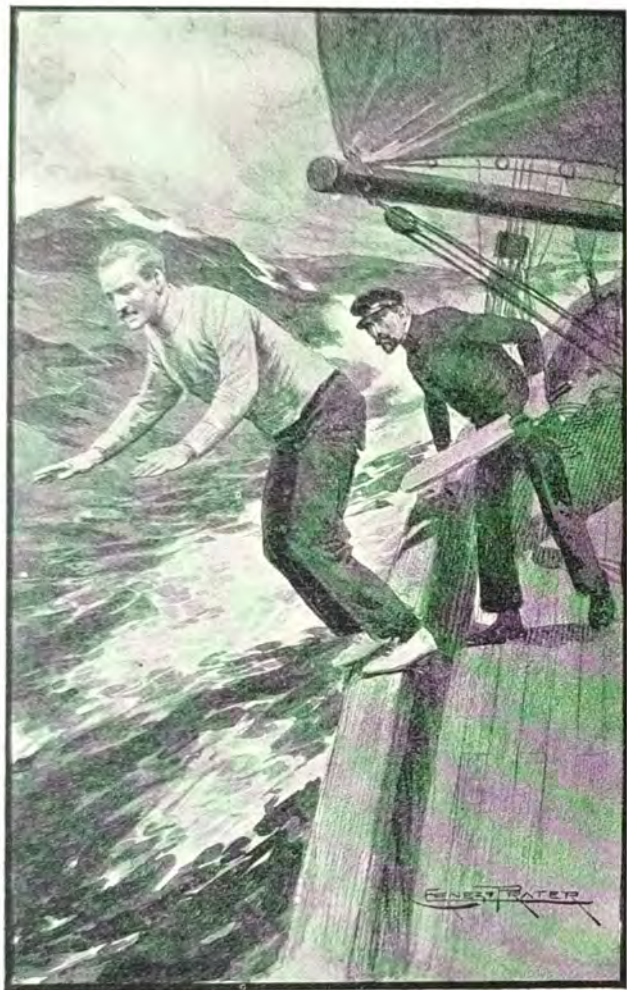


WILFRED GRENFELL
THE MASTER-MARINER



"HE DASHED TO THE SIDE AND TOOK A HEADER INTO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN."

WILFRED GRENFELL

THE MASTER-MARINER

A LIFE OF
ADVENTURE ON SEA AND ICE

By
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AUTHOR OF
"PAUL THE DAUNTLESS," "LIVINGSTONE THE PATHFINDER," ETC.

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FOREWORD

WHEN John Masefield sings

I must go down to the sea again,
To the lonely sea and the ships,

we all respond to that irresistible call of the moving tide.

Of living men there is none whose life is so impregnated with the tang of the salt of the sea and so braced by the fight with gale and ice-floe as that of Wilfred Thomason Grenfell of the Labrador. In him the Viking and the Elizabethan adventurer are alive again—though his sea-raids have a kindlier but not a less courageous quality than those of Eric the Red and Sir Richard Grenville of the *Revenge*.

In writing this story of Dr. Grenfell's adventures from the risks of his boyhood over the sands of Dee till to-day when ice-floe and Arctic tempest are his companions, I have had help from numerous sources. His brother, now head-

master of Mostyn House School, Parkgate, Cheshire, where the Grenfell boys were born and grew, has given valuable time and valued help in showing me the school, recalling boyhood tales and giving me access to the files of "The Griffin" and "The Sandpiper," the successive titles of the school magazine. In that vivid magazine Dr. Grenfell has told the later generations of boys in his old school tales of his experiences on the high seas with Eskimo and Indian, French and Anglo-Saxon.

Books published in America, and especially Mr. Fullerton Waldo's "With Grenfell on the Labrador," Mr. Wallace's "The Story of Grenfell of the Labrador," have been very suggestive. The British Admiralty's two unattractive-looking, but in fact fascinating official volumes for pilots on the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador have been beyond price. No one could guess from their dry-as-dust official exterior the alluring details about seal-hunting, cod-fishing, fogs, the colour and place of lighthouses on rocky headlands and so on that lurk in those pages. This official book is a burly sea-dog

disguised as a suburban clerk in the civil service.

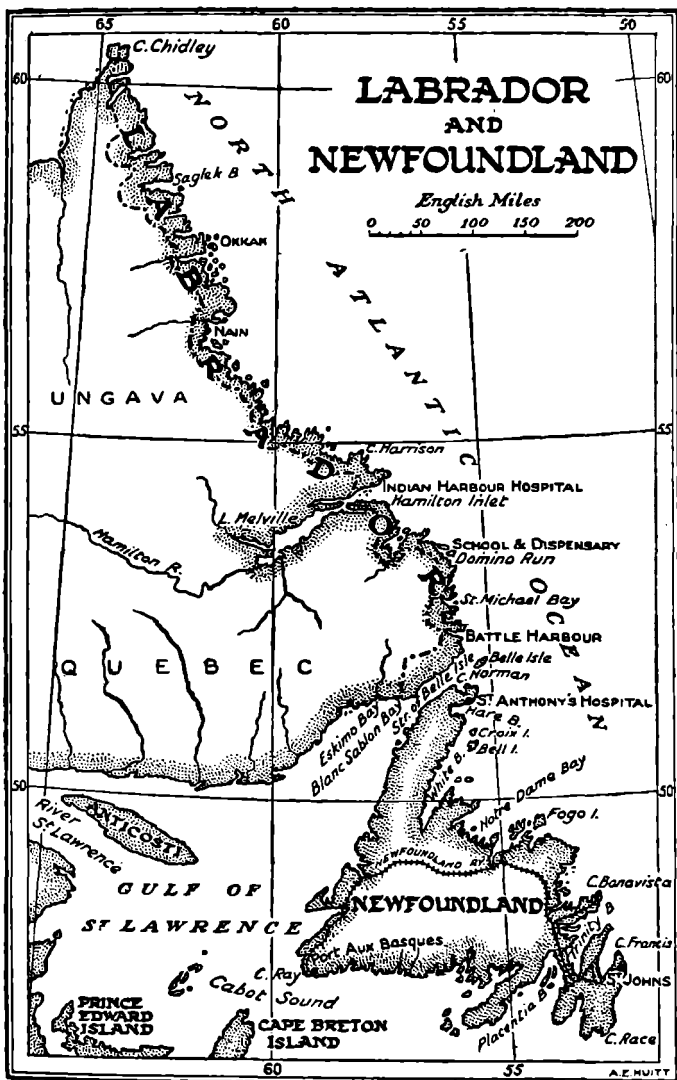
Most valuable of all, of course, is Dr. Grenfell's own autobiography, "A Labrador Doctor"—the Iliad of his life written by Ulysses himself—often written lying on the deck of his own ship between ice-floe and shore. To this book in particular the writer would commend those who would read his story from his own hand, as all should do.

BASIL MATHEWS.

THE ATHENÆUM,
February, 1924.

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THE VOYAGE

Then he (Andrew) went in the dawn at daybreak over the sandhills to the sea-shore, firm of purpose, and his thanes with him, going on the shingle. The ocean roared, the sea-streams were crashing, the hero was hopeful, courageous, when he found on the strand a wide-bosomed ship. . . . There he saw three thanes, glorious ship-masters ; mighty men in the sea-boat sitting ready to go as if they had come over the sea. . . .

Andrew asked to be taken across the sea.

Then the Prince of men spake to him, from where he stood on the gangway over the rolling of the sea, "How doth it befall thee, dearest friend, that thou wouldest seek the sea-hills, the limit of the sea-streams, over the cold cliffs devoid of treasure, wouldest look for a ship ? . . . The way of life is hard for him who trieth the sea-road for long."

Then Andrew in answer, wise in wit, unlocked his world-hoard. . . . The Father of every folk . . . bade us go over the wide deep to win souls. "Go now over all the regions of earth, even as far as the water encloseth, or the plains lie on the way. Preach through the cities over earth's bosom, the glorious

faith. I will hold peace with you. Nor need ye on that journey take treasure, gold nor silver : I will provide for you the abundance of every good thing, at your own choice."

Then the Eternal Lord answered him : " If ye are the thanes of him who hath raised his glory over earth, as ye say to me, and ye hold that the Holy One commanded you, then with joy I will take you over the sea-streams as ye entreat."

Then the brave-souled, the courageous one, stepped into the ship ; the mind of all on the sea-shore rejoiced. . . .

Then was the whale-mere disturbed, aroused : then horn-fish sported, gliding through the ocean, and the grey mew, slaughter-greedy, wheeled around ; the storm-candle darkened, the winds waxed, the waves ground each other, the streams upstirred, the ropes creaked wet with water ; water-terror went forth with the might of troops : the thanes were fearful in mind, not one weened of all those who had sought the ship with Andrew on the ocean stream that living he should reach the land.

It was not yet known to them Who was guiding the swimming of the sea-floater.

CYNEWULF.

WILFRED GRENFELL

CHAPTER I

THE HOME WATERS OF DEE

THE drone of a carpenter's plane and the tapping of a mallet on a chisel, with the rustle of shavings as the two boys moved at their work were the only sounds in the room. Outside, through the window behind them, was the green grass of the lawn at the back of the headmaster's house. Through the open window on the other side of the big room came the scream of seagulls as they whirled and called and fished over the ebb tide that ran out from the broad sands of the River Dee.

The boys, Wilfred and Algernon Grenfell, straightened their backs to look with some pride at the boat that they were making. She was rapidly nearing the exciting day when she could be launched on the tide.

Every piece of timber in her had been bought

with their own pocket money. They had planned her build themselves, Algernon, the elder brother, doing most of the planning to make her right for going out shooting and fishing over those shallow waters. She had to be very shallow in draught to go over the shoals. She must also be light enough for them to carry. Yet she must not turn over easily because the boys—though they themselves were happier in the water than out of it—treasured the guns with which they went out hunting sea-fowl across the waters.

So, with the help of the village carpenter, in the big room of the school at Parkgate—the room that had been their old back nursery as children—the two schoolboys worked at their craft. She was unlike anything that had ever been seen before—somewhere between a sturdy canoe and a light punt with straight lines and a square stern.

The time had now come to show the boat to their friends. Among others, their father (the headmaster of the school that was their home), their mother, and a young cousin came in to view

the boat. There was silence. Then the cousin blurted out : " It looks awful like a coffin."

The boys were furious—for a moment. Then they saw how lamentably true it was.

" She is not built to be seen," explained Algernon.

" Call her *The Reptile*," suggested someone.

" And paint her red," said another.

Both of these ideas were adopted. Then she was carefully pushed out through the window and they slid her down over the sloping roof that slanted from the window down toward the ground and got her safely landed on the grass. Then she was carried round the house, over the sea-wall, across the sands down to the edge of the waters, and launched on the tide flowing up from the Irish Sea into the Dee below Chester.

In *The Reptile* with their canoe-paddles and guns, the two schoolboys and their friends went stalking curlew till they knew every sandbank submerged at high tide and each " gutter"—the natural salt-water channels or runnels—up which the waters swirled. Sometimes the boys slipped away and joined the fishermen of the

village in their boats as they swept out into the Deep—the central river channel down and up which the sea-waters surge. They went in the fishing-boats down with the tide to the river mouth and sometimes toiled all night with the men hauling at the nets till the boats were alive with silver fish ; and they all came home at dawn to the village of Parkgate and to their home, Mostyn House School.

Parkgate is a quiet village in these days ; but the Grenfell boys could see, from a strange picture-map that their father had, how lively it had been in the old days when it was the port from which you sailed to Ireland. That map—drawn by the “ Hydrographer to his most excellent Majesty, King Charles II.,” shows wooden British “ Men o’ War ” riding at anchor with billows breaking on their oak sides, and even sperm whales spouting water as they gambol like dolphins in the harbour.

In the old days of that map the great sailing ships came rolling in from the ocean up to Parkgate and beyond even to Chester, which was then a port. Indeed, old Mostyn House, where the

school is now and where Algernon and Wilfred's father was headmaster, was the old "George" of King Charles's time—the inn-hotel in whose bustling yard the four sweating horses and the lumbering coach came to rest at the end of its long journey over soft roads all the way from London to Cheshire with the passengers for the crazy little sailing packet that took them (and sometimes took a fortnight to take them) over the sea to Dublin. If we look up "The Times," say as late even as 1780, and read the "Coach advertisements," we discover four great coach-routes only, Bristol, Plymouth, York and Parkgate.

But the harbour silted up; and the railways ran past on either side to Holyhead and to Liverpool for Ireland. So Parkgate became a dreamy, quiet old fishing village. Then the father of Algernon and Wilfred Grenfell bought the "George" from his great-uncle who had started a school there. And the school—Mostyn House School—has gone on becoming a better and better school till this day, when it is full of healthy, noisy boys, with splendid playing

fields, great swimming baths, a chapel of unusual beauty, and the Sands of Dee for boating, fishing and shooting.

It was here then that the Grenfell boys played and learned and swam, fished and shot and rowed. At eight years old, on his birthday, February 28,¹ Wilfred was out alone with a gun five miles from his home and shot some black and white oyster-catchers—swift, jerky sea-birds with reddish bills that were feeding on the mussel-patches. He started to wade out through the icy marsh water after them, when suddenly he lurched head first into a deep hole. The boy came to the surface, but the weapon was gone; and the eight-year-old waded home through the deep snow, gloomy with grief for his gun.

No one was very much disturbed, for the boys were “hard as nails”; and could swim even better than they could walk, and knew, like the back of their hands, every inch of the sands and all the gutters that divide the sandbanks. As to clothes, his mother had given Wilfred clothes that were made for rough use in and out of water,

¹ Born 1865

so that when cut off by the silent waters of the inrushing tide he simply swam over to the shallows across the deep channels that cut into the sands.

Once, as the curlews came up the estuary in flocks at nightfall, Wilfred from the water's edge shot bird after bird, taking off his clothes to swim out to "retrieve" his birds; and then, on getting back to his gun, saw another and fired, naked as he was, without stopping to dress. This, of course, meant a bruised shoulder from the gun's kick on his skin; but that was forgotten in the delight of the young hunter in being able to swing over his shoulder a bunch of long-billed birds for supper.

