH, THE PRINCESS MAY"

VI

FAITH and DUTY

WHEN Dr. Grenfell first appeared on the coast, I am told, the folk thought him a madman of some benign description. He knew nothing of the reefs, the tides, the currents, cared nothing, apparently, for the winds; he sailed with the confidence and reckless courage of a Labrador skipper. Fearing at times to trust his schooner in unknown waters, he went about in a whale-boat, and so hard did he drive her that he wore her out in a single season. She was capsized with all hands, once driven out to sea, many times nearly swamped, once blown on the rocks; never before was a boat put to such tasks on that coast, and at the end of it she was wrecked beyond repair. Next season he appeared with a little steam-launch, the *Princess May* —her beam was eight feet!—in which he

not only journeyed from St. Johns to Labrador, to the astonishment of the whole colony, but sailed the length of that bitter coast, passing into the gulf and safely out again, and pushing to the very farthest settlements in the north. Late in the fall, upon the return journey to St. Johns in stormy weather, she was reported lost, and many a skipper, I suppose, wondered that she had lived so long; but she weathered a gale that bothered the mail-boat, and triumphantly made St. Johns, after as adventurous a voyage, no doubt, as ever a boat of her measure survived.

"Sure," said a skipper, "I don't know how she done it. The Lord," he added, piously, "must kape an eye on that man."

There is a new proverb on the coast. The folk say, when a great wind blows, "This'll bring Grenfell!" Often it does. He is impatient of delay, fretted by inaction; a gale is the wind for him—a wind to take him

swiftly towards the place ahead. Had he been a weakling, he would long ago have died on the coast; had he been a coward, a multitude of terrors would long ago have driven him to a life ashore; had he been anything but a true man and tender, indeed, he would long ago have retreated under the suspicion and laughter of the folk. But he has outsailed the Labrador skippers—outdared them—done deeds of courage under their very eyes that they would shiver to contemplate,—never in a foolhardy spirit; always with the object of kindly service. So he has the heart and willing hand of every honest man on the Labrador—and of none more than of the men of his crew, who take the chances with him; they are wholly devoted.

One of his engineers, for example, once developed the unhappy habit of knocking the cook down.

"You must keep your temper," said the doctor. "This won't do, you know."

But there came an unfortunate day when,

being out of temper, the engineer again knocked the cook down.

"This is positively disgraceful!" said the doctor. "I can't keep a quarrelsome fellow aboard the mission-ship. Remember that, if you will, when next you feel tempted to strike the cook."

The engineer protested that he would never again lay hands on the cook, whatever the provocation. But again he lost his temper, and down went the poor cook, flat on his back.

"I'll discharge you," said the doctor, angrily, "at the end of the cruise!"

The engineer pleaded for another chance. He was denied. From day to day he renewed his plea, but to no purpose, and at last the crew came to the conclusion that something really ought to be done for the engineer, who was visibly fretting himself thin.

"Very well," said the doctor to the engineer; "I'll make this agreement with you. If ever again you knock down the cook, I'll

put you ashore at the first land we come to, and you may get back to St. Johns as best you can."

It was a hard alternative. The doctor is not a man to give or take when the bargain has been struck; the engineer knew that he would surely go ashore somewhere on that desolate coast, whether the land was a barren island or a frequented harbour, if ever again the cook tempted him beyond endurance.

"I'll stand by it, sir," he said, nevertheless; "for I don't want to leave you."

In the course of time the *Princess May* was wrecked or worn out. Then came the *Julia Sheridan*, thirty-five feet long, which the mission doctor bought while she yet lay under water from her last wreck; he raised her, refitted her with what money he had, and pursued his venturesome and beneficent career, until she, too, got beyond so hard a service. Many a gale she weathered, off "the worst coast in the world"—often, in-

deed, in thick, wild weather, the doctor himself thought the little craft would go down; but she is now happily superannuated, carrying the mail in the quieter waters of Hamilton Inlet. Next came the *Sir Donald*—a stout ship, which in turn disappeared, crushed in the ice. The *Strathcona*, with a hospital amidships, is now doing duty; and she will continue to go up and down the coast, in and out of the inlets, until she in her turn finds the ice and the wind and the rocks too much for her.

"'Tis bound t' come, soon or late," said a cautious friend of the mission. "He drives her too hard. He've a right t' do what he likes with his own life, I s'pose, but he've a call t' remember that the crew has folks t' home."

But the mission doctor is not inconsiderate; he is in a hurry—the coast is long, the season short, the need such as to wring a man's heart. Every new day holds an opportunity for doing a good deed—not if he

dawdles in the harbours when a gale is abroad, but only if he passes swiftly from place to place, with a brave heart meeting the dangers as they come. He is the only doctor to visit the Labrador shore of the Gulf, the Strait shore of Newfoundland, the populous east coast of the northern peninsula of Newfoundland, the only doctor known to the Esquimaux and poor "liveyeres" of the northern coast of Labrador, the only doctor most of the "liveyeres" and green-fish catchers of the middle coast can reach, save the hospital physician at Indian Harbour. He has a round of three thousand miles to make. It is no wonder that he "drives" the little steamer —even at full steam, with all sail spread (as I have known him to do), when the fog is thick and the sea is spread with great bergs.

"I'm in a hurry," he said, with an impatient sigh. "The season's late. We must get along."

We fell in with him at Red Ray in the

Strait, in the thick of a heavy gale from the northeast. The wind had blown for two days; the sea was running high, and still fast rising; the schooners were huddled in the harbours, with all anchors out, many of them hanging on for dear life, though they lay in shelter. The sturdy little coastal boat, with four times the strength of the *Strathcona*, had made hard work of it that day—there was a time when she but held her own off a lee shore in the teeth of the big wind.

It was drawing on towards night when the doctor came aboard for a surgeon from Boston, a specialist, for whom he had been waiting.

"I see you've steam up," said the captain of the coastal boat. "I hope you're not going out in *this*, doctor!"

"I have some patients at the Battle Harbour Hospital, waiting for our good friend from Boston," said the doctor, briskly. "I'm in a hurry. Oh, yes, I'm going out!"

"For God's sake, don't!" said the captain earnestly.

The doctor's eye chanced to fall on the gentleman from Boston, who was bending over his bag—a fine, fearless fellow, whom the prospect of putting out in that chip of a steamer would not have perturbed, though the doctor may then not have known it. At any rate, as though bethinking himself of something half forgotten, he changed his mind of a sudden.

"Oh, very well," he said. "I'll wait until the gale blows out."

He managed to wait a day—no longer; and the wind was still wild, the sea higher than ever; there was ice in the road, and the fog was dense. Then out he went into the thick of it. He bumped an iceberg, scraped a rock, fairly smothered the steamer with broken water; and at midnight—the most marvellous feat of all—he crept into Battle Harbour through a narrow, difficult passage, and dropped anchor off the mission wharf.

Doubtless he enjoyed the experience while it lasted—and promptly forgot it, as being commonplace. I have heard of him, caught in the night in a winter's gale of wind and snow, threading a tumultuous, reef-strewn sea, his skipper at the wheel, himself on the bowsprit, guiding the ship by the flash and roar of breakers, while the sea tumbled over him. If the chance passenger who told me the story is to be believed, upon that trying occasion the doctor had the "time of his life."

"All that man wanted," I told the doctor subsequently, "was, as he says, 'to bore a hole in the bottom of the ship and crawl out.'"

"Why!" exclaimed the doctor, with a laugh of surprise. "He wasn't *frightened*, was he?"

Fear of the sea is quite incomprehensible to this man. The passenger was very much frightened; he vowed never to sail with "that devil" again. But the doctor is

"THE HOSPITAL SHIP, STRATHCONA"

very far from being a dare-devil; though he is, to be sure, a man altogether unafraid; it seems to me that his heart can never have known the throb of fear. Perhaps that is in part because he has a blessed lack of imagination, in part, perhaps, because he has a body as sound as ever God gave to a man, and has used it as a man should; but it is chiefly because of his simple and splendid faith that he is an instrument in God's hands—God's to do with as He will, as he would say. His faith is exceptional, I am sure—childlike, steady, overmastering, and withal, if I may so characterize it, healthy. It takes something such as the faith he has to move a man to run a little steamer at full speed in the fog when there is ice on every hand. It is hardly credible, but quite true, and short of the truth: neither wind nor ice nor fog, nor all combined, can keep the *Strathcona* in harbour when there comes a call for help from beyond. The doctor clambers cheerfully out on the bowsprit

and keeps both eyes open. "As the Lord wills," says he, "whether for wreck or service. I am about His business."

It is a sublime expression of the old faith.

VII

THE LIVEYERE

DOCTOR GRENFELL'S patients are of three classes. There is first the "liveyere"—the inhabitant of the Labrador coast—the most ignorant and wretched of them all. There is the Newfoundland "outporter"—the small fisherman of the remoter coast, who must depend wholly upon his hook and line for subsistence. There is the Labradorman—the Newfoundland fisherman of the better class, who fishes the Labrador coast in the summer season and returns to his home port when the snow begins to fly in the fall. Some description of these three classes is here offered, that the reader may understand the character and condition of the folk among whom Dr. Grenfell labours.

"As a permanent abode of civilized man," it is written in a very learned if somewhat old-fashioned work, "Labrador is, on the whole, one of the most uninviting spots on the face of the earth." That is putting it altogether too delicately; there should be no qualification; the place is a brutal desolation. The weather has scoured the coast —a thousand miles of it—as clean as an old bone: it is utterly sterile, save for a tuft or two of hardy grass and wide patches of crisp moss; bare gray rocks, low in the south, towering and craggy in the north, everywhere blasted by frost, lie in billowy hills between the froth and clammy mist of the sea and the starved forest at the edge of the inland wilderness. The interior is forbidding; few explorers have essayed adventure there; but the Indians—an expiring tribe—and trappers who have caught sight of the "height of land" say that it is for the most part a vast table-land, barren, strewn with enormous boulders, scarce in game, swarming with flies, with vegetation

surviving only in the hollows and ravines—a sullen, forsaken waste.

Those who dwell on the coast are called "liveyeres" because they say, "Oh, ay, zur, I lives yere!" in answer to the question. These are not to be confounded with the Newfoundland fishermen who sail the Labrador seas in the fishing season—an adventurous, thrifty folk, bright-eyed, hearty in laughter—twenty-five thousand hale men and boys, with many a wife and maid, who come and return again. Less than four thousand poor folk have on the long coast the "permanent abode" of which the learned work speaks—much less, I should think, from the Strait of Belle Isle to Cape Chidley. It is an evil fate to be born there: the Newfoundlanders who went north from their better country, the Hudson Bay Company's servants who took wives from the natives, all the chance comers who procrastinated their escape, desperately wronged their posterity; the saving circumstance is the very isolation of the dwelling-place—no man

knows, no man really *knows*, that elsewhere the earth is kinder to her children and fairer far than the wind-swept, barren coast to which he is used. They live content, bearing many children, in inclemency, in squalor, and, from time to time, in uttermost poverty —such poverty as clothes a child in a trouser leg and feeds babies and strong men alike on nothing but flour and water. They were born there: that is where they came from; that is why they live there.

"'Tis a short feast and a long famine," said a northern "liveyere," quite cheerfully; to him it was just a commonplace fact of life.

There are degrees of wretchedness: a frame cottage is the habitation of the rich and great where the poor live in turf huts; and the poor subsist on roots and a paste of flour and water when the rich feast on salt junk. The folk who live near the Strait of Belle Isle and on the gulf shore may be in happier circumstances. To be sure, they

know the pinch of famine; but some—the really well-to-do—are clear of the overshadowing dread of it. The "liveyeres" of the north dwell in huts, in lonely coves of the bays, remote even from neighbours as ill-cased as themselves; there they live and laugh and love and suffer and die and bury their dead—alone. To the south, however, there are little settlements in the more sheltered harbours—the largest of not more than a hundred souls—where there is a degree of prosperity and of comfort; potatoes are a luxury, but the flour-barrel is always full, the pork-barrel not always empty, and there are raisins in the duff on feast-days; moreover, there are stoves in the whitewashed houses (the northern "liveyere's" stove is more often than not a flat rock), beds to sleep in, muslin curtains in the little windows, and a flower, it may be, sprouting desperately in a red pot on the sill. That is the extreme of luxury—rare to be met with; and it is at all times open to dissolution by famine.