On other days he would walk up the bank towards Chester till he came to the embankment—the Great Cop—where men had tried to build a way across from the English to the Welsh bank of the Dee. But the quicksands had swallowed all; and the tide still came sweeping through the Deep in whirling force. Young Wilfred would throw off his clothes and dive into the whirlpool, to be caught like a cork

and carried out on to the Welsh bank. For just across that water is Wales. The boys could see, beyond the Dee waters, the green hillsides of the land of mountains where the folks spoke a strange tongue. So Wilfred swam from England to Wales ; then running up the bank on that side of the stream, he went on until the channel narrowed again sufficiently for him to swim back to the Cheshire bank again.

Yet those sands of Dee could be dangerous enough. We all remember the haunting song that Grenfell's cousin, Charles Kingsley, wrote about the Sands of Dee. They give us the background of Wilfred Grenfell's boy life.

O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the Sands o' Dee ;
The Western wind was wild and dank wi' foam ;
And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see ;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land,—
And never home came she.



MOSTYN HOUSE SCHOOL, PARKGATE, CHESHIRE, WHERE DR. GRENFELL WAS BORN AND SPENT HIS EARLY SCHOOLDAYS.



**SUNSET OVER THE WELSH HILLS AND THE SANDS OF DEE
FROM THE FRONT OF MOSTYN HOUSE SCHOOL.**

[From photos. by the Author.]

Oh, is it weed or fish, or floating hair—
 A tress of golden hair,
 O' drowned maiden's hair,
 Above the nets at sea ?
 Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
 Among the stakes on Dee.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
 The cruel, crawling foam,
 The cruel, hungry foam,
 To her grave beside the sea ;
 But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,
 Across the Sands o' Dee.

So the sting of the salt of the sea was always in the boy's eyes and the tang on his lips, as it had been for his great Grenville forebears of the West Country, in the days when they ran their ships into the Spanish Main and sailed the Atlantic for adventure and the gold of Mexico. There is in Wilfred Grenfell the blood of men who put their lives in peril on land and sea. One of them, Basil Grenville, commander of the Cornish Army that fought for King Charles, was killed in battle in 1643. Sir Richard Grenville, of *The Revenge*, we remember, who

. . . laugh'd, and we roared a hurrah, and so
 The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart of the
 foe."

passed on to his descendant the spirit of the old sea-dog who cried :

“ Fight on ! Fight on !

Tho’ his vessel was all but a wreck.”

John Pascoe Grenville again, in the Armada days, boarded the Spanish Admiral’s ship, the *Esmeralda*, sword in hand.

The call of the sea was never out of Wilfred Grenfell’s ears. Nor was the sea that he faced on the banks of the Dee always one of quiet waters. For the gales and the tides of spring would come galloping up and tear the very fishing craft from their double anchors and even hurl a boat clear over the iron-bound stone embankment on to the village street in front of the school house.

On the walls of the rooms in the School home were heads of tigers and deer. These came from India, where Wilfred’s mother had been born, the daughter of Colonel Hutchinson, who campaigned there in the days of the Mutiny. Four of his mother’s brothers were generals or colonels in the fighting days of military service in India. Her eldest brother, who fought through the whole

of the Indian Mutiny, was in the historic defence of Lucknow. One of the other brothers was in command of that famous North-West Frontier regiment, the "Guides," the first regiment to wear khaki and from whose uniform the khaki of the world has been copied. He fell in a war on the North-West Frontier. The sporting "heads" were sent home by these uncles who were soldiers and civil servants. Indeed, so many members of different branches of his mother's family served in India that at the first Delhi Durbar forty-eight of her cousins had met together.

So the Grenfell boys, hunting the sea birds—always for food and never for sheer killing—and sailing the waters, took the love of the gun from their mother's side and the love of the sea from the Grenfells.

It was no wonder that Wilfred became a naturalist and a collector. He loved to watch the birds and insects; and this made him wish to be able to have them in the home. So he learned from an old "salt" in the village how to skin and then stuff and mount the birds, while his

elder brother, with his carpentering skill, made the cases in which to show the birds. There was a wonderful variety of birds in those waters. I have watched them from the window through which the boys would sometimes shoot and from the sands themselves. They feed at low water on the sands at the mouth of the river. And as the tide drove them up to the marsh past Parkgate the boys would lie quietly waiting in *The Reptile* in a "gutter," and shoot a supper of birds as they flew past. There were geese who would fly by in a V-shaped formation, with an old chief-gander at the apex, ducks, divers, waders, gulls, terns (or sea-swallows) and not least sandpipers; from whom Mostyn House School has named its school-magazine, "*The Sandpiper*."

Occasionally, a great stately white wild swan or a lordly heron from the Welsh moor-marshes would sweep past.

From birds Wilfred went on to moths—which he chased by night with his net and his pot of intoxicating honey—and butterflies, wild flowers and other plants. He and his brother in this

way made the beginning of the fine museum that Mostyn House School now boasts.

In the holidays the boys were left very much to themselves ; for their father, heavily over-worked during term, spent many of his vacations abroad. The matron was left in charge ; and the boys went at will over the great school-buildings, the playing-fields, the shore and the waters. Once when their father had started off for a holiday on the continent, they wired this telegram to London to a cousin to come up and spend the holidays at their uncle's home :

“ Dear Sid. Come down and stay the holidays. Father has gone to Aix.”

Imagine their amazement the next day to get a telegram :

“ Not gone yet. Father.”

It happened that their parents had stopped at their uncle's house on the way through London. All the same, the parents and the uncle, who were very good-hearted, sent “ Sid ” up to Parkgate for the holidays.

Wilfred left home and Mostyn School when he was fourteen and went to Marlborough College,

near the splendid Savernake Forest in Wiltshire, as a public schoolboy—his brother Algernon going to Clifton. His nickname at Marlborough was “The Beast,” because of his wild mop of hair and his readiness to fight if bullied or attacked. He became a good boxer, and to this day will put on the gloves at any time and on any excuse.

In his first term at Marlborough he won a scholarship which transferred him from the upper fourth form into the fifth. He was keen on the swimming in the great pool made from a branch of the river Kennet; and when not playing in any school team, “flannelled” and did the usual grind of running out round the Ailsbury Arms and back, or put in the afternoon in the gymnasium.

At night he often crept into Savernake Forest, with a dark lantern and his butterfly net hidden under his coat, to sugar the trees with treacle and beer and so catch moths. The boys at Marlborough not only had their “caps” as members of the first school team; but in addition were divided into “the Forty” with

tasselled velvet caps, "the Sixty" with braided velvet caps, and "the Hundred."

At sixteen years old, Wilfred, when in sick-room at Marlborough College with a cough, was diagnosed by the old Doctor "Fungi" (as the boys used to call him) as having congestion of the lungs. So he was sent to the South of France at Hyères to stay with an aunt on hills overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, with orders "to live out-of-doors." With two athletic girls, who were also staying with his aunt, he climbed the hills hunting butterflies and moths, which they also bred; caught frogs and kept them in little box-ponds with ladders of bamboo on which to climb; kept trap-door spiders; rode horses; bathed from the shore; revelled in the Carnival at Nice disguised as a clown; learned French without lessons—as they always spoke it at the villa; and took rather desultory lessons in Greek and Latin at intervals from a tutor who lived in the woods in a house called "The Hermitage."

Back again next spring in England Wilfred was suddenly faced when eighteen years old by

an enigma put to him by his father. The question that his father asked was, "What do you want to do with your life?"

Wilfred was nonplussed. He had been well content with his gun and boat, the stalking of sea-birds, the heave of the tide through the night-watch on the fishing smack under the stars, the racing gallop along the sands; content with school and its stir and clash in playing field and class room, with the strenuous tussle of the football match, and

. . . the cool silver shock
Of a plunge in the pool's living water.

All these had filled life to the brim with things to do. He could walk alone all day, gun in hand, by the marshes and over the shore, forgetting meals and never desiring even the company of friends in the sheer joy of living in the open air and in sight of the sea. If any dim idea of the future had thrust itself upon him, his mind had swung to the sporting trophies from India; and he had the feeling that to have the life and adventure of a hunter would be good.

Wilfred's father suggested that it would be a

good thing to go and talk with their great friend, the family physician—a doctor with an enormous practice who drove what seemed to the boys to be innumerable horses over great tracts of country to visit his many patients. They talked together, and among other things the doctor took down a big glass bottle in which was a human brain preserved in spirit. Something new woke in the boy at that moment. The feeling that the body of man was a wonderful mechanism, that in some mysterious way it had “life,” and that all that it did was controlled by that curious convoluted grey mass, the brain, stirred him deeply. “It attracted me,”¹ he said afterwards, “as did the camera, the gramophone, the automobile.”

Wilfred Grenfell decided to train to be a doctor.

¹ “A Labrador Doctor”: the autobiography of W. T. Grenfell.

CHAPTER II

SLUM AND SEA SCAPES

HERE was a fascinating interest—to study all about the human body ; to know how it worked when well ; to learn to heal it when sick. Wilfred Grenfell flung himself into his quest. No son in either his father's or his mother's family had ever been a doctor. It was all a new idea born of his own feeling of a calling. His father, however, at the time was giving up Mostyn House School¹ in order to be chaplain of the London Hospital.

Wilfred now had a new feeling of the interest of study ; though he never became a learned student of books in the ordinary sense. He

¹ Wilfred's elder brother, Algernon G. Grenfell, is now headmaster of Mostyn House School ; and to visit it in his company—as the author has been able to do—and hear the stories of his and his brother Wilfred's escapades from his own lips, as well as to read the back numbers of "The Griffin" or "The Sandpiper," as it is now called, in his study, is to get a fresh, vivid picture of the school-life of Wilfred Grenfell.

studied for the London University Matriculation. Then he threw himself into the life of the London Hospital, the largest British hospital, with nine hundred patients in the dense, grey, smoky slums of the East End of London—the vastest area of sordid poverty in Britain, if not in the world.

This was part of his preparation for his degree. Some of the lecturers were inefficient and futile. The chemistry professor was frequently pelted with peas by his class. Many of the students were wild, coarse, careless fellows. But there were a few outstanding men like the great surgeons and physicians, Sir Frederick Treves, Sir Andrew Clark, Sir Morel Mackenzie, and Dr. Sutton. So Grenfell the medical student took his preliminary examinations and his first bachelor of medicine degree of London University.

He shone, however, even more on the river than in the examination halls. He not only rowed first as bow, and the following year as stroke in the inter-hospital boat race from Putney to Mortlake, but was secretary of his boat club and then of the United Hospitals' Club, as well as

helping to develop the inter-hospital championship. He was secretary also of the cricket and football clubs, played in the football team in the two years when London Hospital won the inter-hospital football cup, and was chosen to play in the Oxford University football team in the one term when he was up there ; as well as throwing the hammer in the United Hospitals sports.

One night in his second year at the London Hospital, Wilfred Grenfell was walking through the grey streets of Shadwell on his way back from a visit to an out-patient when he heard singing and turned aside into a tent. A man stood up to pray and was making a long dull prayer. Grenfell felt for his hat, and was just leaving when the leader on the platform stood up and interrupted the man, humorously saying, " While our brother finishes his prayer, let us sing a hymn ! " It was D. L. Moody, who in those days was known everywhere as one of the most wonderful religious speakers in the world. The humour and the firmness of the man appealed to Grenfell and he stayed on to hear more. As he listened to Moody's speech he made

up his mind that he would either throw up pretending to be a Christian at all or—as he put it—“do as Christ would in my place as a doctor.” He went a few days later to hear two famous Cambridge “blues,” J. E. and C. T. Studd. Then and there he made up his mind.

Grenfell at once started working with a group of London boys. The lively, ragged, “cheeky” East End boy found in Grenfell a hero who could swim farther and faster, bowl more swiftly and score more runs at cricket, pass more accurately and kick a goal more surely at football, and box better than any of them. One of their first projects together was learning to swim. The only place was the lake in Victoria Park, which became filthy when a large number of boys had been in stirring up the mud. So Grenfell and his boys used to meet at the gate at the hour of opening in the morning, and sometimes, he confesses, even scaled the gates and got a dip before the park keeper arrived.

In the vacations Grenfell began by spending his holidays on an old fishing smack called *The Oyster*, which he and his brother renamed

The Roysterer. They always set sail from the North Coast of Anglesey into the Irish Sea. With their fishing gear they drew their food from the ocean as they went along, putting in at little ports for bread, milk, butter and eggs.

One year, for instance, they set her bows plunging through the waters heading north-west for the Irish coast. The wind, however, blew in their very teeth, so they put about for the Isle of Man. They put a very tall undergraduate friend, who was with them on the cruise as a kind of amateur second mate, on the night watch from midnight till 4 a.m. As the tiller handle was low down near the deck the lanky youth asked if he could sit down to steer instead of stooping. This was agreed to, and when Wilfred Grenfell came on deck at 4 a.m. to take on his four hours' watch, he found his undergraduate friend sitting on the deck rubbing his eyes, not having the faintest idea as to where the ship was or where she was heading or what was her course.

"When I sat down to steer," said the second mate, "the course you gave brought a bright

star right over the topmast head, and that's what I started to steer by. It's a perfect marvel what a game these heavenly bodies play. We must be in some place like 'Alice in Wonderland.' I just shut my eyes for a second and when next I opened them the sun was exactly where I had left the star——" and he slid swiftly down the companion-way out of the reach of Grenfell's foot or arm !

At last, however, they made the port of Douglas and cruised round the island from harbour to harbour.

The next year they took a cruise through the Menai Straits and down the Irish Channel past the Welsh Coast to Milford Haven, sailing over heavy tides and dangerous rocks. Fishing and shooting for their meals, bathing and rowing, climbing Snowdon from Pwllheli Harbour, and taking the risks of the open sea made magnificent holidays. It flashed on Grenfell, however, that it was selfish to take these gorgeous holidays and leave his boys sweltering in the East End ; so the next summer he started with three tents and thirteen boys out to the Anglesey coast,

where in a ravine opening on the sea the boys—in short blue knickers and grey flannel shirts—lived the life of kings.

These were days before Boy Scouts or Brigades and, indeed, many of the things that are the best notes of these great movements were started by Grenfell's troop. No boy was allowed any breakfast until he had bathed in the sea, and sea bathing is a strange and novel custom to Bethnal Green boys. No boy was allowed in the boats till he could swim—so they learned very swiftly. At night they slept on long bags stuffed with hay. In the day time they used to put out to sea in an old lifeboat hired from the National Lifeboat Society, and drifted east on the flood tide and back west on the ebb, fishing for their supper.

The great peak of the boys' holiday was their attack on Mount Snowdon. Half the group tramped across the Island to the Menai Straits and over the suspension bridge, to the great house of a friend of Grenfell near the Welsh coast, and slept in the stables; and the other boys went by boat round the island and anchored

off the coast, the two sets joining to climb the highest mountain in Wales.

One year on the Snowdon outing, the boat division got stranded *en route* and turned up a day late, when the host (in the stables of whose mansion the party slept) gave them an extra good time to make up for their chilly night on the sands. One boy, talking to Wilfred Grenfell on the next day, said: "My! Doctor, I did have some fun kidding that waiter in the white choker. He took a liking to me, so I let him pal up. I told him my name was Lord Shaftesbury when I was at home, but I asked him not to let it out, and the old bloke promised he wouldn't."

"The waiter," as you will rightly have guessed, was the host himself in ordinary evening dress, which these East End boys had never seen save on a waiter.

This camp grew year by year till there were over a hundred boys in it, and they moved from Anglesey to the south coast of England, where they slept and played in the grounds of Lulworth Castle by permission of its owners.

In 1886 Wilfred Grenfell passed the last of his examinations, was made a member of the College of Physicians and of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. It was at this time that Sir Frederick Treves had a talk with Wilfred Grenfell about the wonderful fleets of deep sea fishermen who, in the narrow seas round the British Isles, unseen by most of us, live lives of adventure to feed the people who rarely think of the sailor-fishermen as they eat the fish caught for them by "those in peril on the seas."

Sir Frederick himself loved the sea and the fishermen. Every Boxing Day he used to sail a lugger himself across to Calais, and he would go cruising about among the fishing fleets to share the adventure of the life and to enjoy the talks with the bronzed, sturdy men.

"They want a doctor out among those fishermen," said Sir Frederick, knowing Wilfred Grenfell's love of the sea and of adventure. "Somebody who can give them medicine and deal with their wounds, and teach the skippers ambulance work, and give them a word about their souls, too, to help them along."

Wilfred Grenfell leapt at the chance of being a sea-doctor to fishermen such as he had known since he was born. He, therefore, arranged to go out the following January. One day in the New Year he caught the Yarmouth train at Liverpool Street Station. It was a stormy night when his train ran into Yarmouth Station. He found on the platform a thick-set oilskin-covered fisherman who drove with Grenfell to the harbour. Standing on the edge of the harbour looking into the noisy darkness where the gale howled through the rigging and the water lapped the hulls of the boats swinging on the tide, Grenfell said : " Where is the ship ? " looking out for the masts of some good-sized clipper against the grey sky.

" Those are her topmasts," the fisherman replied, pointing below to sticks.

Grenfell looked down and dimly saw a small craft. This was a shock, but in a minute or two he had gone over the edge and was sliding down the rigging, which had, he discovered too late, just been carefully greased and covered with tar. The next day he was out in the shrill, biting January winds on the North Sea.

CHAPTER III

ON THE NARROW SEAS

WILFRED GRENFELL woke to find himself on a spotless craft.

She was small and trim but plucky in dirty weather. The skipper told him that they were bound for Ostend to ship four tons of tobacco, which had been sent through from England in bond to Belgium, where no duty had to be paid. The little ship's fishing nets and beams had already been sent out in advance to the fishing grounds on a friendly trawler.

In the harbour at Ostend the cold was so intense that Grenfell was able to go skating up the canals. When the little cargo was aboard and the time came to put to sea, they could only get out of the harbour after a kindly steamer had churned round them butting into and smashing the ice as she went. This set them free and soon the little ship was sailing

into the grey wastes. For two unbroken months Grenfell cruised the North Seas. During those days their deck was never clear of ice and snow, and they never saw land, except glimpses of Heligoland and Terschelling.

It astounded Grenfell to discover that, taking all the fleets that they visited into account, fully twenty thousand men and boys were out on the North Sea—a sturdy, courageous, cheerful body of fellows of infinite resource and unconscious daring. To Grenfell they brought back the brave spirit of Drake and Raleigh, and his own ancestor, Sir Richard Grenville, who had run the little *Revenge* into the jaws of death. They knew every inch of those seas with such astonishing thoroughness that they actually determined their latitude and longitude, not by chronometer or sextant so much as by depth of the water and the kind of sand or slime that came up with the lead, which was always heavily greased for that purpose.

They could easily get such soundings, for the North Sea is shallow. Indeed, it once was land, and a great river ran down the centre and out

through the English Channel; a river one of whose tributaries was the Rhine and others, the Thames and the Humber. Because the North Sea is shallow, it is also very rough, and its seas are easily whipped into a great rage by a gale. So Wilfred Grenfell's life was no easy, sunny trip.

There were several fishing fleets, each with its admiral and vice-admiral, the admiral giving his orders as to fishing by flags and rockets. For a long month the little boat of the Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen, which was the boat on which Grenfell was serving, sailed round among all the fleets. The words, "Heal the sick," were carved on the starboard bow, and "Preach the Word" on the port. As they touched each fleet they sold their tobacco to the men (this was to cut out the "copers" who came with vile cheap spirits to the ruination of the fishermen), and Grenfell gave medicines or did a surgical operation where the call came.

Grenfell revelled in it all, and especially the sight at night of the fleet of, say, 100 sails, with the lights leaping, the boats rolling in rough seas, the rockets and flares going up as signals, and

the sound across the waves of the songs of the men as they waited for the time to haul the trawl. There was also the thrill of carrying the fish from the trawler by boat through heavy seas, and getting the cargo by hook or crook aboard the cutter that took it to land. The tossing boat was again and again knocked to pieces and the men hurled into the water, as they made alongside the cargo-boat. Sometimes, too, they would have the curious excitement of discovering in the net the tusks of mammoths and even crockery of the days of Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada, trawled from the deeps of the ocean.

After that time on the sea even Grenfell was ready to take a holiday on land. One part of his summer holidays in those years was as Medical Officer in the new camps for public schoolboys—camps in an open field, generally by the sea—where, on their arrival at the camping-field, as one of the camp's own alliterative poets put it,

“Ten taut and tapering tents of white
The train-tired travellers see.”

In the next year the range of Grenfell's voy-

aging in the Deep-Sea Mission boat was extended to the thousands of Scotch, Manx, Irish and French fishermen who work off the south and west coast of Ireland. Here he sailed among the vessels that came careering up from the harbours of Devon and Cornwall, or swinging down from the North Irish harbours, and some even trailing up from the shores of Brittany itself, to chase the enormous shoals of herring. Each ship trawled as much as two and some even five miles of net.

Grenfell and those working with him sailed in and out along the wild coast, answering a summons first here and then there for medical help.

One day a call came from the Fastnet Lighthouse. Grenfell set out from the ship in a small boat. They rowed toward the rock on which the Atlantic rollers were breaking and where the lighthouse stands. There was a strong sea running and a white line of crashing surf. It was impossible to land, so he caught hold of the buoy that was anchored there while the lighthouse men let down a cable from a

crane at the top of the lighthouse. Rowing from the buoy toward the surf he caught hold of the line, and swung himself into a noose ; the lighthouse men began to work the crane, and Grenfell, hanging in the noose above the boiling surf of the boundless Atlantic like a minnow on a gigantic fishing line, was hoisted up a hundred and fifty feet. Then the crane swung him round into an opening in the side of the lighthouse.

Once inside the lighthouse he unslung his case of medicines and instruments, and used his medical skill on the injured man, and then, putting his shoulders again into the noose, swung out above the tumbling Atlantic, and was let down and down, foot by foot, towards the surface of the sea, where the tossing boat pulled in towards him again. At the right second the lighthouse men let the cable run and Grenfell dropped into the boat.

His boyish zest for adventure and for birds' nesting drew Grenfell one day out to the Skerry Islands. They rowed nine miles in an Irish boat till faced by the rocks and the cliffs, and the crash and boom of the breakers. This time

there was not even a friendly crane and cable. Stripping off their clothes, he and his friends threw themselves into the sea, swam through the surf and climbed up the rock, one of them carrying a line. Once established precariously on the glistening rock, they drew up the little clothing that they needed from the boat and then collected eggs from the bewildering multitude of nests. Some of the rarer gulls, however, whose eggs he was specially interested in, had their nests right in the very face of the cliff, so Grenfell slung over the edge of the cliff and took the eggs up with the back of his foot, from which they were taken by a friend; a gymnastic feat more difficult to perform than it is even to describe clearly.

Many adventures came in those days, especially on a long voyage that Grenfell took round the whole of Ireland in a sixty-ton trawler. The idea of the voyage was to discover what were the best fishing grounds all round and to stimulate the Irish people, many of whom were starving, to fish in them for a living.

One day, for instance, having netted a great

catch of fish, he and one of the crew sailed along the little estuary to try to find a market in a little town called Bell Mullet. They were successful. Going back, however, in the evening, the boat having now no cargo or ballast, a sudden gale smote the heavy lugsail and the craft immediately capsized. Grenfell and his companions were thrown into the water ; but it was shallow and they managed to push the boat along on the mud and get it near to the shore. Through that mud and across a bog they ploughed till they found a little cabin, in whose one room there lived the family, a cow munching in one corner, a donkey tied to the bed and looking down, Grenfell said, placidly and patiently into the face of the baby, two pigs under the bed and chickens running about the floor in the warmth of the peat fire. In the morning they got back to the shore and sailed on past the Giant's Causeway and Rathlin Island, round to the Isle of Man, across to the West of Scotland, over to the Western Hebrides, and round by Stornoway and the Isle of Lewis, where the nets had had such enormous catches that some of them had

actually sunk with their good fish. And so back to London.

Suddenly on that visit to London the wider oceans opened to Wilfred Grenfell's eyes. For word had come from the still wilder waters of the North-West Atlantic, where the fishermen brave icebergs, floes and fogs off the Canadian coasts of Labrador, asking this question: Would Grenfell be ready to sail across the Atlantic in a little vessel to measure up the need of the men for such services as he could give them as a Christian doctor? His adventurous spirit leapt towards the prospect, and within a few weeks he was planning the re-shaping of a ketch-rigged boat like a yawl, and was all agog for the new adventure.

CHAPTER IV

HIGH SEAS AND ICEBERGS

THE days were moving on to high midsummer in England in the early summer of 1892, when Wilfred Grenfell—working with a stern and sturdy new skipper from Cornwall having a name that itself smacks of “Westward Ho” and the high seas, Trevize, and the mate with whom he had sailed the North Seas—was putting the last sailor-like touches to the little vessel before setting out into the Atlantic Ocean.

They made her timbers stouter to take the grinding and the grip of the ice by a sheathing of greenheart at water level round the bows. They also altered her sailing-gear to fit her to cope with the high seas of Atlantic storms. Not only so—they made a small floating hospital of her by fitting her with nursing bunks, operating table, and dispensary, and replacing the old wooden hatches with new iron ones large enough

to admit of carrying patients below from the deck.

It was within a week of Midsummer Day when the tug-boat took the *Albert* out and cast her off amid the cheers of friends. So she stood into the ocean under her own sail. Wilfred Grenfell had started on the new great trail that was to be his for the long years to come. They were bound westward for the fishing fleets of the North Atlantic off the coasts of Newfoundland and Canada.

The *Albert* was of the same small tonnage as was the *Matthew* in which nearly four centuries earlier the dauntless Cabot had set out on the same trail and had at last discovered the country that they called—naturally—Newfoundland.¹

As had happened before to Grenfell in the Irish Sea, the wind blew in his teeth and high seas rolled. They, therefore, swung northward into Crookhaven Harbour, where some of their old friends worked and where they met sailor-

¹ John Cabot sighted the island of Newfoundland in 1497—probably Cape Bonavista. Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583 took possession in the name of Queen Elizabeth. Wilfred Grenfell reached Newfoundland and Labrador in 1892.

patients whom Grenfell had handled. These were all agog with excitement at the fresh adventure on which Grenfell was launching, and they loaded the crew with fresh eggs and vegetables and good wishes as the ship got ready to put out again to sea.

Tacking to and fro against contrary winds they made slow progress. The sea grew colder ; so they knew that they were in the ocean current from the iceberg coasts. Dense fog dropped about them like a blanket, blotting out everything. For three days they sailed on blindly, wrapped in the cold fog of a frigid midsummer. On the twelfth day suddenly they saw looming over them that terrifying sight of the Northern Seas—an iceberg bearing down on the little ship through the fog. In a minute the little barque would have been crashed to splinters by the iceberg as a hammer smashes a nut. The screw-wheel spun round like a top in the hands of the steersman ; she swung round, and escaping the berg by a hair's breadth, they sailed on through the fog.

The cause of these fogs is the curious fact

that the cold Arctic stream in the Atlantic Ocean flowing toward the south and the warm Gulf Stream coming north-east from the Gulf of Mexico toward England meet here. The cold of the one meeting the moisture of the other makes the fog. It is this cold Arctic stream that has the icebergs in it, and the warmer stream from the south loosens them from the mass of ice and swings them into the path of liners like the *Titanic*. It is the Gulf Stream, too, that melts the iceberg under water so that at last it is topheavy and suddenly turns like a mountain doing a somersault.

As swiftly as it had come, the fog vanished. It was Grenfell's seventeenth day out from England. Right ahead of the *Albert* lay a rocky coast; and on its crest the vivid green of trees.

Into the ocean a cape jutted and on its bluff nose a lighthouse stood. It was the light north of St. John's Harbour on the Newfoundland coast. Skipper Trevize had done a fine feat of seamanship by sailing through many days of fog against head winds on the Atlantic to within

a mile or so of the very spot at which the ship had planned to make its first call. It was one of those achievements in which sound scientific seamanship is blended with that curious instinct of the old sea-bred West country mariners, the instinct that makes the old sea-dog seem to follow a scent that is incomprehensible to the ordinary landlubber.