"Sure, zur, *last* winter," a stout young fellow boasted, "we had all the grease us wanted!"

It is related of a thrifty settler named Olliver, however, who lived with his wife and five children at Big Bight,—he was a man of superior qualities, as the event makes manifest,—that, having come close to the pass of starvation at the end of a long winter, he set out afoot over the hills to seek relief from his nearest neighbour, forty miles away. But there was no relief to be had; the good neighbour had already given away all that he dared spare, and something more. Twelve miles farther on he was again denied; it is said that the second neighbour mutely pointed to his flour-barrel and his family—which was quite sufficient for Olliver, who thereupon departed to a third house, where his fortune was no better. Perceiving then that he must depend upon the store of food in his own house, which was insufficient to support the lives of all, he returned home, sent

"THE LABRADOR 'LIVEYERE'"

his wife and eldest son and eldest daughter away on a pretext, despatched his three youngest children with an axe, and shot himself. As he had foreseen, wife, daughter, and son survived until the "break-up" brought food within their reach; and the son was a well-grown boy, and made a capable head of the house thereafter.

The "liveyere" is a fisherman and trapper. In the summer he catches cod; in the winter he traps the fox, otter, mink, lynx, and marten, and sometimes he shoots a bear, white or black, and kills a wolf. The "planter," who advances the salt to cure the fish, takes the catch at the end of the season, giving in exchange provisions at an incredible profit; the Hudson Bay Company takes the fur, giving in exchange provisions at an even larger profit; for obvious reasons, both aim (there are exceptions, of course) to keep the "liveyere" in debt—which is not by any means a difficult matter, for the "liveyere" is both shiftless and (what is

more to the point) illiterate. So it comes about that what he may have to eat and wear depends upon the will of the "planter" and of the company; and when for his ill-luck or his ill-will both cast him off—which sometimes happens—he looks starvation in the very face. A silver fox, of good fur and acceptable colour, is the "liveyere's" great catch; no doubt his most ecstatic nightmare has to do with finding one fast in his trap; but when, "more by chance than good conduct," as they say, he has that heavenly fortune (the event is of the rarest), the company pays sixty or eighty dollars for that which it sells abroad for $600. Of late, however, the free-traders seem to have established a footing on the coast; their stay may not be long, but for the moment, at any rate, the "liveyere" may dispose of his fur to greater advantage —if he dare.

The earth yields the "liveyere" nothing but berries, which are abundant, and, in midsummer, "turnip tops"; and as numer-

ous dogs are needed for winter travelling—wolfish creatures, savage, big, famished—no domestic animals can be kept. There was once a man who somehow managed for a season to possess a pig and a sheep; he marooned his dogs on an island half a mile off the coast; unhappily, however, there blew an off-shore wind in the night, and next morning neither the pig nor the sheep was to be found; the dogs were engaged in innocent diversions on the island, but there was evidence sufficient on their persons, so to speak, to convict them of the depredation in any court of justice. There are no cows on the coast, no goats,—consequently no additional milk-supply for babies,—who manage from the beginning, however, to thrive on bread and salt beef, if put to the necessity. There are no pigs—there is one pig, I believe,—no sheep, no chickens; and the first horses to be taken to the sawmill on Hamilton Inlet so frightened the natives that they scampered in every direction for their lives whenever the team came near,

crying: "Look out! The harses is comin'!" The caribou are too far inland for most of the settlers; but at various seasons (excluding such times as there is no game at all) there are to be had grouse, partridge, geese, eider-duck, puffin, gulls, loon and petrel, bear, arctic hare, and bay seal, which are shot with marvellously long and old guns—some of them ancient flintlocks.

Notwithstanding all, the folk are large and hardy—capable of withstanding cruel hardship and deprivation.

In summer-time the weather is blistering hot inland; and on the coast it is more often than not wet, foggy, blustering—bitter enough for the man from the south, who shivers as he goes about. Innumerable icebergs drift southward, scraping the coast as they go, and patches of snow lie in the hollows of the coast hills—midway between Battle Harbour and Cape Chidley there is a low headland called Snowy Point because the snow forever lies upon it. But warm, sunny days are to be counted upon in August

—days when the sea is quiet, the sky deep blue, the rocks bathed in yellow sunlight, the air clear and bracing; at such times it is good to lie on the high heads and look away out to sea, dreaming the while. In winter, storm and intense cold make most of the coast uninhabitable; the "liveyeres" retire up the bays and rivers, bag and baggage, not only to escape the winds and bitter cold, but to be nearer the supply of game and fire-wood. They live in little "tilts"—log huts of one large square room, with "bunks" at each end for the women-folk, and a "cockloft" above for the men and lads. It is very cold; frost forms on the walls, icicles under the "bunks"; the thermometer frequently falls to fifty degrees below zero, which, as you may be sure, is exceedingly cold near the sea. Nor can a man do much heavy work in the woods, for the perspiration freezes under his clothing. Impoverished families have no stoves—merely an arrangement of flat stones, with an opening in the roof for the escape of the smoke,

with which they are quite content if only they have enough flour to make hard bread for all.

It goes without saying that there is neither butcher, baker, nor candlestick-maker on the coast. Every man is his own bootmaker, tailor, and what not; there is not a trade or profession practiced anywhere. There is no resident doctor, save the mission doctors, one of whom is established at Battle Harbour, and with a dog-team makes a toilsome journey up the coast in the dead of winter, relieving whom he can. There is no public building, no municipal government, no road. There is no lawyer, no constable; and I very much doubt that there is a parson regularly stationed among the whites beyond Battle Harbour, with the exception of the Moravian missionaries. They are scarce enough, at any rate, for the folk in a certain practical way to feel the hardship of their absence. Dr. Grenfell tells of landing late one night in a lonely harbour where three "couples wanted marrying." They had waited many years for the opportunity. It chanced that the doctor was

entertaining a minister on the cruise; so one couple determined at once to return to the ship with him. "The minister," says the doctor, "decided that pronouncing the banns might be dispensed with in this case. He went ahead with the ceremony, for the couple had three children already!"

The "liveyere" is of a sombrely religious turn of mind—his creed as harsh and gloomy as the land he lives in; he is superstitious as a savage as well, and an incorrigible fatalist, all of which is not hard to account for: he is forever in the midst of vast space and silence, face to face with dread and mysterious forces, and in conflict with wind and sea and the changing season, which are irresistible and indifferent.

Jared was young, lusty, light-hearted; but he lived in the fear and dread of hell. I had known that for two days.

"The flies, zur," said he to the sportsman, whose hospitality I was enjoying, "was wonderful bad the day."

We were twelve miles inland, fishing a small stream; and we were now in the "tilt," at the end of the day, safe from the swarming, vicious black-flies.

"Yes," the sportsman replied, emphatically. "I've suffered the tortures of the damned this day!"

Jared burst into a roar of laughter—as sudden and violent as a thunderclap.

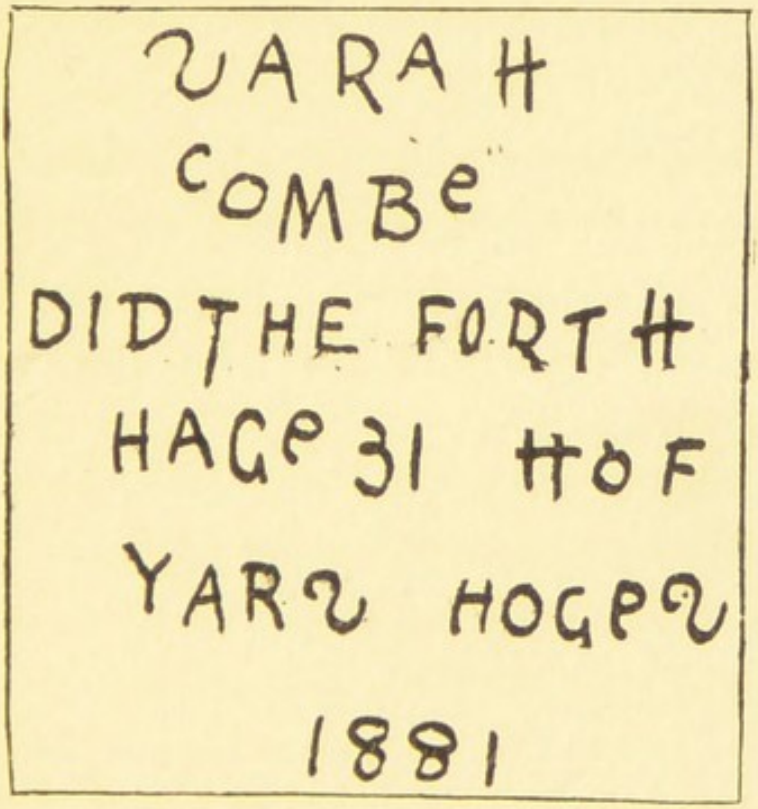
"What you laughing at?" the sportsman demanded, as he tenderly stroked his swollen neck.

"Tartures o' the damned!" Jared gasped. "Sure, if *that's* all 'tis, I'll jack 'asy about it!"

He laughed louder—reckless levity; but I knew that deep in his heart he would be infinitely relieved could he believe—could he only make sure—that the punishment of the wicked was no worse than an eternity of fighting with poisonous insects.

"Ay," he repeated, ruefully, "if that's all 'twas, 'twould not trouble me much."

The graveyard at Battle Harbour is in a sheltered hollow near the sea. It is a green spot—the one, perhaps, on the island—and they have enclosed it with a high board fence. Men have fished from that harbour for a hundred years and more—but there are not many graves; why, I do not know. The crumbling stones, the weather-beaten boards, the sprawling ill-worded inscriptions, are all, in their way, eloquent:



"Sarah Combe died the fourth of August, 1881, aged 31 years."

There is another, better carved, somewhat better spelled, but quite as interesting and luminous:

In
Memory of John
Hill who Died
December 30 1890
Aged 34

Weep not dear Parents
For your lost tis my
Etarnel gain May
May Crist you all take up
The crost that we
Shuld meat again

These things are, indeed, eloquent—of ignorance, of poverty; but no less eloquent of sorrow and of love. The Labrador "liveyere" is kin with the whole wide world.

VIII

WITH The FLEET

IN the early spring—when the sunlight is yellow and the warm winds blow and the melting snow drips over the cliffs and runs in little rivulets from the barren hills—in the thousand harbours of Newfoundland the great fleet is made ready for the long adventure upon the Labrador coast. The rocks echo the noise of hammer and saw and mallet and the song and shout of the workers. The new schooners—building the winter long at the harbour side—are hurried to completion. The old craft—the weather-beaten, ragged old craft, which, it may be, have dodged the reefs and outlived the gales of forty seasons—are fitted with new spars, patched with new canvas and rope, calked anew, daubed anew and, thus refitted, float brave enough on the quiet harbour water. There is no end to

the bustle of labour on ships and nets—no end to the clatter of planning. From the skipper of the ten-ton *First Venture*, who sails with a crew of sons bred for the purpose, to the powerful dealer who supplies on shares a fleet of seventeen fore-and-afters manned from the harbours of a great bay, there is hope in the hearts of all. Whatever the last season, every man is to make a good "voyage" now. This season—*this* season—there is to be fish a-plenty on the Labrador!