The pilot tug came out from between the headlands that hid the town itself. For St. John's Harbour is like a round gourd with a small neck-like entrance. Grenfell was astounded to see over the headlands thick, heavy masses of smoke rising from the hidden town beyond. As the tug took them in tow and they came between the headlands the breeze from the land was hot. As the *Albert* swung round between the headlands, they saw to their horror that the whole city was aflame from end to end, and so fierce was the raging fire that the flames, carried to the harbour by the breeze, had fired some of the ships. The Cathedral that stood on the hill side was a smoking ruin, and the walls and chimneys of the houses stood in stark, black

outline above the flaming floors. The roads that spread into the country were—as Grenfell could see through his glasses—covered with fleeing refugees.

When Grenfell went ashore he naturally expected to find the people in the depths of despair and so absorbed in their own agony and loss that they could give no attention to his ventures. But although their stores were burned and they had to begin again to rebuild their shattered city, they turned to Grenfell and his crew and showed the liveliest keenness on the scheme of the Deep-Sea Mission for sending the help of a doctor to the lonely fishermen of these stormy coasts.

The Governor of the city, the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, and the very porters of the harbour lavished kindness and encouragement upon him. Their friends in Newfoundland, directly they realised what Grenfell was out to do, advised him to sail northward, still along the coasts of Labrador, until he came to the great fleet of over one hundred fishing schooners which, with many thousands of fishermen aboard,

accompanied by their wives and children, had gone for the summer fishing.

The cod is to most people simply a fish that they occasionally eat. To boys and girls it is also thought of as the fish from which comes that nauseous medicine, cod-liver-oil. But out of the quarter of a million people who live on the rocky, wind-swept, stormy coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador two hundred thousand have their very livelihood dependent on the powerful, flashing, swift fish—the cod that from April till October live off those shores. Where they go in October nobody yet knows. The millions and millions of fish simply disappear for five full months. Then they come back again. They have disappeared and reappeared with the regularity of a clock for at least the last four hundred years. In addition to the cod, the people fish for the bait fishes—the spring herring, the caplin (a small fish about the size of a smelt)—the squid and whelk—without which the cod-fishing could not be carried on.

So with a Government pilot on board Grenfell started out on another four hundred miles of

sailing, keeping well out into the ocean. Within the first week of August Grenfell was thrilled with the sight of the Labrador coast which has been the scene since then of most of his life-work and innumerable adventures.

The scene itself was amazingly thrilling. In an ocean of brilliant blue, dazzling icebergs, shaped like castles and spires, rocked and clashed, the sun blazing on them and the ice throwing off flashing radiance. Whales in abundance rolled and splashed, slapping the sea into foam with their enormous tails, hurling themselves clean out of the water into the sunlight and then plunging back into the depths. Dense shoals of smaller fish broke the surface of the water with silver, and gulls and other sea birds screamed and flew overhead, dashing down every now and then to seize a fish and take it off to their nests, which hung in scores of thousands along the ledges of the red cliffs. Beyond the cliffs rose hills covered by woods and behind them the land lifted itself to the peaks. The land was white at its summit, where the snow lay, and white at its foundations, where the league-long rollers

of the Atlantic broke in tremendous spray, crashing into the caves and against the enormous buff faces of rock.

Labrador is a wonderful peninsula of the American continent which Cabot discovered in the same year that he sighted Newfoundland.¹ Lying there between Newfoundland and Canada, it juts into the Atlantic from America just as Alaska—which balances it on the other side of the Continent—juts out into the Pacific Ocean. The value of Labrador—its forests, its fisheries, and its minerals—has never yet been fully understood. Cabot did not give Labrador its name. That came from the ingenious explorer, Corte Real, who in 1501—four years after Cabot—called it Terra Labrador (which means “cultivable land”) to distinguish it from Terra Verde (or Greenland) with which name he had christened

¹ Newfoundland-Labrador governmentally is that part of the Labrador peninsula lying between Blanc Sablon and Cape Chidley and Eastward of the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ungava. The area of the dependency of Labrador is 120,000 square miles, with 650 miles of coast-line. The area of the peninsula of Labrador as a whole is, however, 511,000 square miles. All of Labrador outside the Newfoundland area is governed from Quebec.

its great northern neighbour. Labrador became British on the conquest of Canada in 1759; it was included in the colony of Newfoundland in 1876. Bitterly cold in winter, Labrador has a short and lovely time when the snow and sea-ice melt—the time from the middle of June till early in October. It was at this time—when the fishing is in full swing—that Wilfred Grenfell first arrived. It shows how different the life of Labrador is in winter and summer to recall that only four thousand people live on the Labrador all the year round (liveyeres, they are called, of whom about seventeen hundred are Eskimo), while in summer there are about twenty-five thousand people on her coasts.

The Newfoundland pilot on the bridge with Dr. Grenfell pointed with his hand to a wide opening.

“There’s Domino Run,” he said.

So they ran in through a deep channel between the islands and the cliffs—a channel where all the schooners sail on their way to the fisheries with a fine and beautiful harbour opened to them. There at anchor lay schooners of the

fishing fleet. As the *Albert* sailed in, all eyes turned upon her ; then she ran up the blue flag with M.D.S.F. (the Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen) upon it. Immediately all the ships in the harbour ran up their flags to greet her, and the harbour was a-flutter with warm-hearted welcome.

As her anchor chains ran out, boats started pulling toward her, and skippers came stumping aboard to find out all about her. Their brown, bearded faces beamed with joy and gratitude when they knew that at last, for the first time in all their experience, a doctor in a hospital ship was to live among them, sailing where they sailed. So the skippers went back to their schooners full of content.

Alongside the *Albert* lay a battered, unseaworthy boat. In it a half-starved, ragged man sat, the eyes gleaming under his shaggy brows never leaving the *Albert*. At last he called out :

“ Be you a real doctor ? ”

Grenfell assured him that he hoped he was.

“ Us hasn’t got no money, but there’s a sick man ashore, if so you’d come and see him.”

So Grenfell went into the crazy, buffeted boat

and was pulled ashore by the bearded, brown fisher.

He then led the doctor up to a miserable turf-roofed hut with one small window made of bits of glass, a floor of beach pebbles, walls of dark earth, with rough bunks round the walls. There was not any furniture at all—no chair or table or cupboard—nothing but a little iron stove. Six bewildered and terrified children shivered in a corner of the room.

The sound of a racking, tearing coughing drew Grenfell's eyes to the dark shadow of the lowest bunk. There lay a fever-smitten man dying of pneumonia. What could be done?

He never could be cured in that sty; nor could his wife nurse him properly and at the same time fend for the six children. Their only income was from fishing—and the fish were even now going by. His sole and bare chance of life would be in a hospital. But there was no hospital on all those coasts.

Dr. Grenfell did what he could to ease the man and comfort the wife; and then sailed north on his exploring voyage.

Nine hundred patients were named in the doctor's log-book on that first trip. He could not shake off the memory of their faces. There was the boy whose lower jaw had grown dead bone until his whole face was lopsided, just because there had never been any doctor or dentist within hundreds of miles. He was haunted by the memory of the man whose hands and fore-arms had been blown off by an exploding gun and who had died because there was no doctor or hospital within reach. Nor could he forget the father of the family who for years had been kept from doing his full work as breadwinner by the agony of an ingrowing nail on his foot—which a few minutes of the doctor's skill put right for always. These and hundreds of other cases had thrown grappling hooks upon the doctor's imagination on that first wonder-voyage into the north.

A wonder-voyage it truly was. Dr. Grenfell had faced and revelled in the ordinary beauties and grandeurs of sea and coast around Great Britain and Ireland. But out there on the wild shores of the Labrador the lure of the

unknown and the call of adventure, the majesty of the towering cliff and the thrill of the sea-birds' call broke in on him here as it had never done before. Grey, beetling cliffs towered two thousand feet up, and between these mountain precipices wound gleaming fjords like the heaven-dreams of the Vikings themselves. Islands in hundreds spattered the sea like fistfuls of jewels flung on a blue-grey carpet. And neither the fjords nor the islands had ever been charted on any map ! Strange birds screamed and whirled ; fish flashed not only in the sea, but up the river valleys where trout and salmon leapt. The great silky brown seals swirled and dived in the power of their tireless strength,

There was upon Grenfell the sting and call of the sea that has been in him and his race through all the years, the call of the bold wander-spirit that will not be denied and has driven men of the north-lands, and especially of Britain, for many centuries, out into the unknown sea adventure. He felt what the unknown singer, " The Seafarer," sang to chieftains in Saxon halls under the flare of torches in the earliest dawn of England

eleven centuries earlier than he himself had sailed.¹

“ So now the thoughts of my heart urge that I myself should try the high streams, the ploy of salt waves. The desire of my mind, every moment, spurs on my soul to go, that I far hence may seek a stranger land. For there is no man so high-hearted over earth, nor so good in gifts, nor so keen in youth, nor so brave in deeds, nor so loyal to his lord, that he may not have always sad yearning towards the sea-faring for what the Lord will give him there. His heart is not for the harp, nor of receiving of rings, nor delight of a wife, nor the joy of the world, nor about aught else, but the rolling of the waves. And he ever hath longing who wisheth for the sea.”

Then one morning in the sharp, crisp sunshine Dr. Grenfell, looking overboard, saw along the water-line as it were a girdle of diamonds—crystals of ice that had formed in the night. It was the first dainty warning of the coming of the winter that would soon lock land and sea

¹ From the Caedmon poet-sequence.

in one tremendous iron-hand prison of undesirable cold—when the river-valleys, the rocks, the sea itself would be frozen and blizzards that would freeze to the bone would harry the tortured traveller.

It was time to turn southward and homeward. But the voyage had set going in the mind of Dr. Grenfell projects that burned in him like a fire. He called in at the place where the man in the hovel had been coughing his life out and found a grave—and the widow with her starving children. The breadwinner had gone from them, and they had to face the cruel blizzards and the ice of a Labrador winter at Domino Run without hope or help.

If—the thought burned itself into Grenfell's spirit—if only there had been a hospital the man need not have died.

With that thought and his wonderful experiences in his mind he sailed southward in the *Albert* down the coast of Newfoundland to St. John's Harbour.

Other schemes, however, had run on ahead of the *Albert*. When, in November, Grenfell's

yawl slipped in between the heads and ran up her blue flag in St. John's Harbour, therefore, he found that the story of the good work done by the *Albert* and her doctor had already reached the people. His Excellency, the Governor of the Colony, called a meeting at Government House, and the meeting was enthusiastic in favour of work Dr. Grenfell had begun in his ship under the Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen, and promising the "co-operation of all classes of this community." Then one of the greatest merchants in the Colony rose to speak, and the meeting was startled (with which Dr. Grenfell was delighted) to hear him say that he would present a building at Battle Harbour (near the Straits of Belle Isle that run between Newfoundland and Labrador).

Here was, indeed, a splendid start. A building presented : the whole Colony of Newfoundland pledged to back up the work with its support.

As Captain Trevize strode the deck of the *Albert* with Dr. Grenfell, when they put out from St. John's Harbour that November for England, they were indeed proud and happy men. So

were the committee men of the Deep-Sea Fishermen's Mission. The Doctor and the Captain went about among the people in Britain speaking at meetings and raising help for new supplies and equipment for the hospital.

Then news came through from Newfoundland that another firm of merchants—the shippers, Job Brothers, with a fisheries station at Indian Harbour,¹ north of Hamilton Inlet, up the Labrador Coast (two hundred miles north of the other new hospital at Battle Harbour¹)—had presented a second hospital.

As these two centres were regular anchoring places for the fishing fleets as they went up and down the coast, they seemed ideal spots for the little hospitals.

Three things were needed: the equipment, more medical help, and a small steamboat in which to run up and down to the settlements on the harbours that run every few miles into that scoured and storm-torn coast.

One day when Dr. Grenfell was at his own old home at Parkgate, he found on the River Dee

¹ See Map.

up at Chester a tough little steam-launch that was for sale—forty-five feet long. He thought that it would be suitable. One can believe that he was almost too swift in his judgment that time. For she was only eight feet in beam. In any case the boat was bought and given to the mission by a friend and re-christened the *Princess May*.

The new helpers were found in Doctor Arthur Bobardt, Dr. Elliott Curwen, and two trained nurses, Miss Cecilia Williams and Miss Ada Cawardine; this gave a doctor and a nurse to each new hospital, with Dr. Grenfell free to travel.

They all sailed out once more “Westward Ho,” on the *Albert*.

Dr. Grenfell, who is incessantly active wherever he is, played cricket on board with whatever colleague would join him. The “boundaries” of the deck of a little ship like the *Albert* are rather narrow for cricket, and “lost balls” cannot easily be found and brought back when they go overboard into the Atlantic Ocean.

At length they were playing with the last ball. Overboard it went.

“Tack back and pick me up,” shouted Grenfell to the helmsman as he dashed to the side and took a header in all his clothes into the Atlantic Ocean.

It was surely the strangest piece of fielding ever done in the history of cricket. The amazed man at the wheel rather lost his head and steered wrongly. Dr. Grenfell was in almost freezing water and a great way from his ship, which was now on a tack away from him. He trod water and kept himself up, while the ship put about again and at last picked him up with the ball in his pocket.

He changed his clothes and went on with the game. It was some time after that we find in the Mostyn House School Magazine, the “Griffin,” a letter from Grenfell in which he thanks one of the masters for the idea of boring a hole through a cricket ball and attaching long thin whipcord through the hole, for the purposes of deck-cricket.

“Tell Mr. Price,” writes the Doctor,¹ “his idea of boring a hole through a cricket ball and attaching it by a string proved A1 for ship

¹ June 26, 1893, in the “Griffin.”

cricket. A break from the ' off ' or ' leg ' was equally easy when the boat rolled. Fielding was delightfully simple, there being no running after the ball—for we counted a slog into the sea three and on deck one. It gave us no end of fun and exercise."

CHAPTER V

ADVENTURES IN A LAUNCH

ONE day before Dr. Grenfell sailed on that second journey from England, he had steered the little steam-launch *Princess May*¹ through the canal to the Mersey. There the *Corean*, a big ship of the Allan line, swung round a crane, and let it down and slung up the *Princess May* on to her deck as though she were a schoolboy's cricket-bag. The liner was going to drop the launch at St. John's, Newfoundland. This she did. The liner, however, lost the *Princess May*'s funnel in the baggage hold. This was enough to make even a fussy steam-launch feel insignificant!