The future is bright as the new spring days. Aunt Matilda is to have a bonnet with feathers—when Skipper Thomas gets home from the Labrador. Little Johnny Tatt, he of the crooked back, is to know again the virtue of Pike's Pain Compound, at a dollar a bottle, warranted to cure—when daddy gets home from the Labrador. Skipper Bill's Lizzie, plump, blushing, merry-eyed, is to wed Jack Lute o' Burnt Arm—when Jack comes back from the Labrador. Every man's heart, and, indeed, most men's

fortunes, are in the venture. The man who has nothing has yet the labour of his hands. Be he skipper, there is one to back his skill and honesty; be he hand, there is no lack of berths to choose from. Skippers stand upon their record and schooners upon their reputation; it's take your choice, for the hands are not too many: the skippers are timid or bold, as God made them; the schooners are lucky or not, as Fate determines. Every man has his chance. John Smith o' Twillingate provisions the *Lucky Queen* and gives her to the penniless Skipper Jim o' Yellow Tickle on shares. Old Tom Tatter o' Salmon Cove, with plea and argument, persuades the Four Arms trader to trust him once again with the *Busy Bee.* He'll get the fish *this* time. Nar a doubt of it! *He'll* be home in August—this year—loaded to the gunwale. God knows who pays the cash when the fish fail! God knows how the folk survive the disappointment! It is a great lottery of hope and fortune.

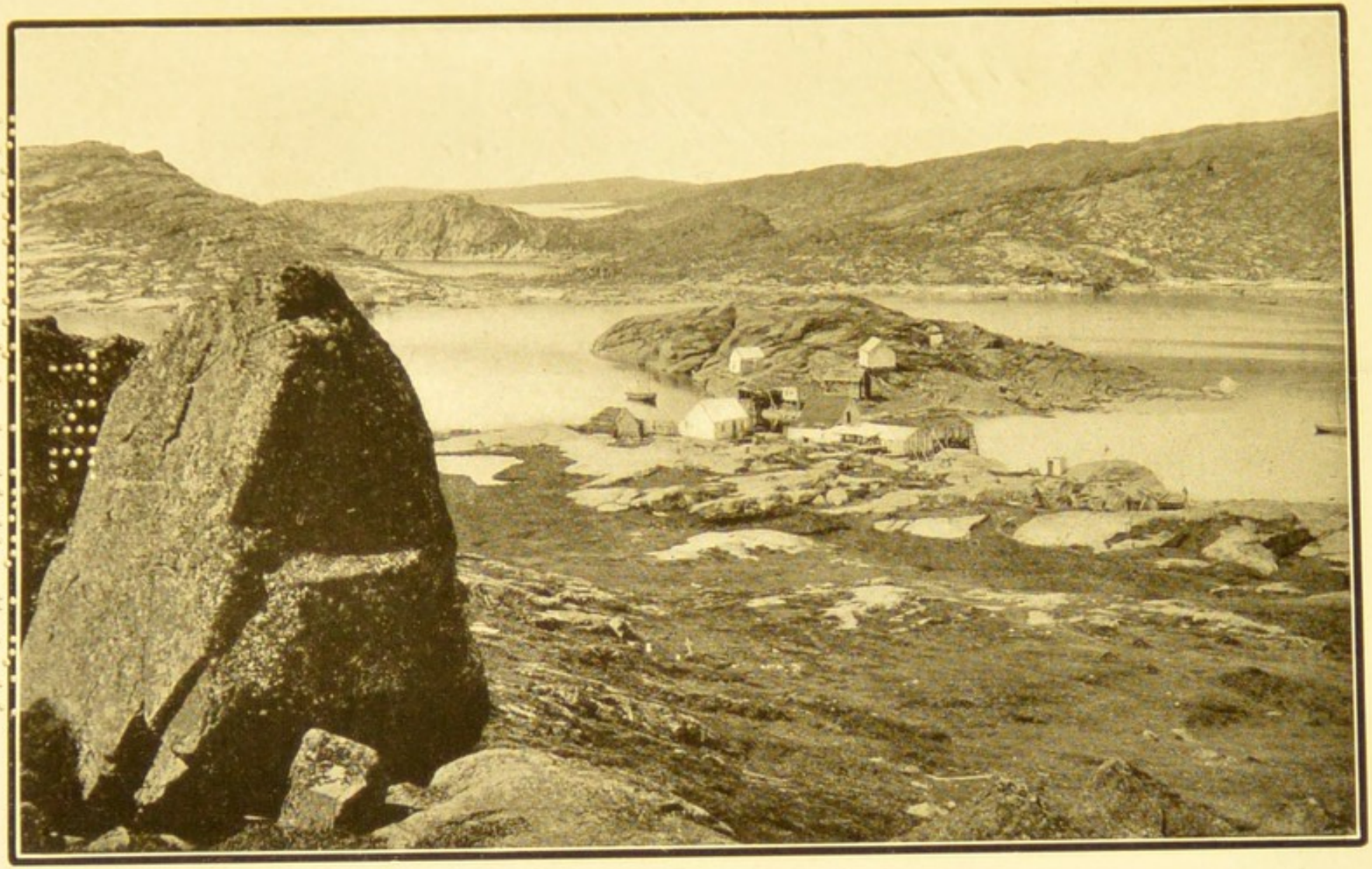
When, at last, word comes south that the ice is clearing from the coast, the vessels spread their little wings to the first favouring winds; and in a week—two weeks or three—the last of the Labradormen have gone "down north."

Dr. Grenfell and his workers find much to do among these men and women and children.

At Indian Harbour where the *Strathcona* lay at anchor, I went aboard the schooner *Jolly Crew*. It was a raw, foggy day, with a fresh northeast gale blowing, and a high sea running outside the harbour. They were splitting fish on deck; the skiff was just in from the trap—she was still wet with spray.

"I sails with me sons an' gran'sons, zur," said the skipper, smiling. "Sure, I be a old feller t' be down the Labrador, isn't I, zur?"

He did not mean that. He was proud of his age and strength—glad that he was still able "t' be at the fishin'."



"AT INDIAN HARBOR"

"'Tis a wonder you've lived through it all," said I.

He laughed. "An' why, zur?" he asked.

"Many's the ship wrecked on this coast," I answered.

"Oh no, zur," said he; "not so many, zur, as you might think. Down this way, zur, *we knows how t' sail!*"

That was a succinct explanation of very much that had puzzled me.

"Ah, well," said I, "'tis a hard life."

"Hard?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Yes," I answered; "'tis a hard life—the fishin'."

"Oh no, zur," said he, quietly, looking up from his work. "'Tis just—just *life!*"

They do, indeed, know how "t' sail." The Newfoundland government, niggardly and utterly independable when the good of the fisherfolk is concerned, of whatever complexion the government may chance to be, but prodigal to an extraordinary degree when individual self-interests are at stake—

this is a delicate way of putting an unpleasant truth,—keeps no light burning beyond the Strait of Belle Isle; the best it does, I believe, is to give wrecked seamen free passage home. Under these difficult circumstances, no seamen save Newfoundlanders, who are the most skillful and courageous of all, could sail that coast: and they only because they are born to follow the sea—there is no escape for them—and are bred to sailing from their earliest years.

"What you going to be when you grow up?" I once asked a lad on the far northeast coast.

He looked at me in vast astonishment.

"What you going to *be*, what you going to *do*," I repeated, "when you grow up?"

Still he did not comprehend. "Eh?" he said.

"What you going to work at," said I, in desperation, "when you're a man?"

"Oh, zur," he answered, understanding at last, "I isn't clever enough t' be a parson!"

And so it went without saying that he

was to fish for a living! It is no wonder, then, that the skippers of the fleet know "how t' sail." The remarkable quality of the sea-captains who come from among them impressively attests the fact—not only their quality as sailors, but as men of spirit and proud courage. There is one—now a captain of a coastal boat on the Newfoundland shore—who takes his steamer into a ticklish harbour of a thick, dark night, when everything is black ahead and roundabout, steering only by the echo of the ship's whistle! There is another, a confident seaman, a bluff, high-spirited fellow, who was once delayed by bitter winter weather—an inky night, with ice about, the snow flying, the seas heavy with frost, the wind blowing a gale.

"Where have you been?" they asked him, sarcastically, from the head office.

The captain had been on the bridge all night.

"Berry-picking," was his laconic despatch in reply.

There is another—also the captain of a

coastal steamer—who thought it wise to lie in harbour through a stormy night in the early winter.

"What detains you?" came a message from the head office.

"It is not a fit night for a vessel to be at sea," the captain replied; and thereupon he turned in, believing the matter to be at an end.

The captain had been concerned for his vessel—not for his life; nor yet for his comfort. But the underling at the head office misinterpreted the message.

"What do we pay you for?" he telegraphed.

So the captain took the ship out to sea. Men say that she went out of commission the next day, and that it cost the company a thousand dollars to refit her.

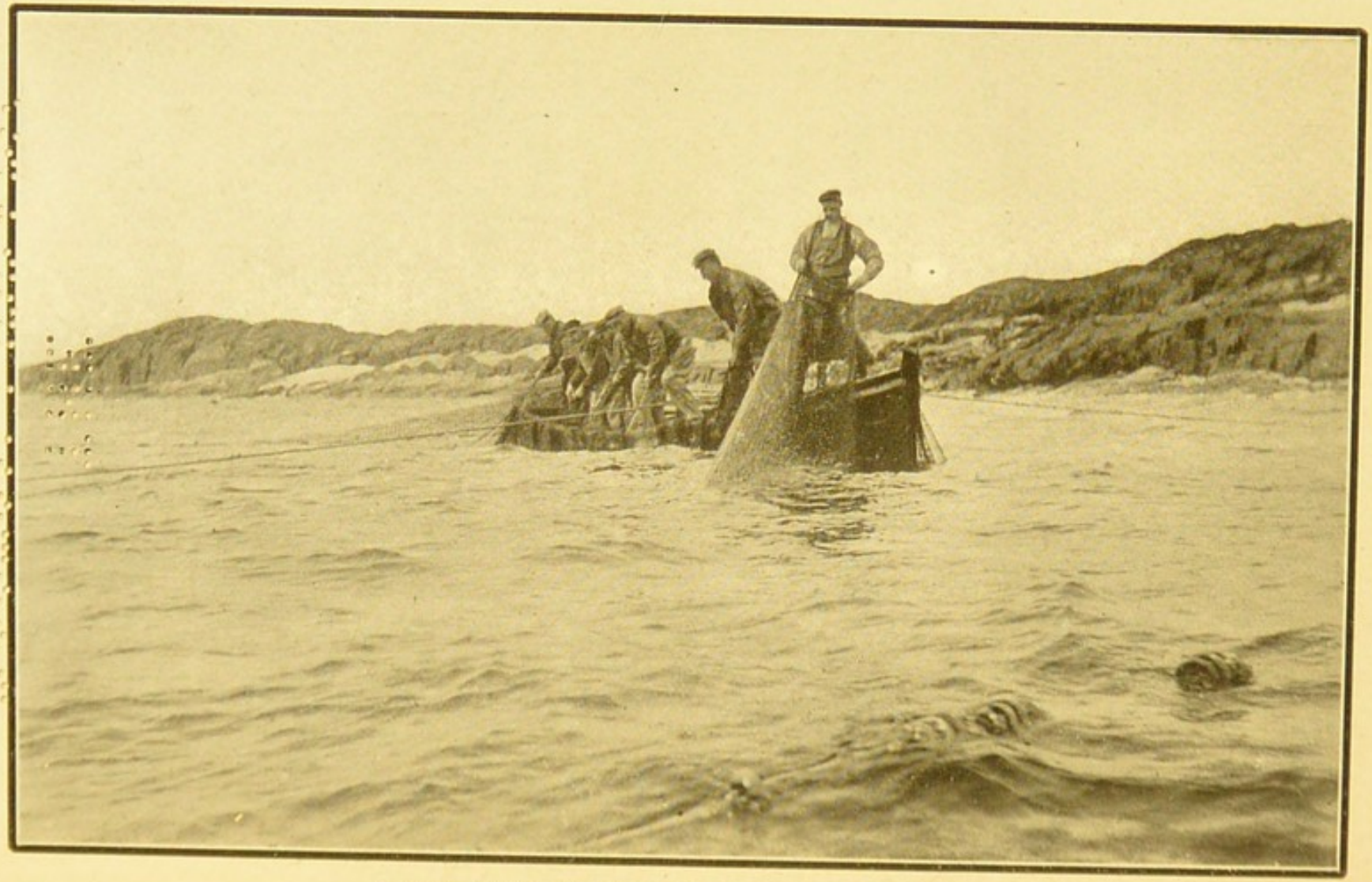
"A dunderhead," say the folk, "can *cotch* fish; but it takes a *man* t' find un." It is a chase; and, as the coast proverb has it, "the fish have no bells." It is estimated that there are 7,000 square miles of fishing-banks

off the Labrador coast. There will be fish somewhere—not everywhere; not every man will "use his salt" (the schooners go north loaded with salt for curing) or "get his load." In the beginning—this is when the ice first clears away—there is a race for berths. It takes clever, reckless sailing and alert action to secure the best. I am reminded of a skipper who by hard driving to windward and good luck came first of all to a favourable harbour. It was then night, and his crew was weary, so he put off running out his trap-leader until morning; but in the night the wind changed, and when he awoke at dawn there were two other schooners lying quietly at anchor near by and the berths had been "staked." When the traps are down, there follows a period of anxious waiting. Where are the fish? There are no telegraph-lines on that coast. The news must be spread by word of mouth. When, at last, it comes, there is a sudden change of plan—a wild rush to the more favoured grounds.