The small hospital at Battle Harbour¹, with eight beds for men and eight for women, was half finished by the time they got to Newfoundland. Dr. Bobardt sailed up there and soon had

¹ See Chapter IV.

his first patients being cured in the little hospital. But the Indian Harbour hospital could not be built so quickly and would not be ready for another year. So Dr. Curwen was free, and therefore took charge of the *Albert* hospital ship and carried the patients from the fishing schooners to the settlements on shore.

Dr. Grenfell was out to test his little steam-launch and to run in and out of the harbours up the coast. There were two reasons for this. If he was to do work in all weathers on that coast it was necessary that he should learn every creek and headland, and how the currents set and the tides run. He must also know the people, and there is, of course, no better way than running in and out of the harbours up the coast.

The *Princess May* had now got a new funnel. In the summer of that year (1893) Dr. Grenfell on July 7, put to sea in the steam-launch with a cook and an engineer. As she was a narrow boat and neither of the three men on board knew that coast as navigators it was a dangerous enterprise.

The old salts on the harbour edge at St. John's, as the *Princess May* puffed jauntily

out between the St. John's headlands, wagged their heads sagely and sadly.

"She will never pull through," they said, "Two bits of ice will crack her like a nut between nut-crackers."

There is more fog on that coast in July than any later month in the year, and it will last for ten days at a time. Icebergs float down in the fog; one iceberg could easily thrust the *Princess May* under her heel, like an elephant stamping on a field-mouse. The winds would be rising and she would be sunk like a walnut shell in a lake. The strong squalls of August would be getting up; and the heavy swell that runs with the easterly winds and the north-east "flurries" would swamp her.

So the sage fishermen and seal-hunters predicted.

No man even to-day and with the finest boat can sail the Newfoundland and Labrador coast till he knows the landmarks and headlands—such as the red and white striped square lighthouse on Cape Bonavista—with the need to give the Gooseberry Islands a wide berth of

some three miles because of the shelving rock shoals near the water-surface; the Bacalhas Island light, with its iron tower painted in red and white spirals like a barber's pole; and a hundred other places. But in those days even these lighthouses were not yet placed on that tortured, wind-swept, tempest-scoured, ice-ground rocky coast.

Nor, if you could have read Dr. Grenfell's own heart, would you have found him completely at ease. But misgiving turned to consternation when—after only five miles running—he found that the launch was filling with water.

“She's sprung a leak, sir,” cried the engineer. “Had we better put back?”

Dr. Grenfell in his mind's eye could see the sage old sailor-men twinkling with satisfaction and laughing up their sleeves if he put back with his craft. He could imagine their grim satisfaction at the fulfilment of their lugubrious forecasts.

“No,” he replied, “we'll stand on.”

He went down on his knees and examined the hull: he found a little opening in the bottom,

whittled some wood into a shaped plug, drove it into the hole and to his joy found that she was soon taut and dry.

A fog then settled down on her like a prodigious blanket. Dr. Grenfell shaped his course—as he thought—right out to sea. With horrifying suddenness an immense rock-cliff reared itself right over him out of the sea. The white surf of the waves was almost under their bow ; and the breakers were crashing on rocks that would make match wood of the *Princess May* in five minutes.

Grenfell yelled to the engineer to reverse engines—he swung the tiller and peered for rocks. An error of a yard would have ended Grenfell's career for ever. By a miraculous blend of skill, nerve and good luck, she was brought out into the open sea again.

How had this shocking blunder in direction been made ? Grenfell overhauled the compass. He found that the man who had screwed the compass down into position had used iron screws. The iron of the screws pulled the magnet in the compass sufficiently to deflect it from the true

north and cause the mistake in direction that nearly ended his life.

This defect was put right. But now a great swell was sweeping over the ocean so strongly that the launch rolled dizzily ; and the compass needle swung wildly to and fro, to and fro, with the rolling. The only thing to do was to take the extremes of oscillation and reckon that the point half way between was where the compass meant to point when it really had any chance of doing so. With this as their guiding principle and the fog still all about them, they set the *Princess May's* engines spinning and she ran northward through the fog.

It would, however, have been madness to try to run through the night in the fog in that tiny launch. Not only so. She ran her engines on wood-fire, and the fire-box being small it was impossible to carry fuel for a long trip. Indeed, the wood-cutting labour was a serious drawback.

“ It made a permanent impression on my biceps,” wrote Dr. Grenfell later.

So Grenfell changed her course to the westward to try to find a channel into the coast. Feeling

their way through the fog in this way they were horror-struck to discover themselves in seething white foam, the surf roaring round the hull, rock-pinnacles all about them and cruel reefs rearing their spines on either side. The fog made it impossible to see more than fifty feet, yet it was vital to keep enough sea way on her to make her answer her helm.

With infinite coolness and caution, Wilfred Grenfell zig-zagged a careful course between these Scylla and Charybdis perils of the rocky islets and the whirling surf. At last he had her again safely headed out to sea.

The twilight now began to close about them ; but they went on and again tried a way through the fog to the coast, listening intently for the sound of breakers. At length—just before dark—they swung safely round a small headland into a tiny harbour away from the rip of the surf.

So the *Princess May* held on day after day for a week, making her way into inlet after inlet of the coast of Newfoundland till, on the seventh day out, she swung with rather perky satisfaction across the Straits of Belle Isle from Newfound-

land to Labrador and puffed into Battle Harbour, where she dropped her miniature anchor alongside the *Albert*.

When the Doctor went ashore he found the new hospital nearly finished and his colleagues at work. After inspection and talking over matters with Dr. Curwen and Dr. Bobardt, he set out again down the coast back to St. John's. Again he called in at creeks and harbours and looked in on the folk in their lonely cabins on the little harbour beaches. There was great joy in these little huts when the doctor's launch puffed into their bays. For the settlers live very lonely lives, fishing in the summer for cod and, where there are rivers, for trout and salmon, and in the winter hunting for furs. The fish they salt, and barter them, with the furs, for food like pork and flour when the traders come round.

The harvest of Newfoundland and Labrador is not grain or fruit, and it has no farms stocked with cattle and sheep, for the biting cold of the Arctic tempests and the long dark winter make the lands barren for the agriculturalist. In the

inland of Labrador is a vast, broken, barren plateau, and on the fringes are forests where spruce trees shake out their scent in the short summer. But only a few Red Indians hunt the wild beasts there, and no other men live inland. All these Indians belong to the famous Algonquin tribes. The Mountaineer (Montaignois) Indians hunt in the southern forests and the wild Nascaupees in the North, while the Crees hold sway in the West. But in those vast solitudes you may roam for a week and never see the smoke of an encampment.

The seals and the walrus are the "stock" of Labrador; and the cod and herring are "the silver harvest of the sea," and it is for this harvest that the fishermen in the summer "plough the deep" with the keels of their tough, seasoned schooners.

It is, however—more than all the rest put together—the cod and the seal that make the wealth of those lands of Labrador and Newfoundland. We have already seen how the cod come and go to and from the Labrador and Newfoundland Coast with unfailing regularity every year

for century after century. Even more astonishing and fascinating is the migration of the seals when their whelps are to be born.¹

It was to these seal-hunting, cod-fishing, hardy, frost-bitten, friendly peoples—of mixed English, Scottish, Irish, Canadian, and French origin, with some Eskimo—that Wilfred Grenfell had decided to give his life. He very quickly found on that voyage both up and down the coast in the *Princess May* how much they needed and welcomed him.

He found in every settlement and on every schooner folk who wanted his help. He sent on patients to the hospital and quickly it was crowded. You could go to-day into every harbour and find people whose lives have been saved and others whose lives have been altered from misery to happiness by Dr. Grenfell and his hospitals.

On that one journey there were many cases. Here we can give only one. A fourteen year old girl had been suffering from internal abscesses for year after year. Her life was wretched, they

¹ See Chapter VII.

were slowly killing her. Dr. Grenfell had her taken up to the Battle Harbour Hospital. After an operation and treatment she was absolutely cured, and went away a happy, healthy girl, who is there to-day, but now (for this was in 1892) a strong woman with healthy grown-up children and little grandchildren.

During that summer Dr. Grenfell ran northward up the coast of Labrador toward the Arctic. He wanted to know the coast; but he also desired to see the places where the Moravian missionaries for over a century and a third have looked after the Eskimo who hunt seal and fish on those coasts.

There are two kinds of Eskimo on the Labrador. If you sail up and round the north you discover the Eskimo who live in winter in the round roofed houses made of snow-bricks called iglooweuks, while in summer they take to skin tents, called tupeks. Indoors they burn lamps made of a hollowed piece of stone shaped like a half-cheese, with seal-oil burning in a wick of moss or rag. These Northern Eskimo are very much like the Eskimo in their neighbouring country of Green-

land. If you come round the corner from the north to the east coast¹ you find the more civilized Eskimo who live in cabins like the white settlers. Their cabins are built on the shores of the many bays that indent the coast, where they always hear the boom of the breakers. The boy, by the time he can walk, can also sail and knows the ways of the herring and the cod, the walrus and the seal.

It was into cabins like these that Dr. Grenfell came that summer,—guided by Mr. Christopher Schmidt of the Moravian Mission. As he came up to the cabin he would open the door of the lean-to porch. Inside it he would find stove-wood piled up to serve through the winter, where it could be got from within without going out or opening the outer door to let in the snow drift or the biting wind. On one side the dog-harness and snow shoes and *komatik* were hung.

Shutting the outer door of the porch behind him, he now opened the inner door of the porch into the cabin itself. In the centre stood an iron stove built for burning wood. Close by was

¹ See map.

a sturdy firwood table made by the Eskimo. There are no chairs. Strong chests in which furs and thick clothes are kept are used as seats. In a cupboard is the simple supply of crockery. There is a clock and a Bible. Under the teaching of the Moravian missionaries through the century, almost all the people are nominally Christian and many of them real Christians, for the sense of the awe and grandeur of the sea and the perils that loom over life from the sea and from the cold gives them that strong feeling of the power of the Eternal that is sung by the Manx fishermen :

Thou, Lord, dost rule the raging of the sea,
When loud the storm and furious is the gale :
Strong is thine arm ; our little barques are frail :
Send us Thy help ; remember Galilee.

An Eskimo hut he found generally was very dirty, and in many, to his great pain, were boys and girls and grown up people suffering dreadfully from tuberculosis. Yet they were a wonderfully happy, contented, cheerful, laughing people, who loved a joke.

One day Dr. Grenfell was in the gardens at the

settlement called Nain. The breeze from the Arctic made it chilly, so he tells us "a troop of Eskimo women came out to cover up the potatoes. Every row of potatoes is covered with arched sticks and long strips of canvas along them. A huge roll of sacking is kept near each row and the whole is drawn over and the potatoes are tucked in bed for the night. I could not resist the temptation to lift the bedclothes and shake hands and say good-night to one of the nearest plants, whereat the merry little people went off into convulsions of laughter."

He found, too, that they love music and part singing and have brass bands and enjoy Christmas and Easter carols. He took records on a gramophone and their excitement knew no bounds when they heard their own voices coming again from the little machine.

On both the northern and north-eastern shores of the Labrador the Eskimo whom he met on that early voyage always hail with delight the appearance of the masts and funnel of Dr. Grenfell's ship. For they have practically no other man coming to them with power to cure

them. The very first Eskimo that he met was even before the *Princess May* voyage. Dr. Grenfell tells the story in a letter to the boys of his old school, Mostyn House School, in their magazine, "The Griffin."

"It was," he says, "a still moonlight night and the *Albert* lay at anchor in one of the numberless creeks on the Northern Labrador, when we first fell in with the Eskimo. I was below decks, when the silence was suddenly broken by a number of tenor voices singing a familiar tune on deck—it was as familiar as that of a hymn beginning :

"There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we shall see it afar."

"Mounting the gangway I found the decks crowded by a number of the quaintest little figures. Dressed in skins and snow-white jumpers, topped by long pointed curls standing high up over their heads, and with gleaming black eyes, some sat cross-legged on the bulwarks or hatches, while others were gliding noiselessly about in their sealskin boots. Imagination conjured up the 'Merry Lives' of childhood.

“ My first Eskimo patient was a poor man whose two arms had been shot off by an exploding saluting cannon. For a fortnight he had been lying on his back in much agony. We were searching one night for shelter in the *Princess May*, hoping to find an island we knew some Eskimo were fishing from. At last sighting some of their poor little tents, we ‘ hove to ’ and blew our whistle for one to pilot us. Soon some kayaks came off through the surf, and ran lines ashore to moor us.

“ Recognising me from last year, they dragged me off to one of their tents and set me down on a little box, the only furniture in it. The rock floor was divided into three parts, in which were thrown two or three dog-skins. This tent accommodated three families. Soon the tent was full all round of chatting, laughing Eskimo. A seal oil lamp was lit up, for the window, which was stretched seal-gut instead of glass, kept out the little remaining light. Then the patients came in one by one and knelt before me in the little bit of space left. Among others I remember was a girl with a frost-bitten

great toe, which had to have the bone taken out. She neither flinched nor cried in the least, and the onlookers were much delighted.

“Some time later from a station further north, I had just got up steam to leave, when I heard cries signalling me to wait a minute. Soon a boat full came alongside, and a young Eskimo about twenty-five years stepped on board. He carried his right arm at an angle of 45° with his side, and said it had been thus out of joint a month. We got him below and could find nothing wrong with the bones, but at last a large and deep abscess was discovered. In ten minutes the arm could be easily worked—the lad had not even winced at the knife, and as he went away, not being able to speak a word of English, he tried to look it in his jet-black eyes like a dog does. The Moravian missionary with me said, ‘He wants to tell you he cannot give you thanks, but he feels it invisible.’

“One of these Eskimo had a boy at the winter school, held by the Moravians. The boy was so bad that they asked the father to beat him. The father answered that he thought as a

Christian he ought not to do so, but to forgive him always. They never, however, dispute the Bible, and when one of the missionaries showed him what Solomon had to say on that subject, he at once adopted that wise man's views on the subject, and 'appealed to the boy's feelings' with a piece of walrus hide.