It is in this scramble that many a skipper makes his great mistake. I was talking with a disconsolate young fellow in a northern harbour where the fish were running thick. The schooners were fast loading; but he had no berth, and was doing but poorly with the passing days.

"If I hadn't—if I *only* hadn't—took up me trap when I did," said he, "I'd been loaded an' off home. Sure, zur, would you believe it? but I had the berth off the point. Off the point—the berth off the point!" he repeated, earnestly, his eyes wide. "An', look! I hears they's a great run o' fish t' Cutthroat Tickle. So I up with me trap, for I'd been gettin' nothin'; an'—an'—would you believe it? but the man that put his down where I took mine up took a hundred quintal[1] out o' that berth next marnin'! An' he'll load," he groaned, "afore the week's out!"

[1] A quintal is, roughly, a hundred pounds. One hundred quintals of green fish are equal, roughly, to thirty of dry, which, at $3, would amount to $90.



"SET THE TRAPS IN THE OPEN SEA"

When the fish are running, the work is mercilessly hard; it is kept up night and day; there is no sleep for man or child, save, it may be, an hour's slumber where they toil, just before dawn. The schooner lies at anchor in the harbour, safe enough from wind and sea; the rocks, surrounding the basin in which she lies, keep the harbour water placid forever. But the men set the traps in the open sea, somewhere off the heads, or near one of the outlying islands; it may be miles from the anchorage of the schooner. They put out at dawn—before dawn, rather; for they aim to be at the trap just when the light is strong enough for the hauling. When the skiff is loaded, they put back to harbour in haste, throw the fish on deck, split them, salt them, lay them neatly in the hold, and put out to the trap again. I have seen the harbours—then crowded with fishing-craft—fairly ablaze with light at midnight. Torches were flaring on the decks and in the turf hut on the rocks ashore. The night was quiet; there was

not a sound from the tired workers; but the flaring lights made known that the wild, bleak, far-away place—a basin in the midst of barren, uninhabited hills—was still astir with the day's work.

At such times, the toil at the oars, and at the splitting-table,[1] whether on deck or in the stages—and the lack of sleep, and the icy winds and cold salt spray—is all bitter cruel to suffer. The Labrador fisherman will not readily admit that he lives a hard life; but if you suggest that when the fish are running it may be somewhat more toilsome than lives lived elsewhere, he will grant you something.

"Oh, ay," he'll drawl, "when the fish is runnin', '*tis* a bit hard."

I learned from a child—he was merry, brave, fond of the adventure—that fishing is a pleasant business in the sunny midsummer months; but that when, late in the fall, the skiff puts out to the trap at dawn, it is

[1] A "clever hand" can split—that is, clean—thirty fish in a minute.

wise to plunge one's hands deep in the water before taking the oars, no matter how much it hurts, for one's wrists are then covered with salt-water sores and one's palms are cracked, even though one take the precaution of wearing a brass chain—that, oh, yes! it is wise to plunge one's hands in the cold water, as quick as may be; for thus one may "limber 'em up" before the trap is reached.

"'Tis not hard, now," said he. "But, oh—oo—oo! when the big nor'easters blow! Oo—oo!" he repeated, with a shrug and a sage shake of the head; "'tis won-der-ful hard those times!"

The return is small. The crews are comprised of from five to ten men, with, occasionally, a sturdy maid for cook, to whom is given thirty dollars for her season's work; some old hands will sail on no ship with a male cook, for, as one of them said, "Sure, some o' thim min can't boil water without burnin' it!" A good season's catch is one hundred quintals of dry fish a man. A

simple calculation—with some knowledge of certain factors which I need not state—makes it plain that a man must himself catch, as his share of the trap, 30,000 fish if he is to net a living wage. If his return is $250 he is in the happiest fortune—richly rewarded, beyond his dreams, for his summer's work. One-half of that is sufficient to give any modest man a warm glow of content and pride. Often—it depends largely upon chance and the skill of his skipper—the catch is so poor that he must make the best of twenty-five or thirty dollars. It must not be supposed that the return is always in cash; it is usually in trade, which is quite a different thing—in Newfoundland.

The schooners take many passengers north in the spring. Such are called "freighters" on the coast; they are put ashore at such harbours as they elect, and, for passage for themselves, families, and

gear, pay upon the return voyage twenty-five cents for every hundredweight of fish caught. As a matter of course, the vessels are preposterously overcrowded. Dr. Grenfell tells of counting thirty-four men and sixteen women (no mention was made of children) aboard a nineteen-ton schooner, then on the long, rough voyage to the north. The men fish from the coast in small boats just as the more prosperous "green-fish catchers" put out from the schooners. Meantime, they live in mud huts, which are inviting or otherwise, as the women-folk go; some are damp, cave-like, ill-savoured, crowded; others are airy, cozy, the floors spread deep with powdered shell, the whole immaculately kept. When the party is landed, the women sweep out the last of the winter's snow, the men build great fires on the floors; indeed, the huts are soon ready for occupancy. At best, they are tiny places—much like children's playhouses. There was once a tall man

who did not quite fit the sleeping place assigned to him; but with great good nature he cut a hole in the wall, built a miniature addition for his feet, and slept the summer through at comfortable full length. It is a great outing for the children; they romp on the rocks, toddle over the nearer hills, sleep in the sunshine; but if they are eight years old, as one said—or well grown at five or seven—they must do their little share of work.

Withal, the Labradormen are of a simple, God-fearing, clean-lived, hardy race of men. There was once a woman who made boast of her high connection in England, as women will the wide world over; and when she was questioned concerning the position the boasted relative occupied, replied, "Oh, *he's* Superintendent o' Foreign Governments!" There was an austere old Christian who on a Sunday morning left his trap —his whole fortune—lie in the path of a

destroying iceberg rather than desecrate the Lord's day by taking it out of the water. Both political parties in Newfoundland shamelessly deceive the credulous fisherfolk; there was a childlike old fellow who, when asked, "And what will you do if there *is* no fish?" confidently answered: "Oh, they's goin' t' be a new Gov'ment. *He'll* take care o' we!" There was a sturdy son of the coast who deserted his schooner at sea and swam ashore. But he had mistaken a barren island for the mainland, which was yet far off; and there he lived, without food, for twenty-seven days! When he was picked up, his condition was such as may not be described (the Labrador fly is a vicious insect); he was unconscious, but he survived to fish many another season.

The mail-boat picked up Skipper Thomas of Carbonear—then master of a loaded schooner—at a small harbour near the

Straits. His crew carried him aboard; for he was desperately ill, and wanted to die at home, where his children were.

"He's wonderful bad," said one of the men. "He've consumption."

"I'm just wantin' t' die at home," he said, again and again. "Just that—just where my children be!"

All hearts were with him in that last struggle—but no man dared hope; for the old skipper had already beaten off death longer than death is wont to wait, and his strength was near spent.

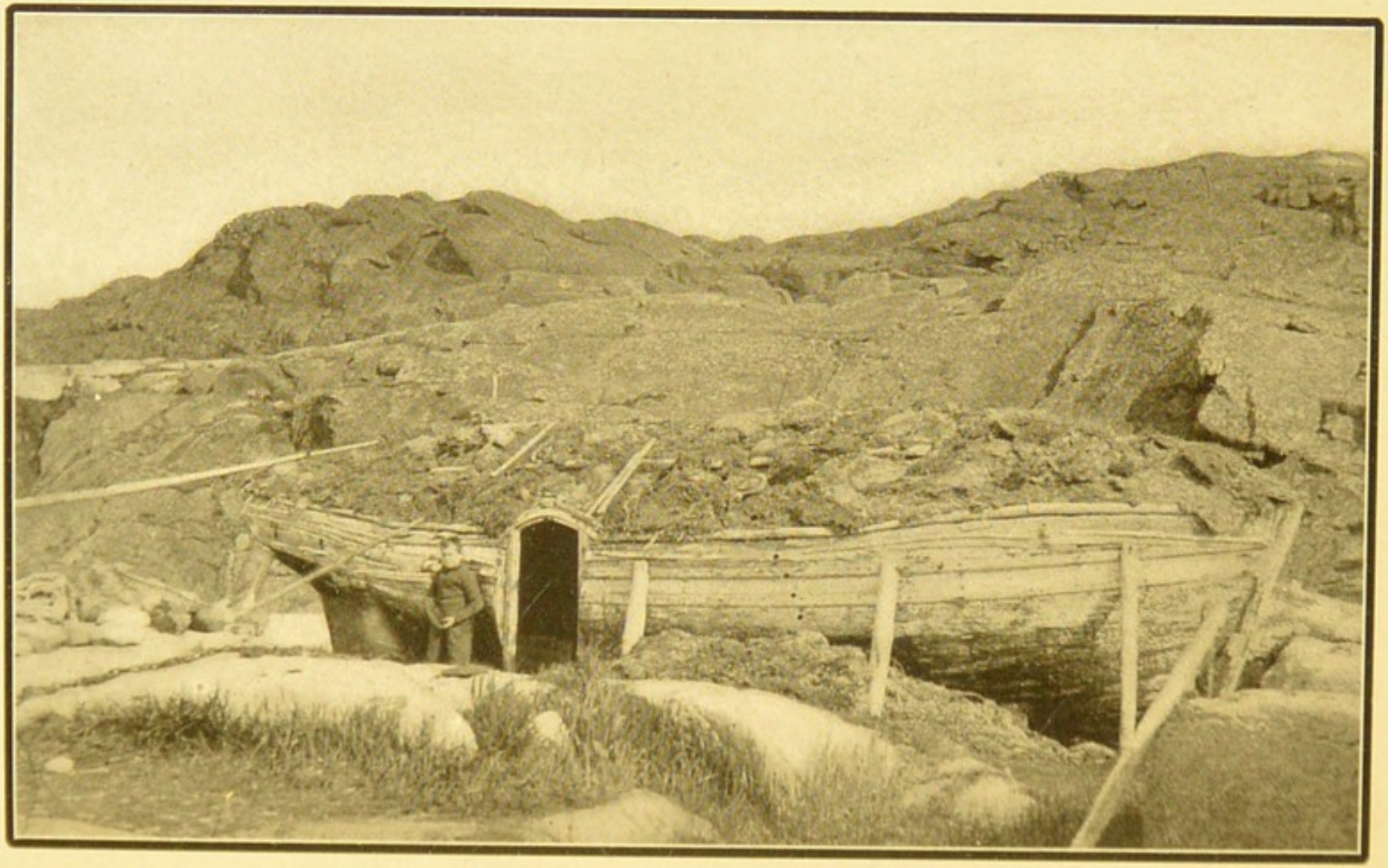
"Were you sick when you sailed for the Labrador in the spring?" they asked him.

"Oh, ay," said he; "I were terrible bad then."

"Then why," they said—"why did you come at all?"

They say he looked up in mild surprise. "I had t' make me livin'," he answered, simply.

His coffin was knocked together on the



"THE BULLY-BOAT BECOMES A HOME"

forward deck next morning—with Carbonear a day's sail beyond.

The fleet goes home in the early fall. The schooners are loaded—some so low with the catch that the water washes into the scuppers. "You could wash your hands on her deck," is the skipper's proudest boast. The feat of seamanship, I do not doubt, is not elsewhere equalled. It is an inspiring sight to see the doughty little craft beating into the wind on a gray day. The harvesting of a field of grain is good to look upon; but I think that there can be no more stirring sight in all the world, no sight more quickly to melt a man's heart, more deeply to move him to love men and bless God, than the sight of the Labrador fleet beating home loaded—toil done, dangers past; the home port at the end of a run with a fair wind. The home-coming, I fancy, is much like the return of the viking ships to the old Norwegian harbours must have been. The lucky skippers strut the village roads with

swelling chests, heroes in the sight of all; the old men, long past their labour, listen to new tales and spin old yarns; the maids and the lads renew their interrupted love-makings. There is great rejoicing—feasting, merrymaking, hearty thanksgiving.

Thanks be to God, the fleet's home!

IX

On The FRENCH SHORE

DOCTOR GRENFELL appears to have a peculiar affection for the outporters of what is locally known as the "French Shore"—that stretch of coast lying between Cape John and the northernmost point of Newfoundland: it is one section of the shore upon which the French have fishing rights. This is the real Newfoundland; to the writer there is no Newfoundland apart from that long strip of rock against which the sea forever breaks: none that is not of punt, of wave, of fish, of low sky and of a stalwart, briny folk. Indeed, though he has joyously lived weeks of blue weather in the outports, with the sea all a-ripple and flashing and the breeze blowing warm, in retrospect land and people resolve themselves into a rocky harbour and a sturdy little lad with a question—the harbour, gray and dripping wet, a cluster of whitewashed cottages perched on the rocks,

towards which a tiny, red-sailed punt is beating from the frothy open, with the white of breakers on either hand, while a raw wind lifts the fog from the black inland hills, upon which ragged patches of snow lie melting; the lad, stout, frank-eyed, tow-headed, browned by the wind, bending over the splitting-table with a knife in his toil-worn young hand and the blood of cod dripping from his fingers, and looking wistfully up, at last, to ask a question or two concerning certain old, disquieting mysteries.

"Where do the tide go, zur, when 'e runs out?" he plainted. "Where do 'e go, zur? Sure, zur, *you* is able t' tell me that, isn't you?"

So, in such a land—where, on some bleak stretches of coast, the potatoes are grown in imported English soil, where most gardens, and some graveyards, are made of earth scraped from the hollows of the hills, where four hundred and nineteen bushels of lean wheat are grown in a single year, and the

production of beef-cattle is insignificant as compared with the production of babies—in such a land there is nothing for the young man to do but choose his rock, build his little cottage and his flake and his stage, marry a maid of the harbour when the spring winds stir his blood, gather his potato patch, get a pig and a goat, and go fishing in his punt. And they do fish, have always fished since many generations ago the island was first settled by adventurous Devon men, and must continue to fish to the end of time. Out of a total male population of one hundred thousand, which includes the city-folk of St. Johns and an amazing proportion of babies and tender lads, about fifty-five thousand men and grown boys catch fish for a living.

"Still an' all, they's no country in the world like this!" said the old skipper. "Sure, a man's set up in life when he haves a pig an' a punt an' a potato patch."

"But have you ever seen another?" I asked.

"I've been so far as Saint Johns, zur, an' once t' the waterside o' Boston," was the surprising reply, "an' I'm thinkin' I knows what the world's like."

So it is with most Newfoundlanders: they love their land with an intolerant prejudice; and most are content with the life they lead. "The Newfoundlander comes back," is a significant proverb of the outports; and, "White Bay's good enough for me," said a fishwife to me once, when I asked her why she still remained in a place so bleak and barren, "for I've heered tell 'tis wonderful smoky an' n'isy 't Saint Johns." The life they live, and strangely love, is exceeding toilsome. Toil began for a gray-haired, bony-handed old woman whom I know when she was so young that she had to stand on a tub to reach the splitting-table; when, too, to keep her awake and busy, late o' nights, her father would make believe to throw a bloody cod's head at her. It began for that woman's son when, at five or six years old, he was just able to spread the fish to dry on

the flake, and continued in earnest, a year or two later, when first he was strong enough to keep the head of his father's punt up to the wind. But they seem not to know that fishing is a hard or dangerous employment: for instance, a mild-eyed, crooked old fellow—he was a cheerful Methodist, too, and subject to "glory-fits"—who had fished from one harbour for sixty years, computed for me that he had put out to sea in his punt at least twenty thousand times, that he had been frozen to the seat of his punt many times, that he had been swept to sea with the ice-packs, six times, that he had weathered six hundred gales, great and small, and that he had been wrecked more times than he could "just mind" at the moment; yet he was the only old man ever I met who seemed honestly to wish that he might live his life over again!

The hook-and-line man has a lonely time of it. From earliest dawn, while the night yet lies thick on the sea, until in storm or calm or favouring breeze he makes harbour

in the dusk, he lies off shore, fishing—tossing in the lop of the grounds, with the waves to balk and the wind to watch warily, while he tends his lines. There is no jolly companionship of the forecastle and turf hut for him—no new scene, no hilarious adventure; nor has he the expectation of a proud return to lighten his toil. In the little punt he has made with his own hands he is forever riding an infinite expanse, which, in "fish weather," is melancholy, or threatening, or deeply solemn, as it may chance—all the while and all alone confronting the mystery and terrible immensity of the sea. It may be that he gives himself over to aimless musing, or, even less happily, to pondering certain dark mysteries of the soul; and so it comes about that the "mad-house 't Saint Johns" is inadequate to accommodate the poor fellows whom lonely toil has bereft of their senses—melancholiacs, idiots and maniacs "along o' religion."

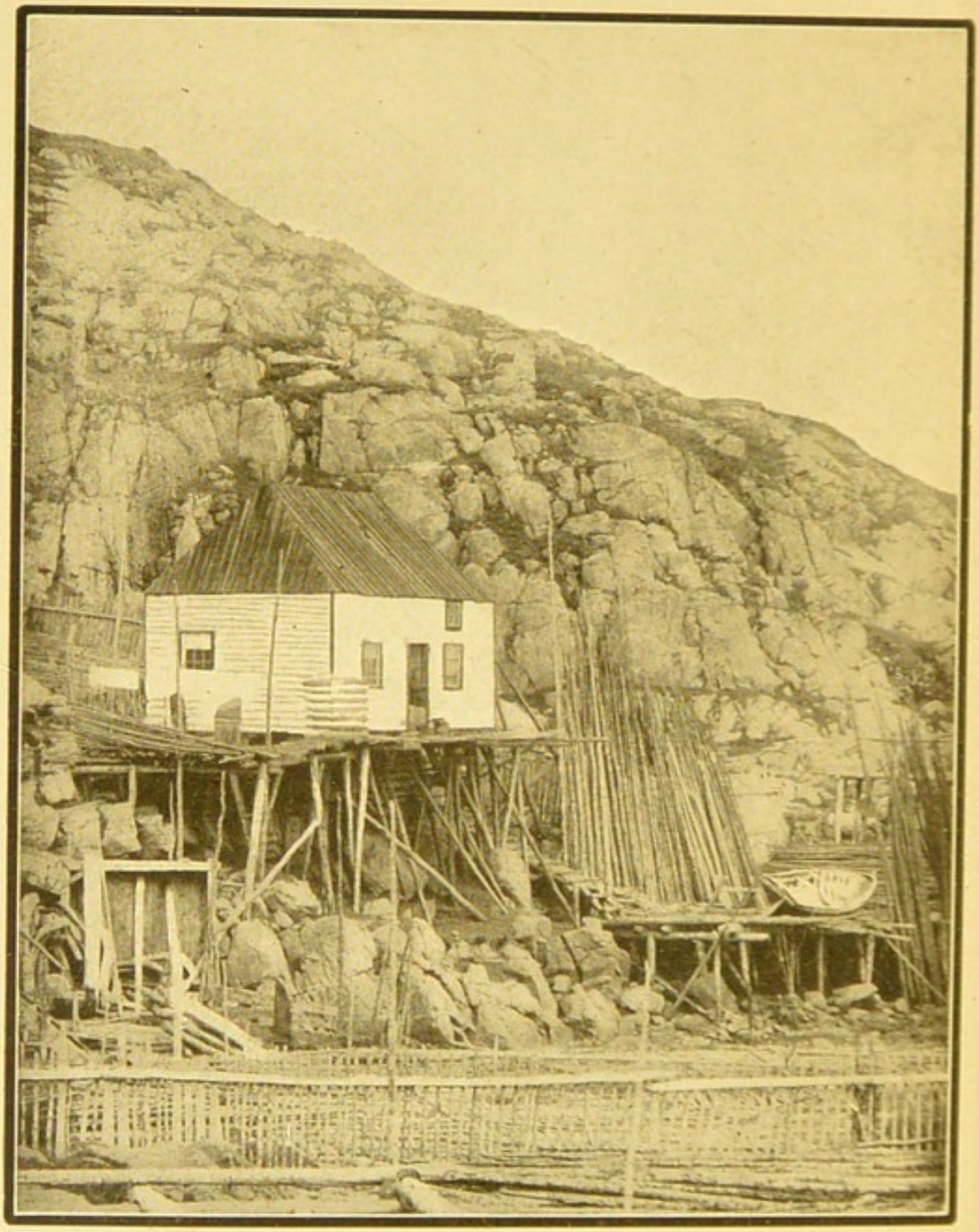
Notwithstanding all, optimism persists everywhere on the coast. One old fisher-

man counted himself favoured above most men because he had for years been able to afford the luxury of cream of tartar; and another, a brawny giant, confessed to having a disposition so pertinaciously happy that he had come to regard a merry heart as his besetting sin. Sometimes an off-shore gale puts an end to all the fishing; sometimes it is a sudden gust, sometimes a big wave, sometimes a confusing mist, more often long exposure to spray and shipped water and soggy winds. It was a sleety off-shore gale, coming at the end of a sunny, windless day, that froze or drowned thirty men off Trinity Bay in a single night; and it was a mere puff on a "civil" evening—but a swift, wicked little puff, sweeping round Breakheart Head — that made a widow of Elizabeth Rideout o' Duck Cove and took her young son away. Often, however, the hook-and-line man fishes his eighty years of life, and dies in his bed as cheerfully as he has lived and as poor as he was born.

X

SOME OUTPORT FOLK

IT had been a race against the peril of fog and the discomfort of a wet night all the way from Hooping Harbour. We escaped the scowl of the northeast, the gray, bitter wind and the sea it was fast fretting to a fury, when the boat rounded Canada Head and ran into the shelter of the bluffs at Englee—into the damp shadows sombrely gathered there. When the punt was moored to the stage-head, the fog had thickened the dusk into deep night, and the rain had soaked us to the skin. There was a light, a warm, yellow light, shining from a window, up along shore and to the west. We stumbled over an erratic footpath, which the folk of the place call "the roaad"—feeling for direction, chancing the steps, splashing through pools of water, tripping over sharp rocks. The whitewashed cottages of the village, set on the hills, were like the



"THE WHITEWASHED COTTAGES ON THE HILLS"

ghosts of houses. They started into sight, hung suspended in the night, vanished as we trudged on. The folk were all abed—all save Elisha Duckworthy, that pious giant, who had been late beating in from the fishing grounds off the Head. It was Elisha who opened the door to our knock, and sent a growling, bristling dog back to his place with a gentle word.