"Another day an elderly squaw came to me for 'the shivers,'—I forget the Eskimo word. The cause of this attack proved eventually to be the arrival of the little *Princess May* which, being the first steamer she had ever seen, she had taken to be a man-of-war. Now it so happened her son Rudolph had some time previous got tired of his wife, and so had just shot her. After that, however, Rudolph became a Christian, but by Moravian rules, as he had never been punished for his crime, he could not be accepted into their communion. Remorse had seized him, and now he was anxious to find some one to punish him, that his crime might be expiated. Naturally his mother was anxious lest our arrival should give him the chance he wanted."

In the same school magazine, "The Griffin," Dr. Grenfell tells the story of this interesting people for the boys at Mostyn House School.

"The earliest that is known of the Eskimo," he writes, "dates from the time of Eric the Red. A son of that hardy Norseman apparently visited the Labrador coast, and discovered these people, whom he called skroellingers, or dwarfs. From what can be learned, the Norseman cruelly slaughtered those whom he encountered because he could not understand their language. The Eskimo call themselves 'inuits,' or 'the people,' because they believe they were the last people created. They detest being called 'Eskimo,' which in their language means 'raw meat eaters,' and they regard it as a term of opprobrium. Neither do they care to be styled 'Indians,' because they have been frequently beaten in battle by the Indians who inhabit the interior of Labrador.

"These Indians are supposed to be descendants of the old Canadian Algonquins. Although they have always beaten the Eskimo in battle, fortune has turned against them lately. They

do not fish and therefore have to undergo great privations for want of food. In some of their camps this year numbers of them have been found starved to death. Others have left to go further west, where food is more plentiful.

“The Eskimo are a small-sized people, but some of them attain the height of five feet eight inches. They have flat features of an olive and not displeasing hue, jet black eyes and straight black hair. The men cut their hair straight across the forehead in a sort of ‘Piccadilly’ fringe, the remainder being allowed to grow down to the shoulders. Their dress consists of an upper garment of skin called a ‘kossack.’ This is in one piece, and is drawn up over the head in a sort of cowl. The nether limbs are encased in skin. Skin boots, which cover the leg as far as the knee, and possess very heavy soles, complete the costume.

“The Eskimo women carry their infants in the ‘cowl,’ which by the men is used as a head covering. It is suspended over their backs, and there the infant rests quite cosily. At the back the women’s garment runs almost down to

the heel in a sort of tail, giving the wearer a grotesque appearance. When viewed from the side the Eskimo dress is most ludicrous in aspect. Considerable ingenuity is shown in the manufacture of these garments. The tendons from the reindeer serve them as thread, and with the aid of needles passed through fire and bent in the requisite way, they sew the skins together. The sole of the boot is very thick. It is rendered soft and pliable for sewing by being chewed.

“A mud hut forms a summer residence for the Eskimo,” Dr. Grenfell goes on. “In the winter, by means of an old saw, they cut out frozen blocks of snow, and as these are ready they are piled up in the form of a bee-hive around the aperture thus made, space being left at the top for ventilation. Ingress and egress are obtained to these snow houses through long passages, so constructed as to barely allow a person to crawl in on the flat of his stomach. These passages, however, prevent the cold air from entering the hut. The houses are lit by means of a rudely-fashioned lamp. This consists of a piece of soapstone hollowed out, into

which seal oil or cod oil has been poured. The dried fibre of a kind of moss which abounds in that country serves as a wick.

“ When the Eskimo resort to the islands for fishing they live in tents of reindeer skin, several families often living in one tent. Further north in Greenland, where Nansen encountered these people, and further north still, where Sir Leopold McClintock wintered, they reside in skin tents all the winter. The habit of the heathen Eskimo on entering their tents for the night is to strip off their clothes and oil their bodies. Then they wear only a breech clout about the loins, both men and women.

“ The Eskimo are a merry, happy race of people, and very affectionate in their disposition. They endure pain with considerable fortitude. I have performed a number of surgical operations upon Eskimo, and when I have not given an anæsthetic the endurance shown was such that one would almost imagine it was an inanimate object and not a human being that was under the knife. They are very grateful for any service you may render them.

“ The Eskimo are very musical, and at the Moravian Mission stations they are taught to play musical instruments. Each Moravian station has a brass band, and the natives frequently gather together for the purpose of singing.

“ There are about 3,000 Eskimo in that part of Labrador which I am familiar with. They live by catching seals and whales, and eating the blubber, using the skins for the purposes of clothing themselves. They hunt in their light ‘kayaks,’ or canoes. When seated in these a piece of skin is drawn from the edge of the place wherein they sit right up under their arms, preventing any water from entering, and rendering the buoyant little craft water-tight. The method of catching the seals or whales is by harpooning them.

“ The harpoon is ingeniously made of walrus tusk, attached by a strip of hide to the end of a pole. To this is attached a buoy, made out of an inflated skin. When the harpoon is thrown the whale dashes away, but the appearance of the buoy indicates its locality. The Eskimo follows in his kayak, secures his prey and tows it ashore. When out hunting the Eskimo carry

their wives with them, either sitting or lying on the stern of the kayak, from the mainland to the adjacent islands. This is done because the kayak will only hold one person. They are very liable to be upset.

“ A native named Michael—they all have but one name—pluckily rescued a companion named Simeon whilst crossing from Okkak to the hunting islands this spring. The weather was cold and stormy, and Simeon’s kayak upset. He could not extricate himself nor handle the paddle, as he became benumbed with the cold. Michael, notwithstanding that all his energies were required to look out for himself, managed to right his companion’s boat after extreme difficulty and bring him safe to shore.

“ The Eskimo play a kind of leap-frog in the water with the boats. Swiftly propelling their kayaks, which all possess high pointed bows, the more active ride over their less skilful companions, forcing them down into the water. The only other game I have seen them play is hitting with sticks a kind of ball made out of an inflated skin.

“ Every Eskimo keeps dogs, and his wealth is measured by the number of animals he owns. He travels the greater part of the year in a *komatik*, or dog sleigh. The *komatik* is made of cross pieces of wood tied to runners, the latter being shod with whale ribs, or often with frozen mud. The driver holds no reins, but a long whip made of walrus hide, with which he could flick off the ear of a dog, it is said! The traces which control the dogs radiate from the dashboard of the sleigh, on the right and left of the long trace which is fastened to the leader. The leader is a well-trained dog, who runs at a distance of about 70 feet from the driver. He is trained to go to the right when the driver shouts ‘ouk,’ and to the left when ‘ra’ is called. The other dogs obediently follow his lead.

“ It is exceedingly difficult to convey a knowledge of the Scriptures to the Eskimo. They do not know what a fruit tree is, and they have no sheep, oxen, or horses, and they do not understand seed time and harvest, because they never sow or reap, except in a metaphorical sense. In spite of this the Moravian mission work has been

very successful. There are six stations, with three Moravians at each, on the Labrador coast."

The sea-wanderer in Dr. Grenfell found great excitement and joy in those journeys among the Eskimo from one to another of the Moravian mission-stations in the *Princess May*. The little fussy launch ran happily behind islands, between them and the shore, up lovely fjords as calm as rivers, in and out of rugged bays, across straits, past the mouths of rivers—all in quiet and calm without a wave under the protection of rocky islands, while on the land side loomed immense cliffs and mountains. On both sides rose woods of fir and larch and spruce ; and birds of many kinds—eider duck, Canadian goose, surf-scooters ; while on land Dr. Grenfell discovered fresh flowers of sub-Arctic varieties.

At last the time was due—and, indeed, overdue—for turning back on his tracks and sailing southward again. When he crossed the Straits of Belle Isle running southward, the *Princess May* was the last boat to leave the Labrador. They ran short of fuel ; so there was nothing for it

but to smash up her cabin top and burn it in order to reach the opposite shore. There he stopped to repair and refit the boat, and delayed so long that the authorities at St. John's were in intense anxiety. So they sent the mail steamer northward specially to find him. When the mail steamer reached him and Grenfell went aboard he received one of the surprises of his life. The skipper, who had been thoroughly distressed and was overjoyed at finding the doctor, gave him a tremendous and bear-like hug, crying,

“Thank God ! We all thought you were gone. A schooner picked up your flag-pole at sea.”

CHAPTER VI

THE "SIR DONALD" AND THE JOLLY BOAT

FROM dancing in and out of bays on the rolling *Princess May* to riding right over the Rocky Mountains of Canada on a railway engine with the driver is a far cry. It all belongs to the same story, however.

For Dr. Grenfell could now see that he must get a wider and fuller support for the hospitals up and down the Newfoundland and Labrador coasts and for the ship than could easily be secured from Britain. So he, with his colleague, Dr. Bobardt, sailed across the narrow seas to Canada to interest the people there in the needs of the fisher-folk and hunters and trappers of Labrador.

Lord Strathcona (then Sir Donald Smith), the great Canadian Pacific Railway and shipping magnate, took a keen interest in the Deep-Sea Mission work that Dr. Grenfell was doing. Noth-

ing, therefore, would do but that Grenfell and Bobardt must go right across Canada on a free holiday and see his home at Silver Heights near Winnipeg. He gave the Mission a fine little steamer called the *Sir Donald*. Sir Thomas Roddick, of Montreal, who was a man of Newfoundland, also gave a fine twenty-foot jolly boat with a sail and a centre boom.

So the next year, after a series of meetings in Canada, at which he secured new help for the work, Dr. Grenfell started in the new steamer, the *Sir Donald*, and steered her from the great city of Montreal down the long and often lovely reaches of the St. Lawrence River into the Straits that run up between Labrador and Newfoundland. Meanwhile the schooner *Albert* had sailed to England for new stores, and had sailed out again to Battle Harbour hospital on the Labrador Coast. On her were the sorely-needed new doctors and nurses.

The *Albert* had already reached Battle Harbour, so when Dr. Grenfell and his little crew with the *Sir Donald* got near to the Harbour, they swabbed the decks, polished the compass

and all the brasses till they glistened in the crisp sunlight.

With fluttering flags and hearts expectant, they turned her bows toward the harbour mouth.

Crash ! Grrrrrrr ! Bump !

Hurled to the deck, again Dr. Grenfell stood up and his heart nearly broke. A submerged rock and shoal had cut into the steamer's side. The keel in parts was ground to fragments. Worst of all the screw-propeller and its shaft were not only smashed, but gone. The new steamer was a partial wreck and completely disabled among rocky islands.

Taking her boat they rowed ashore to an island near by ; and, landing on it, they trailed miserably through bogs and over hills for some miles to the farther shore. They then found a fisherman with a boat. He rowed the shamefaced group over to Battle Harbour Island. There lay the *Albert* in the harbour.

" Our new colleagues and old friends," says Dr. Grenfell, " were all impatiently waiting to see our new fine steamer speed in with all her flags up—when, instead, two bedraggled-looking

tramps, crestfallen almost to weeping, literally crept aboard ! ”

The friends were swift to help. They got quickly out to the *Sir Donald*, patched the hull, and the *Albert* took her in tow and sailed steadily down the coast, with the battered little new steamer ignominiously trailing behind. There she was taken in hand in the dry dock at St. John's, Newfoundland, after three hundred miles trailing down the coast.

Dr. Grenfell, characteristically irrepressible and undaunted, got aboard his little sailing jolly boat from Montreal with which he had fallen head over heels in love. In that little boat up and down that stormy coast he spent one of the most radiant and happy summers of his life. Even now when he is talking about her and that summer he will say things like this, “ My dainty little lady spread her wings to a fair breeze.” If Wilfred Grenfell ever had time for writing poetry it would surely be to produce an ode to that jolly boat. One can indeed imagine him writing a poem like that anonymous old English sea-port song which runs :—

I've seen the sea as black as pitch,
I've seen it white as snow ;
But I never feared its foaming yet,
Though the winds blew high or low.

I never liked the landsman's life,
The earth is aye the same ;
Give me the ocean for my dower,
My vessel for my hame.

Give me the fields that no man ploughs,
The farm that pays no fee ;
Give me the bonnie fish, that glance
So gladly through the sea.¹

The summer in the jolly boat was not only a thrilling time of sailing, but gave Dr. Grenfell a superb chance of getting right alongside the people.

The fact that he could not carry many stores and that the fishermen up this or that little bay and the skipper aboard some tough schooner had to be his hosts brought him and the fisher people nearer to one another than ever. Their doctor gave them healing, bound up their cuts and wounds, operated on them, gave them medicines ; but they in return had him sit down in the log cabins and on their schooners taking

¹ From "Songs of the Seaports," collected by Rev. F. Iliffe. (London, 1861.)

their rough, simple, wholesome food under the swinging lamp and sharing the simple but profound fellowship of the sea. One "hefty" schooner actually let down its crane ropes and hoisted Grenfell, jolly boat and all, aboard as though it were a child's toy boat.

So Grenfell cruised right up that coast to Eskimo Bay. Every evening as twilight began to come on, he returned into some new bay, and either beached or anchored his little boat. By next morning some sturdy boys in the settlers' cabin had found a new hero, and some lonely settlers a fresh, strong, stalwart friend in Grenfell.

Indeed, he loved this life so much that he lingered almost too long on that coast. The cold began to come in. He found himself in Square Island Harbour far from St. John's, with snow coming down and the cold beginning to settle in. The long winter, running over eight months, lay ahead. It had been a shockingly poor fishing summer, and, worse than that, the traders who bring the supplies of food to the settlers in exchange for salt fish and sealskins

had passed by the little settlement of Square Island Harbour.

There were twelve families there, and nothing like enough food to last for the months ahead. Already there was no butter and hardly any of the molasses with which bread was sweetened.

Grenfell had shot some birds as he came sailing into the harbour, birds that, like himself, had been driven in by the storm that was beginning to rage outside. The little group in the log cabin under the headship of the old man who was the leader of that little settlement—Uncle Jim—cooked and ate their supper. The last trader had passed the settlement by and there seemed no hope of any food for the winter. Uncle Jim knelt down with the group for family prayers.

“Open the windows of heaven,” prayed Uncle Jim, and nothing could have seemed more impossible. But Uncle Jim was sure that his prayer would be answered.

So they went to bed.

Next morning as they flung open the cabin door the first object that Grenfell’s eyes rested upon was a ship at anchor in the harbour !

The trader, having passed Square Island Harbour, had been caught in the storm and driven right back in his tracks to Square Island Harbour. So the fish and furs of settlers were changed for flour and salt pork and tea, and the settlement had its winter stores of food.