"Will you not ——"

"Sure, sir," said Elisha, a smile spreading from his eyes to the very tip of his great beard, "'twould be a hard man an' a bad Christian that would turn strangers away. Come in, sir! 'Tis a full belly you'll have when you leaves the table, an' 'tis a warm bed you'll sleep in, this night."

After family prayers, in which we, the strangers he had taken in, were commended to the care and mercy of God in such simple, feeling phrases as proved the fine quality of this man's hospitality and touched our hearts in their innermost parts, Elisha invited us to sit by the kitchen fire with him "for a

spell." While the dogs snored in chorus with a young kid and a pig by the roaring stove, and the chickens rustled and clucked in their coop under the bare spruce sofa which Elisha had made, and the wind flung the rain against the window-panes, we three talked of weather and fish and toil and peril and death. It may be that a cruel coast and a sea quick to wrath engender a certain dread curiosity concerning the "taking off" in a man who fights day by day to survive the enmity of both. Elisha talked for a long time of death and heaven and hell. Then, solemnly, his voice fallen to a whisper, he told of his father, Skipper George, a man of weakling faith, who had been reduced to idiocy by wondering what came after death —by wondering, wondering, wondering, in sunlight and mist and night, off shore in the punt, labouring at the splitting-table, at work on the flake, everywhere, wondering all the time where souls took their flight.

"'Twere wonderin' whether hell do be underground or not," said Elisha, "that

turned un over at last. Sure, sir," with a sigh, "'twere doubt, you sees. 'Tis faith us must have."

Elisha stroked the nearest dog with a gentle hand—a mighty hand, toil-worn and misshapen, like the man himself.

"Do your besettin' sin get the best o' you, sir?" he said, looking up. It may be that he craved to hear a confession of failure that he might afterwards sustain himself with the thought that no man is invulnerable. "Sure, we've all besettin' sins. When we do be snatched from the burnin' brands, b'y, a little spark burns on, an' on, an' on; an' he do be wonderful hard t' douse out. 'Tis like the eye us must pluck out by command o' the Lard. With some men 'tis a taste for baccy. With some 'tis a scarcity o' salt in the fish. With some 'tis too much water in the lobster cans. With some 'tis a cravin' for sweetness. With me 'tis worse nor all. Sure, sir," he went on, "I've knowed some men so fond, so wonderful fond, o' baccy that um smoked

the shoes off their children's feet. 'Tis their besettin' sin, sir—'tis their besettin' sin. But 'tis not baccy that worries me. The taste fell away when I were took from sin. 'Tis not that. 'Tis worse. Sure, with me, sir," he said, brushing his hand over his forehead in a weary, despairing way, "'tis laughin'. 'Tis the sin of jokin' that puts my soul in danger o' bein' hove overboard into the burnin' lake. I were a wonderful joker when I were a sinful man. 'Twas all I lived for—not t' praise God an' prepare my soul for death. When I gets up in the marnin', now, sir, I feels like jokin' like what I used t' do, particular if it do be a fine day. Ah, sir," with a long sigh, "'tis a great temptation, I tells you—'tis a wonderful temptation. But 'tis not set down in the Book that Jesus Christ smiled an' laughed, an' with the Lard's help I'll beat the devil yet. I'll beat un," he cried, as if inspired to some supreme struggle. "I'll beat un," he repeated, clinching his great hands. "I will!"

Elisha bade us good-night with a solemn face. A little smile—a poor, frightened little smile of tender feeling for us—flickered in his eyes for the space of a breath. But he snuffed it out relentlessly, expressed his triumph with a flash of his eye, and went away to bed. In the morning, when the sun called us up, he had come back from the early morning's fishing, and was singing a most doleful hymn of death and judgment over the splitting-table in the stage. The sunlight was streaming into the room, and the motes were all dancing merrily in the beam. The breeze was rustling the leaves of a sickly bush under the window—coaxing them to hopeful whisperings. I fancied that the sea was all blue and rippling, and that the birds were flitting through the sunlight, chirping their sympathy with the smiling day. But Elisha, his brave heart steeled against the whole earth's frivolous mood, continued heroically to pour forth his dismal song.

Twilight was filling the kitchen with strange shadows. We had disposed of Aunt Ruth's watered fish and soaked hard-bread with hunger for a relish. Uncle Simon's glance was mournfully intent upon the bare platter.

"But," said Aunt Ruth, with obstinate emphasis, "I knows they be. 'Tis not what we hears we believe, sir. No, 'tis not what we hears. 'Tis what we sees. An' I've seed un."

"'Tis true, sir," said Uncle Simon, looking up. "They be nar a doubt about it."

"But where," said I, "did she get her looking-glass?"

"They be many a trader wrecked on this coast, sir," said Uncle Simon.

"'Twere not a mermaid I seed," said Aunt Ruth. "'Twere a mer*man*."

"Sure," said Uncle Simon, mysteriously, "they do be in the sea the shape o' all that's on the land—shape for shape, sir. They be sea-horses an' sea-cows an' sea-dogs. Why not the shape o' humans?"

"Well," said Aunt Ruth, "'twas when I were a little maid. An' 'twas in a gale o' wind. I goes down t' Billy Cove t' watch me father bring the punt in, an' I couldn't see un anywhere. So I thought he were drownded. 'Twere handy t' dark when I seed the merman rise from the water. He were big an' black—so black as the stove. I could see the eyes of un so plain as I can see yours. He were not good lookin'—no, I'll say that much—he were not good lookin'. He waved his arms, an' beckoned an' beckoned an' beckoned. But, sure, sir, I wouldn't go, for I were feared. 'Tis the soul o' me father,' thinks I. 'Sure, the sea's cotched un.' So I runs home an' tells me mother; an' she says 'twere a merman. I *knows* they be mermans an' mermaids, 'cause I'se seed un. 'Tis what we sees we believes."

"'Tis said," said Uncle Simon, "that if you finds un on the rocks an' puts un in the water they gives you three wishes; an' all you has t' do is wish, an' ——"

"'Tis said," said Aunt Ruth, with a prodigious frown across the table, "that the mermaids trick the fishermen t' the edge o' the sea an' steals un away. Uncle Simon Ride," she went on, severely, "if ever you——"

Uncle Simon looked sheepish. "Sure, woman," said he, the evidences of guilt plain on his face, "they be no danger t' me. 'Twould take a clever mermaid t'——"

"Uncle Simon Ride," said Aunt Ruth, "nar another word. An' if you don't put my spinnin' wheel t' rights this night I'll give you your tea in a mug[1] t'-morrow—an' mind that, sir, mind that!"

After we had left the table Uncle Simon took me aside. "She do be a wonderful woman," said he, meaning Aunt Ruth. Then, earnestly, "She've no cause t' be jealous o' the mermaids. No, sir—sure, no."

It is difficult to convey an adequate conception of the barrenness of this coast. If

[1] A scolding.

you were to ask a fisherman of some remote outport what his flour was made of he would stare at you and be mute. "Wheat" would be a new, meaningless word to many a man of those places. It may be that the words of the Old Skipper of Black Harbour will help the reader to an understanding of the high value set upon the soil and all it produces.

"Come with me," said the Old Skipper, "an' I'll show you so fine a garden as ever you seed."

The garden was on an island two miles off the mainland. Like many another patch of ground it had to be cultivated from a distant place. It was an acre, or thereabouts, which had been "won from the wilderness" by the labour of several generations; and it was owned by eleven families. This was not a garden made by gathering soil and dumping it in a hollow, as most gardens are; it was a real "meadow."

"Look at them potatoes, sir," said the skipper. He radiated pride in the soil's

achievement as he waited for my outburst of congratulation.

The potatoes, owing to painstaking fertilization with small fish, had attained admirable size—in tops. But the hay!

"'Tis fine grass," said the skipper. "Fine as ever you seed!"

It was thin, and nearer gray than yellow; and every stalk was weak in the knees. I do it more than justice when I write that it rose above my shoe tops.

"'Tis sizable hay," said the skipper. "'Tis time I had un cut."

On the way back the skipper caught sight of a skiff-load of hay, which old John Burns was sculling from Duck Island. He was careful to point it out as good evidence of the fertility of that part of the world. By and by we came to a whisp of hay which had fallen from the skiff. It was a mere handful floating on the quiet water.

"The wastefulness of that dunderhead!" exclaimed the skipper.

He took the boat towards the whisp of hay, puffing his wrath all the while.

"Pass the gaff, b'y," he said.

With the utmost care he hooked the whisp of hay—to the last straw—and drew it over the side.

"'Tis a sin," said he, "t' waste good hay like that."

Broad fields, hay and wheat and corn, all yellow, waving to the breeze—the sun flooding all—were far, far beyond this man's imagination. He did not know that in other lands the earth yields generously to the men who sow seed. How little did the harvest mean to him! The world is a world of rock and sea—of sea and naked rock. Soil is gathered in buckets. Gardens are made by hand. The return is precious in the sight of men.

Uncle Zeb Gale—Daddy Gale, who had long ago lost count of his grandchildren, they were so many—Ol' Zeb tottered up

from the sea, gasping and coughing, but broadly smiling in the intervals. He had a great cod in one hand, and his old cloth cap was in the other. His head was bald, and his snowy beard covered his chest. Toil and the weight of years had bowed his back, spun a film over his eyes and cracked his voice. But neither toil nor age nor hunger nor cold had broken his cheery interest in all the things of life. Ol' Zeb smiled in a sweetly winning way. He stopped to pass a word with the stranger, who was far away from home, and therefore, no doubt, needed a heartening word or two.

"Fine even, zur," said he.

"'Tis that, Uncle Zeb. How have the fish been to-day?"

"Oh, they be a scattered fish off the Mull, zur. But 'tis only a scattered one. They don't run in, zur, like what they used to when I were young, sure."

"How many years ago, sir?"

"'Tis many year, zur," said Uncle Zeb,

"TOIL"

smiling indulgence with my youth. "They was fish a-plenty when—when—when I were young. 'Tis not what it used t' be —no, no, zur; not at all. Sure, zur, I been goin' t' the grounds off the Mull since I were seven years old. Since I were seven! I be eighty-three now, zur. Seventy-six year, zur, I has fished out o' this here harbour."

Uncle Zeb stopped to wheeze a bit. He was out of breath with this long speech. And when he had wheezed a bit, a spasm of hard coughing took him. He was on the verge of the last stage of consumption, was Uncle Zeb.

"'Tis a fine harbour t' fish from, zur," he gasped. "They be none better. Leastways, so they tells me—them that's cruised about a deal. Sure, I've never seen another. 'Tis t' Conch[1] I've wanted t' go since I were a young feller. I'll see un yet, zur—sure, an' I will."

"You are eighty-three?" said I.

[1] Some miles distant.

"I be the oldest man t' the harbour, zur. I marries the maids an' the young fellers when they's no parson about."

"You have fished out of this harbour for seventy-six years?" said I, in vain trying to comprehend the deprivation and dull toil of that long life—trying to account for the childlike smile which had continued to the end of it.

"Ay, zur," said Uncle Zeb. "But, sure, they be plenty o' time t' see Conch yet. Me father were ninety when he died. I be only eighty-three."

Uncle Zeb tottered up the hill. Soon the dusk swallowed his old hulk. I never saw him again.

We were seated on the Head, high above the sea, watching the fleet of punts come from the Mad Mull grounds and from the nets along shore, for it was evening. Jack had told me much of the lore of lobster-catching and squid-jigging. Of winds and tides and long breakers he had given me

solemn warnings—and especially of that little valley down which the gusts came, no man knew from where. He had imparted certain secrets concerning the whereabouts of gulls' nests and juniper-berry patches, for I had won his confidence. I had been informed that Uncle Tom Bull's punt was in hourly danger of turning over because her spread of canvas was "scandalous" great, that Bill Bludgell kept the "surliest dog t' the harbour," that the "goaats was wonderful hard t' find" in the fog, that a brass bracelet would cure salt-water sores on the wrists, that—I cannot recall it all. He had "mocked" a goat, a squid, a lamb, old George Walker at prayer, and "Uncle" Ruth berating "Aunt" Simon for leaving the splitting-table unclean.