A day or two after this, when the storm had abated, Grenfell hoisted the sail of his jolly boat and tacked down the coast. Then the winter closed down and the sea became ice-hard. No sea voyages were possible all through the winter. All travel is by dog-sledge or *komatik*.

Meanwhile the hull of the *Sir Donald* had been repaired and a new propeller and shaft fitted. As soon as the ice was open in the following summer Grenfell was out, and the little steamer, *Sir Donald*, nosed its way up north and ever north till Grenfell was in uncharted and again and again practically unknown waters. So far north did he drive that for eleven days the little steamer was actually frozen in the ice.

Up in those northern latitudes fishing schooners were plying to and fro following the cod. From St. John's the regular mail steamer came up as

far as the ice and broke her propeller. It was a proud hour for Grenfell when a boat came along to his little steamer asking help for the big mail-boat. It was very much like the old fable of the mouse helping the lion; but he gladly steamed along to where the mail-boat lay with her great sides looming high over him, and taking a cable from the mail steamer began to pull her out.

It was a perilous piece of work, for the Atlantic rollers came surging by and the frozen ice-pans¹ heaved themselves up and down sometimes above the level of the decks of the *Sir Donald*. To be caught between two of these might well have crushed the little steamer; but she staunchly held on, and at last got the mail-boat out of the ice-field. Five hours of steady pulling brought the mail-boat to Battle Harbour, where she was taken in hand and put right.

Sailing in and out among those fishing boats in the *Sir Donald* that summer gave Grenfell great chances of helping the men in their illnesses and accidents.

Aboard one vessel right up north at Cape

¹ Slabs of ice.

Chidley he found a young fisherman in agony from the rupture of an eye through a gun explosion. The one eye was ruined and would soon have destroyed the sight of the other. Grenfell operated and relieved him. Then came a humorous touch to a tragic circumstance. The young fisherman had a sweetheart in the south at Newfoundland and he dreaded facing her thus disfigured.

“ Call in at our hospital at Battle Harbour,” said Grenfell. “ There are some false eyes there. See if you can find a blue one to match yours ! ”

So they parted. Sometime later when Grenfell returned to the hospital, a man met him and said to him :

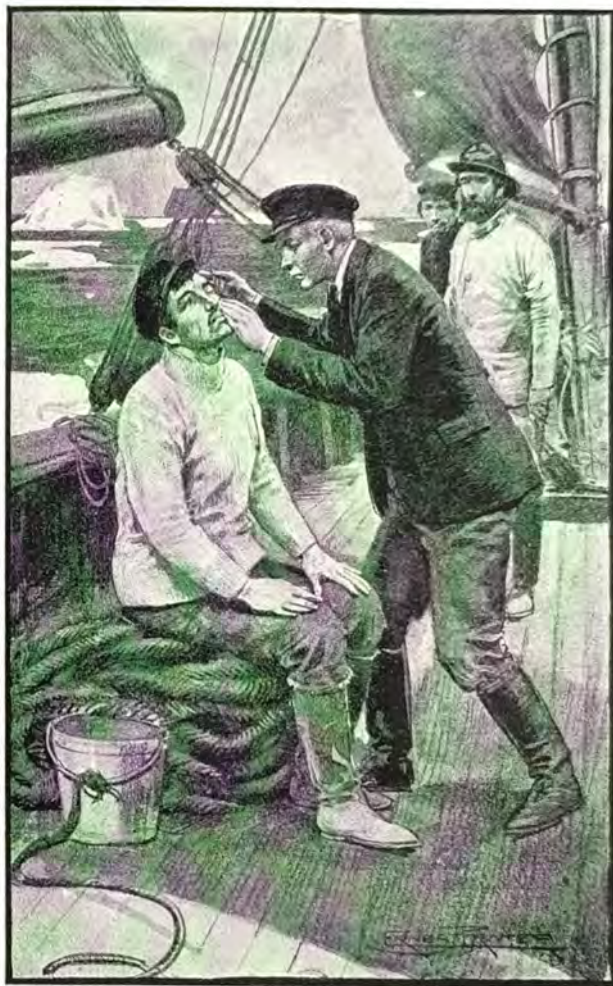
“ Will you examine my eye. There is something wrong with it.”

“ Go into the hospital,” said Grenfell, “ and I will examine it for you.”

The youth broke out into peals of laughter.

“ Why, Doctor,” he said, “ I am the boy whose eye you removed. This is the glass one you promised. Do you think it will suit the girl ? ”

* * * *



"HE FOUND A YOUNG FISHERMAN IN AGONY FROM THE RUPTURE OF AN EYE THROUGH A GUN EXPLOSION."

The fascination of this work and the cruising held Grenfell again late in the season—indeed, it was November before he turned back, and even before he started southward he was driving dog teams over the snow every time he went ashore.

He was steaming down the Straits curving round a piece of the coast in order to escape the shelving shoals of rock which run for a full half mile out to sea from the shore, when suddenly he saw behind his steamer the immense bulk of a racing liner, looming out of the fog, dashing from Britain to Canada.

The thrill and the horror were double. First to escape. He jammed down the helm, and put his steamer out to sea, yet was so close that she rocked and heaved in the wake. The second terror was, however, more dreadful still; for the liner was within a few yards of the rock. Suddenly the liner evidently got a flash of the lighthouse, put her helm round and, missing the shoal by an ace, went careering on her voyage.

Going on with a young bridegroom aboard

they put in at the harbour of Henley for the youth's wedding. While the ceremony went on the weather outside changed. The harbour suddenly froze over; the little steamer was caught. The new ice, however, broke, and Grenfell put the *Sir Donald* out to sea to cross the Straits. They were only part way across, however, when a raging storm got up and he was forced to swing round and make again for the harbour. Fog came up, choking them, and the shore and hills were covered with snow. Invisible as the shore was, and though it was impossible to discern the harbour, Grenfell, nevertheless, made a shot for it. He was horror-struck to have rear up ahead of him in the fog a precipice and on his bow a great rock. Swinging the wheel round at a furious speed, he got the ship just in the narrow yards of sea that churned between the rock and the cliff, and so into safety.

They decided that winter to try a new experiment—that is, to keep the Battle Harbour Hospital open for the winter. It was a difficult and drastic step; but Dr. Willway, who was then Dr. Grenfell's colleague, said he would stop

there and carry on. So they left him, with the *Sir Donald* in the harbour, and sailed away down south.

Many were the thoughts that Dr. Grenfell sent out to his colleague during the winter, wondering what his fate might be. When the ice broke in the summer he sailed north again. Grenfell feared the worst. But Dr. Willway, fit and well, came aboard with every sign of having enjoyed his lonely and difficult time. To Grenfell's horror, however, the *Sir Donald*, which, as we know, had been left at Battle Harbour, had disappeared. They dragged the harbour for her, but could find nothing. Meanwhile, three hundred miles away, out on the Atlantic Ocean, Labrador and Newfoundland seal hunters came on a strange object gripped fast in the pack ice. It was the *Sir Donald*, which had been carried out with the movement of the ice in Battle Harbour Bay right into the ocean.

The humorous hunters declared to Dr. Grenfell when they brought the boat back to him that they had found a group of old seals having tea in the cabin !

CHAPTER VII

THE SEAL HUNTERS

IN all the world of wonders and romances of animals there are not many so strange as, and none stranger than, the spring ice-voyage of the brown seals.

They come lying on their stupendous rafts of ice, sailing down from the Polar Arctic toward the open seas by Newfoundland.

When the sun in March begins to break the iron grip of the cold, the Arctic current, which moves down from the Poles to the Atlantic, brings southward great ice-floes. On these floes there gather hundreds of thousands of seals—lovely, brown, plump creatures covered with the silky fur that keeps out the cold and throws off all water.

About the fifteenth of February every year, with the regularity of clock-work, the seals are about a hundred miles from the east coast of

Newfoundland. There on the ice, within about a week of that day—i.e. between the fifteenth and twenty-second of February—hundreds of thousands of whelps—baby-seals—are born on the ice every year.

There are two kinds of seals, the hoods and the harps. The book produced for pilots of ships by the British Admiralty¹ says, “The gathering of these two great herds of seals, which take the ice at the same spot and precisely at the same time (namely, the middle of February) every year, and always occupy the same relative positions (the hoods being seaward and the harps a few miles towards the land) is one of the most interesting facts in natural history.”

The whelps grow and grow wonderfully swiftly. In a month's time from their birth they weigh as much as fifty pounds. Early in April the young seals and their mothers leap into the sea to fish together.

The Newfoundland seal-fishers put out in the sealing vessels in the middle of March, and are by law not allowed to kill any seal before the 14th of

¹ The Newfoundland and Labrador, Vol. 1 (Fifth edition, 1917)

March or after April 20. New steel boats are now being used instead of the old wooden ships. These cut into the ice more quickly and easily. The first steel vessel used (in 1906) killed over thirty thousand seals in four days. Such destruction by a number of such ships armed with guns seriously threatens to reduce the numbers of seals.

Seal-skin is used, as we know, for fur coats in America and Britain and Europe. But on the Labrador and Newfoundland coast itself they make wonderful boots, some up to the knee, others up to the hips, that are very light, quite waterproof and last a long time, sometimes having the hair left on inside for warmth. Moccasins too, and gloves, and mittens and tobacco pouches are made of this beautiful leather. As, however, over a quarter of a million seal are sometimes killed in that single month (bringing in as much as £250,000) and as each mother seal has only the one whelp in the year, there is an increasing fear lest the seals may be very much diminished in number unless care is taken.

Dr. Grenfell will never forget his first voyage out with the seal-hunting ships.

Noon struck in the church above St. John's Harbour as the crew of the stout sealing-ship, the *Neptune*, got her all taut and ready for sailing.

The harbour was in a buzz of excitement such as never comes except at that hour on that day—March 10—every year. Indeed, it is one of the most thrilling sailing days to be found in all the world—the day of sailing for the great seal-hunting in the Atlantic—hunting amid icebergs, stupendous floes that crush an ordinary ship like a boy's finger and thumb would crush a hedge-sparrow's egg; and on the success of those days the whole living—the very meals and clothing!—of thousands of people depend. Dr. Grenfell on that morning in 1906 went aboard the *Neptune* for his first adventure of this hunting among the ice-floes a hundred miles from land.

The *Neptune* was such a ship as is never seen in any ordinary port—a big body rigged like a barque; with engines and a screw. She sat chubby and square on the water. Not only was

her hull a foot and a half thick in itself, but carried a double sheathing of tough greenheart around the sea-line.

Buttressed within with beams of English oak, she has inside her bow a broad band of iron and seventeen solid feet of tough wood. The hull is crammed with food and water and men, as well as five hundred tons of coal. The crew of more than three hundred are all agog. The reason why the *Neptune*, the *Windsor*, the *Aurora*, the *Wolf*, and the others are all waiting like bloodhounds on the beach to get out on the seal trail is that by law they are not allowed to go out toward the seal-hunting ice until that day. To go earlier would simply massacre undeveloped baby seals.

Twelve moved on to one, and one verged on to two o'clock. Every ship flew its flag. The sirens bellowed ; the people crowded the wharves, a bell rang, and the lëader of the sealing fleet—which in 1906 was the *SS. Aurora*—butted her way out of the harbour, followed by the *Neptune* and the *Windsor*, and the rest.

The wind had blown the broken ice off shore

for at least a mile, and the ships, with sail and steam both working, swung out into the ocean and were soon butting their way through the broken ice. Up aloft in a conning tower is Dr. Grenfell with the "scunner" as he is called—the word is a corruption of "conner."

One morning Dr. Grenfell saw away on the white ice-floes multitudes of spots—these were the seals. The ship drove at the ice, butting the floe off in this direction; missing an iceberg on the other side; driving away toward the seal. All the time grinding, crushing, groaning sounds are going on, for the Atlantic swell heaves the stupendous ice-pans up and down. Here an iceberg weighing thousands of tons reels to and fro like a cathedral tower in an earthquake. The hull of the iceberg under the water swings up beneath a flat ice-floe and buffets it out of the water with a grinding crash. Meanwhile the other side of the iceberg has come down with a prodigious hammer-blow upon another floe which is beaten down into the water, and turns a complete somersault.

The crew, lightly dressed for rushing across

the ice, and leaping from pan to pan, scramble over the sides and drop on to the ice armed with rifles to hunt the seals. It is not long before the doctor is very busy binding up deep gashes from the ice; bandaging strained ankles, and dislocated shoulders. He himself, after working right through the morning, went over the side on to the ice to find the men, who were almost all out hunting.

It was already well on in the afternoon. He was first of all alone, and then met a few others. The wind, which had driven the ice up together, now fell almost to a calm. Immediately the ice-pans broke away from one another so that each man was marooned on a little island of ice.

A dozen men with Dr. Grenfell got together on a largish pan. The ship had now disappeared from sight. The men were getting cold in their hunting kit, so Grenfell started leap-frog and hop, skip and jump, to keep them warm. Darkness now came on, so they took out the supplies they carry of oatmeal with sugar, and melting some snow into it, they took food.

The darkness was now complete. So they took the fat of some of the seals, smeared it on to the handles of the wooden bats or clubs with which the seals are killed, and set fire to the fat, to attract the ship.

Hour after hour went on, and it was the middle of the night before the ship had butted its way to them. The captain was furiously angry with the wrath of a father with sons whom he has feared to be lost. Grenfell himself tells us :

“No sooner had we climbed over the rail than the skipper came and gave us the best or worst ‘blowing up’ I ever received since my father spanked me. He told me afterwards that his good heart was really so relieved by our safe return that he was scarcely conscious of what he said. Indeed, any words which might have been construed as unparliamentary he asked me to construe as gratitude to God.”

Grenfell started in right away to hunt up his patients on the *Neptune*. They were scattered about in all the holds of the ship. Down below in the Stygian darkness he stumbled, climbing over coal, clambering past barrels, with the

ship's steward toiling after him with a ship's candle.

The most agonising of all the complaints of the men was the curious affliction of snow-blindness. The intolerable pain of this almost drives men mad, and he found them groaning and rolling on the ground. To each of these he gave the local anæsthetic of cocaine, which eased the agony and left the men almost speechless with thanks. The men did not hunt the seal on the Sunday, and on this journey the seal seemed to know this. For they came wallowing up the ice, staring with their dark, beady eyes at the ship. The fat, round baby seals would often roll helplessly on their backs, ludicrously wagging their flappers in the air, and their tails running like a pendulum.