Then he sang this song, in a thin, sweet treble, which was good to hear:

"'Way down on Pigeon Pond Island,
When daddy comes home from swilin',[1]

[1] Sealing.

(Maggoty fish hung up in the air,
Fried in maggoty butter)!
Cakes and tea for breakfast,
Pork and duff for dinner,
Cakes and tea for supper,
When daddy comes home from swilin'."

He asked me riddles, thence he passed to other questions, for he was a boy who wondered, and wondered, what lay beyond those places which he could see from the highest hill. I described a street and a pavement, told him that the earth was round, defined a team of horses, corrected his impression that a church organ was played with the mouth, and denied the report that the flakes and stages of New York were the largest in the world. The boys of the outports do not play games—there is no time, and at any rate, the old West Country games have not come down to this generation with the dialect, so I told him how to play tag, hide-and-go-seek and blind man's buff, and proved to him that they might be interesting, though I had to admit that they might not be profitable in certain cases.

"Some men," said I, at last, "have never seen the sea."

He looked at me and laughed his unbelief. "Sure," said he, "not a hundred haven't?"

"Many more than that."

"'Tis hard t' believe, zur," he said. "Terrible hard."

We were silent while he thought it over.

"What's the last harbour in the world?" he asked.

I hesitated.

"The very last, zur! They do say 'tis St. Johns. But, sure, zur, they must be something beyond. What do it be?" After a silence, he continued, speaking wistfully, "What's the last harbour in all the whole world, zur? Doesn't you know?"

It had been a raw day—gray and gusty, with the wind breaking over the island from a foggy sea: a sullen day. All day long there had been no rest from the deep harsh growl of the breakers. We were at tea in Aunt Amanda's cottage; the table was

spread with dried caplin, bread and butter, and tea, for Aunt Amanda, the Scotsman who was of the harbour, and me. The harbour water was fretting under the windows as the swift gusts whipped over it; and beyond the narrows, where the sea was tumbling, the dusk was closing over the frothy waves. Out there a punt was reeling in from the Mad Mull fishing grounds; its brown sail was like a leaf driven by the wind. I saw the boat dart through the narrows to the sheltered water, and I sighed in sympathy with the man who was then furling his wet and fluttering sail, for I, too, had experienced the relief of sweeping from that waste of grasping waves to the sanctuary of the harbour.

"Do you think of the sea as a friend?" I asked Aunt Amanda.

She was a gray, stern woman, over whose face, however, a tender smile was used to flitting, the light lingered last in her faded eyes—the daughter, wife, and mother of

punt fishermen. So she had dealt hand to hand with the sea since that night, long ago, when, as a wee maid, she first could reach the splitting-table by standing on a bucket. As a child she had tripped up the path to Lookout Head, to watch her father beat in from the grounds; as a maiden, she had courted when the moonlight was falling upon the ripples of Lower Harbour, and the punt was heaving to the spent swell of the open; as a woman she had kept watch on the moods of the sea, which had possessed itself of her hours of toil and leisure. In the end—may the day be long in coming—she will be taken to the little graveyard under the Lookout in a skiff. Now, at my suggestion, she dropped her eyes to her apron, which she smoothed in an absent way. She seemed to search her life—all the terror, toil, and glory of it—for the answer. She was not of a kind to make light replies, and I knew that the word to come would be of vast significance.

"It do seem to me," she said, turning her eyes to the darkening water, "that the say is hungry for the lives o' men."

"Tut, woman!" cried the old Scotsman, his eyes all a-sparkle. "'Tis a libel on the sea. Why wull ye speak such trash to a stranger? Have ye never heard, sir, what the poet says?"

"Well," I began to stammer.

"Aye, man," said he, "they all babble about it. But have ye never read,

> "'"O, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
> And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
> The exulting sense, the pulse's maddening play,
> That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?"'"

With that, the sentimental old fellow struck an attitude. His head was thrown back; his eyes were flashing; his arm was rigid, and pointing straight through the window to that patch of white, far off in the gathering dark, where the sea lay raging. It ever took a poet to carry that old Scotsman off his feet—to sweep him to some high, cloudy place, where the things of life

rearranged and decked themselves out to please his fancy. I confess, too, that his enthusiasm rekindled, for a moment, my third-reader interest in "a wet sheet and a flowing sea" and "a wind that follows fast." We have all loved well the sea of our fancy.

"Grand, woman!" he exclaimed, turning to Aunt Amanda, and still a-tremble. "Splendid!"

Aunt Amanda fixed him with her gray eye. "I don't know," she said, softly. "But I know that the say took me father from me when I was a wee maid."

The Scotsman bent his head over his plate, lower and lower still. His fervour departed, and his face, when he looked up, was full of sympathy. Of a sudden my ears hearkened again to the growling breakers, and to the wind, as it ran past, leaping from sea to wilderness; and my spirit felt the coming of the dark.

XI

WINTER PRACTICE

IT is, then, to the outporter, to the men of the fleet and to the Labrador liveyere that Doctor Grenfell devotes himself. The hospital at Indian Harbour is the centre of the Labrador activity; the hospital at St. Anthony is designed to care for the needs of the French shore folk; the hospital at Battle Harbour—the first established, and, possibly, the best equipped of all—receives patients from all directions, but especially from the harbours of the Strait and the Gulf. In the little hospital-ship, *Strathcona*, the doctor himself darts here and there and everywhere, all summer long, responding to calls, searching out the sick, gathering patients for the various hospitals. She is known to every harbour of the coast; and she is often overcrowded with sick bound to the hospitals for treatment or operation.

"THE HOSPITAL AT BATTLE HARBOR."

Often, indeed, in cases of emergency, operations are performed aboard, while she tosses in the rough seas. She is never a moment idle while the waters are open. But in the fall, when navigation closes, she must go into winter quarters; and then the sick and starving are sought out by dog-team and komatik. There is no cessation of beneficent activity; there is merely a change in the manner of getting about. Summer journeys are hard enough, God knows! But winter travel is a matter of much greater difficulty and hardship. Not that the difficulty and hardship seem ever to be perceived by the mission-doctor; quite the contrary: there is if anything greater delight to be found in a wild, swift race over rotten or heaving ice, or in a night in the driving snow, than in running the *Strathcona* through a nor'east gale. The Indian Harbour hospital is closed in the fall; so intense is the cold, so exposed the situation, so scarce the wood, so few the liveyeres, that it has been found unprofitable to keep it open. There is another way of

meeting the needs of the situation; and that is by despatching the Battle Harbour doctor northward in midwinter. The folk know that he is bound towards them—know the points of call—can determine within a month the time of his arrival. So they bring the sick to these places—and patiently wait. This is a hard journey—made alone with the dogs. Many a night the doctor must get into his sleeping bag and make himself as comfortable as possible in the snow, snuggled close to his dogs, for the sake of the warmth of their bodies. Six hundred miles north in the dead of winter, six hundred miles back again; it takes a man of unchangeable devotion to undertake it!

The Labrador dogs—pure and half-breed "huskies," with so much of the wolf yet in them that they never bark—are for the most part used by the doctor on his journeys. There would be no getting anywhere without them; and it must be said that they are magnificent animals, capable of heroic

deeds. Every prosperous householder has at least six or eight full-grown sled-dogs and more puppies than he can keep track of. In summer they lie everywhere under foot by day, and by night howl in a demoniacal fashion far and near; but they fish for themselves in shallow water, and are fat, and may safely be stepped over. In winter they are lean, desperately hungry, savage, and treacherous—in particular, a menace to the lives of children, whom they have been known to devour. There was once a father, just returned from a day's hunt on the ice, who sent his son to fetch a seal from the waterside; the man had forgotten for the moment that the dogs were roaming the night and very hungry—and so he lost both his seal and his son. The four-year-old son of the Hudson Bay Company's agent at Cartwright chanced last winter to fall down in the snow. He was at once set upon by the pack; and when he was rescued (his mother told me the story) he had forty-two ugly wounds on his little body. For many

nights afterwards the dogs howled under the window where he lay moaning. Eventually those concerned in the attack were hanged by the neck, which is the custom in such cases.

Once, when Dr. Grenfell was wintering at St. Anthony, on the French shore, there came in great haste from Conch, a point sixty miles distant, a komatik with an urgent summons to the bedside of a man who lay dying of hemorrhage. And while the doctor was preparing for this journey, a second komatik, despatched from another place, arrived with a similar message.

"Come at once," it was. "My little boy has broken his thigh."

The doctor chose first to visit the lad. At ten o'clock that night he was at the bedside. It had been a dark night—black dark: with the road precipitous, the dogs uncontrollable, the physician in great haste. The doctor thought, many a time, that there would be "more than one broken limb" by

the time of his arrival. But there was no misadventure; and he found the lad lying on a settle, in great pain, wondering why he must suffer so.

"Every minute or two, " says the doctor, "there would be a jerk, a flash of pain, and a cry to his father, who was holding him all the time."

The doctor was glad "to get the chloroform mask over the boy's face"—he is a sympathetic man, the doctor; glad, always, to ease pain. And at one o'clock in the morning the broken bone was set and the doctor had had a cup of tea; whereupon, he retired to a bed on the floor and a few hours' "watch below." At daylight, when he was up and about to depart, the little patient had awakened and was merrily calling to the doctor's little retriever.

"He was as merry as a cricket," says the doctor, "when I bade him good-bye."

About twelve hours on the way to Conch, where the man lay dying of hemorrhage

—a two days' journey—the doctor fell in with a dog-train bearing the mail. And the mail-man had a letter—a hasty summons to a man in great pain some sixty miles in another direction. It was impossible to respond. "That call," says the doctor, sadly, "owing to sheer impossibility, was not answered." It was haste away to Conch, over the ice and snow—for the most of the time on the ice of the sea—in order that the man who lay dying there might be succoured. But there was another interruption. When the dog-train reached the coast, there was a man waiting to intercept it: the news of the doctor's probable coming had spread.

"I've a fresh team o' dogs," sir, said he, "t' take you t' the island. There's a man there, an' he's wonderful sick."

Would the doctor go? Yes—he would go! But he had no sooner reached that point of the mainland whence he was bound across a fine stretch of ice to the island than he was again intercepted. It was a young man, this time, whose mother lay

ill, with no other Protestant family living within fifty miles. Would the doctor help her? Yes—the doctor would; and did. And when he was about to be on his way again——

"Could you bear word," said the woman, "t' Mister Elliot t' come bury my boy? He said he'd come, sir; but now my little lad has been lying dead, here, since January."

It was then early in March. Mr. Elliot was a Protestant fisherman who was accustomed to bury the Protestant dead of that district. Yes—the doctor would bear word to him. Having promised this, he set out to visit the sick man on the island; for whom, also, he did what he could.

Off again towards Conch—now with fresh teams, which had been provided by the friends of the man who lay there dying. And by the way a man brought his little son for examination and treatment—"a lad of three years," says the doctor; "a bright,

healthy, embryo fisherman, light-haired and blue-eyed, a veritable celt."

"And what's the matter with him?" was the physician's question.

"He've a club foot, sir," was the answer.

And so it turned out: the lad had a club foot. He was fond of telling his mother that he had a right foot and a wrong one. "The wrong one, mama," said he, "is no good." He was to be a cripple for life—utterly incapacitated: the fishing does not admit of club feet. But the doctor made arrangements for the child's transportation to the St. Anthony hospital, where he could, without doubt be cured; and then hurried on.

The way now led through a district desperately impoverished—as much by ignorance and indolence as by anything else. At one settlement of tilts there were forty souls, "without a scrap of food or money," who depended upon their neighbours—and the opening of navigation was still three

months distant! In one tilt there lay what seemed to be a bundle of rags.

"And who is this?" the doctor asked.

It was a child. "The fair hair of a blue-eyed boy of about ten years disclosed itself," says the doctor. "Stooping over him I attempted to turn his face towards me. It was drawn with pain, and a moan escaped the poor little fellow's lips. He had disease of the spine, with open sores in three places. He was stark naked, and he was starved to a skeleton. He gave me a bright smile before I left, but I confess to a shudder of horror at the thought that his lot might have been mine. Of course the 'fear of pauperizing' had to disappear before the claims of humanity. Yet, there, in the depth of winter," the doctor asks, with infinite compassion, "would not a lethal draught be the kindest friend of that little one of Him that loved the children?"

For five days the doctor laboured in Conch, healing many of the folk, helping

more; and at the end of that period the man who has suffered the hemorrhage was so far restored that with new dogs the doctor set out for Canada Bay, still travelling southward. There, as he says, "we had many interesting cases." One of these involved an operation: that of "opening a knee-joint and removing a loose body," with the result that a fisherman who had long been crippled was made quite well again. Then there came a second call from Conch. Seventeen men had come for the physician, willing to haul the komatik themselves, if no dogs were to be had. To this call the doctor immediately responded; and having treated patients at Conch and by the way, he set out upon the return journey to St. Anthony, fearing that his absence had already been unduly prolonged. And he had not gone far on the way before he fell in with another komatik, provided with a box, in which lay an old woman bound to St. Anthony hospital, in the care of her sons, to have her foot amputated.

Crossing Hare Bay, the doctor had a slight mishap—rather amusing, too, he thinks.

"One of my dogs fell through the ice," says he. "There was a biting nor'west wind blowing, and the temperature was ten degrees below zero. When we were one mile from the land, I got off to run and try the ice. It suddenly gave way, and in I fell. It did not take me long to get out, for I have had some little experience, and the best advice sounds odd: it is 'keep cool.' But the nearest house being at least ten miles, it meant, then, almost one's life to have no dry clothing. Fortunately, I had. The driver at once galloped the dogs back to the woods we had left, and I had as hard a mile's running as ever I had; for my clothing was growing to resemble the armour of an ancient knight more and more, every yard, and though in my youth I was accustomed to break the ice to bathe if necessary, I never tried running a race in a coat of

mail. By the time I arrived at the trees and got out of the wind, my driver had a rubber poncho spread on the snow under a snug spruce thicket; and I was soon as dry and a great deal warmer than before."

At St. Anthony, the woman's foot was amputated; and in two days the patient was talking of "getting up." Meantime, a komatik had arrived in haste from a point on the northwest coast—a settlement one hundred and twenty miles distant. The doctor was needed there—and the doctor went!

This brief and inadequate description of a winter's journey may not serve to indicate the hardship of the life the doctor leads: he has small regard for that; but it may faintly apprise the reader of the character of the work done, and of the will with which the doctor does it. One brief journey! The visitation of but sixty miles of coast! Add to this the numerous journeys of that winter, the various summer voyages of the *Strath-*

"THE DOCTOR ON A WINTER'S JOURNEY"

cona; conceive that the folk of two thousand miles are visited every year, often twice a year: then multiply by ten—for the mission has been in efficient existence for ten years—and the reader may reach some faint conception of the sum of good wrought by this man. But without knowing the desolate land—without observing the emaciated bodies of the children—without hearing the cries of distress—it is impossible adequately to realize the blessing his devotion has brought to the coast.

XII

THE CHAMPION

THE Deep-sea Mission is not concerned chiefly with the souls of the folk, nor yet exclusively with their bodies: it endeavours to provide them with religious instruction, to heal their ailments; but it is quite as much interested, apparently, in improving their material condition. To the starving it gives food, to the naked clothing; but it must not be supposed that charity is indiscriminately distributed. That is not the case. Far from it. When a man can cut wood for the steamer or hospitals in return for the food he is given, for example, he is required to do so; but the unhappy truth is that a man can cut very little wood "on a winter's diet" exclusively of flour. "You gets weak all of a suddent, zur," one expressed it to me. In his effort to "help the people help themselves" the

doctor has established cooperative stores and various small industries. The result has been twofold: the regeneration of several communities, and an outbreak of hatred and dishonest abuse on the part of the traders, who have too long fattened on the isolation and miseries of the people. The cooperative stores, I believe, are thriving, and the small industries promise well. Thus the mission is at once the hope and comfort of the coast. The man on the *Strathcona* is the only man, in all the long history of that wretched land, to offer a helping hand to the whole people from year to year without ill temper and without hope of gain.

"But I can't do everything," says he.

And that is true. There is much that the mission-doctor cannot do—delicate operations, for which the more skilled hand of a specialist is needed. For a time, one season, an eminent surgeon, of Boston, the first of many, it is hoped, cruised on the *Strathcona* and most generously operated at Battle Harbour. The mission gathered the pa-

tients to the hospital from far and near before the surgeon arrived. Folk who had looked forward in dread to a painful death, fast approaching, were of a sudden promised life. There was a man coming, they were told, above the skill of the mission surgeons, who could surely cure them. The deed was as good as the promise: many operations were performed; all the sick who came for healing were healed; the hope of not one was disappointed. Folk who had suffered years of pain were restored. Never had such a thing been known on the Labrador. Men marvelled. The surgeon was like a man raising the dead. But there was a woman who is now, perhaps, dead; she lacked the courage. Day after day for two weeks she waited for the Boston surgeon; but when he came she fled in terror of the knife. Her ailment was mortal in that land; but she might easily have been cured; and she fled home when she knew that the healer had come. No doubt her children now know what it is to want a mother.

Dr. Grenfell will let no man oppress his people when his arm is strong enough to champion them. There was once a rich man (so I was told before I met the doctor)—a man of influence and wide acquaintance—whose business was in a remote harbour of Newfoundland. He did a great wrong; and when the news of it came to the ears of the mission-doctor, the anchor of the *Strathcona* came up in a hurry, and off she steamed to that place.

"Now," said the doctor to this man, "you must make what amends you can, and you must confess your sin."

The man laughed aloud. It seemed to him, no doubt, a joke that the mission-doctor should interfere in the affairs of one so rich who knew the politicians at St. Johns. But the mission-doctor was also a magistrate.

"I say," said he, deliberately, "that you must pay one thousand dollars and confess your sin."

The man cursed the doctor with great

laughter, and dared him to do his worst. The joke still had point.

"I warn you," said the doctor, "that I will arrest you if you do not do precisely as I say."

The man pointed out to the doctor that his magisterial district lay elsewhere, and again defied him.

"Very true," said the doctor; "but I warn you that I have a crew quite capable of taking you into it."

The joke was losing its point. But the man blustered that he, too, had a crew.

"You must make sure," said the doctor, "that they love you well enough to fight for you. On Sunday evening," he continued, "you will appear at the church at seven o'clock and confess your sin before the congregation; and next week you will pay the money as I have said."

"I'll see you in h—ll first!" replied the man, defiantly.

At the morning service the doctor an-

"A CREW QUITE CAPABLE OF TAKING YOU INTO IT"

nounced that a sinful man would confess his sin before them all that night. There was great excitement. Other men might be prevailed upon to make so humiliating a confession, the folk said, but not this one—not this rich man, whom they hated and feared, because he had so long pitilessly oppressed them. So they were not surprised when at the evening service the sinful man did not show his face.

"Will you please to keep your seats," said the doctor, "while I go fetch that man."

He found the man in a neighbour's house, on his knees in prayer, with his friends. They were praying fervently, it is said; but whether or not that the heart of the doctor might be softened I do not know.

"Prayer," said the doctor, "is a good thing in its place, but it doesn't 'go' here. Come with me."

The man meekly went with the doctor; he was led up the aisle of the church, was placed where all the people could see him;

and then he was asked many questions, after the doctor had described the great sin of which he was guilty.

"Did you do this thing?"

"I did."

"You are an evil man, of whom the people should beware?"

"I am."

"You deserve the punishment of man and God?"

"I do."

There was much more, and at the end of it all the doctor told the man that the good God would forgive him if he should ask in true faith and repentance, but that the people, being human, could not. For a whole year, he charged the people, they must not speak to that man; but if at the end of that time he had shown an honest disposition to mend his ways, they might take him to their hearts.

The end of the story is that the man paid the money and left the place.

This relentless judge, on a stormy day of last July, carried many bundles ashore at Cartwright, in Sandwich Bay of the Labrador. The wife of the Hudson Bay Company's agent exclaimed with delight when she opened them. They were Christmas gifts from the children of the "States" to the lads and little maids of that coast. With almost all there came a little letter addressed to the unknown child who was to receive the toy; they were filled with loving words —with good wishes, coming in childish sincerity from the warm little hearts. The doctor never forgets the Christmas gifts. He is the St. Nicholas of that coast. If he ever weeps at all, I should think it would be when he hears that despite his care some child has been neglected. The wife of the agent stowed away the gifts against the time to come.

"It makes them *very* happy," said the agent's wife.

"Not long ago," I chanced to say, "I saw a little girl with a stick of wood for a dolly.

Are they not afraid to play with these pretty things?"

"They *are*," she laughed. "They use them for ornaments. But *that* doesn't matter. It makes them happy just to look at them."

We all laughed.

"And yet," she continued, "they *do* play with them, sometimes, after all. There is a little girl up the bay who *has kissed the paint off her dolly!*"

Thus and all the time, in storm and sunshine, summer and winter weather, Grenfell of the Deep-sea Mission goes about doing good; if it's not in a boat, it's in a dog-sled. He is what he likes to call "a Christian man." But he is also a hero—at once the bravest and the most beneficently useful man I know. If he regrets his isolation, if the hardship of the life sometimes oppresses him, no man knows it. He does much, but there is much more to do. If the good people of the world would but give a little more

of what they have so abundantly—and if they could but know the need, they would surely do that—joy might be multiplied on that coast; nor would any man be wronged by misguided charity.

"What a man does for the love of God," the doctor once said, "he does differently."

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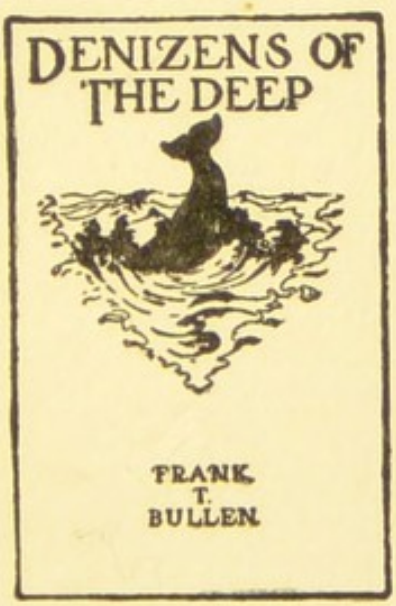

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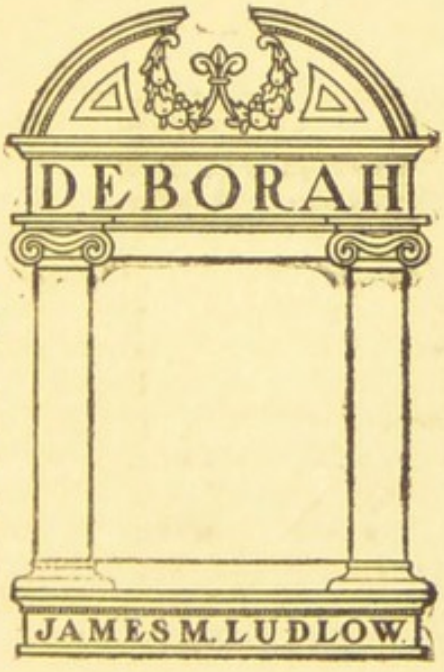

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