That Sunday morning, however, men came across the ice, and clambering aboard, brought them the dread news of the wreck of *SS. Wolf*. The story was a dramatic picture of the inconceivable strength of the ice.

The breeze from the South had driven the ice away from the southern shore of Fogo Island

on the south of which island Grenfell's ship lay. The *Wolf* had worked her way round to the north between the shore and the great ice floe. No sooner, however, was she there than the wind dropped and then rose again, blowing in from the north with an irresistible force that brought the ice down toward the shore. It gave the feeling of a whole continent in motion. The terrific floe surged toward the shore where the coastal ice awaited the impact. The *Wolf* was between the two. Her captain, realising the peril, backed his ship into a slight indentation in the oncoming floe just before it butted into the coast.

So enormous was the force that the floe surged up over the coast ice, towering even above the deck of the *Wolf*. The ship's enormously stout, reinforced hull was cracked like a walnut shell.

Swiftly the captain of the boat got his men to seize everything they could lay hands on and dash over the ship's sides on to the ice. But they dared not stay even to get their kit, for as they leapt overboard, the ice parted again and the *Wolf* sank like a lump of iron.

So three hundred seal hunters from that ship were left penniless, with their year's harvest gone, and the Captain a ruined man through the grip of cruel ice.

As Grenfell, inside the ship *Neptune* on the other side of the island, heard the crash and grinding, the groaning and battering of the broken ice-pans against the stout hull of the ship, there came upon him an overwhelming sense of the awful majesty and power of these remorseless forces.

A little later, at the end of their hunting, came the last Sunday of the voyage. The sun blazed down from the blue sky and glittered back again from the white snow and ice which stretched out to the horizon. That afternoon, under the sunshine, he gathered the men about him on the fore-deck. There they lay in the bright afternoon with the pocket hymn-books that he had brought, singing together.

"Then and again at evening prayers," says Dr. Grenfell, "eternal life seemed so close, as if it lay just over that horizon of ice, in the eternal blue beyond."

So they sailed back to Newfoundland, the seal-hunting for that year at an end ; while the surviving seals swam back through the ocean to their northern homes.

CHAPTER VIII

AN OBSTACLE RACE WITH DEATH

It seems strange that a voyage among such perils as the seal-hunting expedition should have brought so little real danger to Grenfell, while, on the other hand, an attempt to go from Newfoundland to New York to speak at a meeting, which sounds an enterprise safe to the point of dullness, should have been full of infinite difficulty and much peril.

In the spring of a later year friends who wished to help Dr. Grenfell to raise a considerable sum of money for the hospitals at St. Anthony, India Harbour and Battle Harbour, and for his Orphanage (as well as for the upkeep of the new and larger ship, the *Strathcona*, which replaced the *Sir Donald*), organized a very influential meeting at New York at which Dr. Grenfell was to speak.

He arranged to run with his dog-team on the sea-ice north to the Straits of Belle Isle round

the point westward, then southward to Port Aux Basque to catch a steamer to Nova Scotia and so by train to New York. Usually this is a fine dog-team route in the early spring.

To Dr. Grenfell's great chagrin, however, a blizzard blew up from the north-east and, heaving the tide under it, smashed the ice. The dog-route was destroyed. There was only one way to achieve the journey. That was to run south by boat amid the broken ice for a hundred miles. If he could land there on the coast a trek of a hundred miles overland across a trackless wilderness through deep snow would bring him to the railway, whence he could run southward by train to St. John's, and so by steamer to Canada or New York.

The sea journey itself was a desperate piece of work. On the land side lay the broken, heavy shore ice. On the other was the tremendous mass of broken ice-pack from the Arctic, with colossal lumps, some of over a hundred tons, which the wind, if it gets up, can throw at you and smash your boat and you, like a brick dropping on a wren's egg.

Dr. Grenfell, however, had faced this peril too often to be turned back by it now. He waited in harbour at St. Anthony's Hospital till the blizzard blew over. Then he fetched out his small motor-boat from its shed. He planned—as we have said—to run the boat down south along the coast for a few days till he reached the nearest point of shore to the rail head.

One morning Grenfell and one of his helpers put out in the motor-boat to make this attempt. They had not gone far, however, when the wind rose from the East and began to drive the dreaded ice in toward the shore. To be nipped there would mean destruction. They drove in toward the shore to escape the ice. Suddenly there was a cruel wrenching sound. A rock had caught the boat and rent a jagged hole in her hull. By working furiously, however, Grenfell and his companion plugged up the hole.

They started again ; the East wind, however, had brought not only the ice, but desperate cold. It was so intense that actually the pipes of the motor itself froze. To go ahead with burst pipes was impossible. They, however, found that

they could patch up the pipes for the time being.

Grenfell got ashore and, cutting down boughs from the juniper tree, lay them on the snow. By the side of this improvised mattress he made a great fire of other boughs. Here he lay then to sleep and to think out his next move. The ice floe now absolutely blocked his path to the south. It was just possible to get back to St. Anthony's harbour between the shore and the ice. The battered motor-boat was, therefore, turned about and threaded her way north toward St. Anthony. Grenfell, undaunted, had made up his mind to try a way by sea through the Straits of Belle Isle round the western side of Newfoundland.

They were not yet, however, even in St. Anthony, their original starting-point! For he discovered that, after all, it was impossible to get the motor-boat through the ice. Grenfell ran her into a little harbour and borrowed from one of the fishermen settlers there a small rowing-boat.

They put to sea in this little boat, guiding

her through the narrow alley-ways of sea between the ice-pans and the shore.

Often they had to get out and haul the boat across pans of ice. Indeed, already the day when he ought to have been in New York at his meeting was getting perilously near, and the journey was worse than not started, in the sense that Grenfell had not yet got back to St. Anthony for equipment for a fresh enterprise.

Suddenly, with a turn of the wind, the ice charged in and was about to crush the boat, when Grenfell and his companion leapt out and on to the ice. They got the boat by the bows, lifted it, and were about to pull the stern out of the sea, when they heard an awful crashing. The ice nipped off the stern of the row-boat as though some prodigious shark had seized and snapped it in two.

So the two men stood on the ice and looked woefully shoreward to the rocks. The sea was a tessellated mosaic of ice-blocks and water. The tide was turning and began to move seaward carrying the men on their little island of ice out into the Atlantic. Both of them had kept grip

of their guns and they had seized a boat hook. They fired again and again, and yet again. But the shore was as silent and dead as the grave.

Dr. Grenfell's friend, William Taylor, then decided to try to get to shore by leaping from pan to pan, with the boat-hook as a leaping-pole. It was a perilous enterprise—a kind of gigantic "hop, skip and jump," with death as a probability if you missed your jump. One after another, however, of the chasms were successfully leapt. Then there was an awful moment when, leaping upon a rather smaller piece of ice, which swung under his weight, Taylor staggered, fell, and plunged deep beneath the icy water.

Terror seized Grenfell lest his friend should either suffer the awful numbness that comes through the sheer intensity of the cold, or should rise beneath the ice-pan itself. Whatever happened, Grenfell was too far away now to help.

It was an immense relief to Grenfell when he saw Taylor's head emerge above the water and then watched him, after repeated efforts, come out safely once more on a block of ice. This,

however, seemed only to postpone the inevitable end. For Taylor's ice-pan bore him swiftly to sea—a horrible situation, seeing that every stitch of his clothes was saturated with freezing water.

In sheer desperation, Grenfell took up his gun again and loaded and fired, and loaded and fired again.

Taylor was now some distance out to sea when, to his joy, Grenfell caught the steadily repeated gleam of a moving oar. The gun had at last been heard. Soon fishermen had rescued them, and the boat, with its bows towards St. Anthony, was carrying them to safety.

Meanwhile, in New York, the original time for holding the meeting had passed, and the date had been adjourned more than once. June had opened. Grenfell, determined at all costs to get through, waited till the water was a mile wide between the ice and the shore—then he got up steam in the boilers of the *Strathcona*, hove anchor and put out northward to sea.

He intended to steam round the northernmost point of Newfoundland, and then west and south

down the Straits of Belle Isle to the nearest point at which he could catch the mail-boat.

They got safely round the northern point, but found the Straits full of icebergs and thick floe. They tried to back the *Strathcona* out of it, but cold set in again, and in a short time the *Strathcona* was frozen into the ice, like a bee in amber.

The fates seemed to be fighting against Grenfell's set purpose of getting to New York. This, of course, only intensified his dogged insistence on pushing through somehow. He made up his mind to walk down the coast to the port of call by hook or crook, to which he had intended to steam. So Mrs. Grenfell made up a great pack of food, cooking and sleeping things, and included in the kit a suit of clothes fit for the prospective meeting.

With his heavy pack on his back, Grenfell went over the side of the *Strathcona* on to the ice, and down the Straits on to the land over the snow and broken ice. He moved southward at the rate of thirty miles a day, sleeping in what shelter he could find.

In three days he had reached the open water harbour where the mail-boat would call—tired, but triumphant, and prodigiously hungry. He walked up to the little house of the missionary at that port. They gladly and swiftly boiled water for tea and set a meal on the table. As Grenfell sat down, full of zest for his meal, the door was flung open and a fisherman dashed in, crying :

“ For God’s sake, some one, come !—come and save my brother’s life. He is bleeding to death. He has shot his leg nearly off. He is five miles away.”

Grenfell leapt to his feet, and ran as he had never run in his life for that five miles. It was a race with death, by a man already tired almost beyond endurance.

Rushing to the room where the young fisherman of twenty—a youth who had served through four tremendous years of world war in Europe—was lying stretched out on a table with his shattered leg strung to the ceiling to check the blood, Grenfell found him semi-conscious with just a spark of life in him.

He quickly drove a crowd of relatives and neighbours out of the room. He had no instruments and no medicine with him. Swiftly he sent one running here and one there to get things that he, with rare foresight, had arranged long before to be awaiting him in certain homes along that coast in case they should ever be required.

While these men raced across country for anæsthetics and what instruments could be found, and to commandeer the communion wine from the Mission Church, Grenfell stopped the flow of blood with a tourniquet. With the very inadequate anæsthetic that was brought, and the help of two men, Grenfell now operated on the leg. One of the two helpers fell on the floor in a faint; the other, however, stuck by Grenfell through the difficult hour.

The young man was saved. And if you go down that coast to-day you will see him stumping about on one leg; but happy and doing a man's work.

* * * * *

Grenfell got to the meeting in New York, although it had been postponed for two months

before it was finally held. But it is a strange thought to remember that, if the ice had been open when Grenfell started in his motor-boat; if he had not endured the perilous adventure on the ice-pans; if again the ice had been open for the *Strathcona*, there would be on that coast, instead of a hale and happy young fisherman, a desolate grave. We can almost see an Unseen Hand pushing Grenfell from every course that he tried to take, and a finger leading him to the place where he was wanted to make his race with death and his victory for life.

CHAPTER IX

WITH THE DOG TEAM THROUGH A BLIZZARD

As the doctor comes out of his hospital at St. Anthony to take the ice trail to some place leagues away where a man is lying ill, his first thought is for his dog team who haul the long *komatik*. They are great, deep-chested, sturdy-shouldered, shaggy dogs, who, when they stand up on their hind legs, can put their forelegs on their master's shoulder. They have shrewd, intelligent eyes and wise-looking heads.

"Tad and Eric!" calls the doctor, and the tails of the largest and heaviest dogs of his pack begin to wave. They are the rear dogs of the team who haul steadily on their traces. In front of these come two more—Rover and Shaver. Rover is only half the size of Shaver, and is a black, lop-eared fellow who, however, pulls his weight in the team. In front of them are two very different dogs—Scottie, a shaggy

khaki dog, and Spot, a big white-haired creature, who gets his name from a black blodge on his neck. Ahead of these again are Spider and Tiger, Tiger being red and white and his mate black and white. In front of them all, at the head of the team, runs Gypsy, a splendid, brainy, sensitive, big, black and white dog, who leads them all. Gypsy's ears are always alert to hear Dr. Grenfell's voice, and he is swift to obey.

Dr. Grenfell has a single line of walrus leather, and every dog has a trace from his harness, which is lashed on to this walrus line, so Gypsy of course has the longest trace, Tiger and Spider shorter ones, Spot and Scottie shorter still, and so on. The dogs, of course, have been different in different years, for some have died and some grow too old or go lame.

When Dr. Grenfell is ready to start he throws himself on a *komatik* or sledge, which is ten to twelve feet long and about two feet wide. He then shouts "Oo-isht!" to the dogs. Away leaps Gypsy with the others behind, the *komatik* swinging behind them. As they feel the weight of the *komatik* the dogs settle down to a steady

pull. But the pull is not just a straight run on beaten snow over a good road. It is often over frozen sea where the waves have come tumbling up and hurled the ice into hillocks and long ridges like frozen breakers, or on a narrow strip of rough barricade ice on the edge of the rocky shore ; or the trail goes up steep broken hills with boulders and tree stumps where the doctor must often get out and pull himself with the pack, and even lift the *komatik* itself over some rocky ridge.

Through the long winter, when intense frost and the biting wind will freeze a man's hands or feet so that they are dead and have to be amputated, the doctor can never go out without his close-fitting leather and fur cap that covers his ears and chin and forehead, and in the intensest weather, when crossing ice, his great sealskin fur boots a yard high that stretch from heel to hip.

So up and down the stormy, frozen coasts of Northern Newfoundland and Labrador, Dr. Grenfell is continually moving among the people in the scattered, lonely settlements. Since the

War the Newfoundland Government has put up a telegraph line to St. Anthony, and Dr. Grenfell's hospital, so that now a call for his services can come from a hundred miles away, and there is no other doctor than he and his assistant within hundreds of miles to the North or the West.

We can follow him now on two of the many scores of adventures that have come to him in answer to such calls. Evening was just coming on in the New Year of 1919, and a young fisherman living thirty miles away from Grenfell's hospital to the North, at Cape Norman, telegraphed to Dr. Grenfell. His wife, he said, was seriously ill. Could he come at once?

Dr. Grenfell wired back immediately that his dog team was out, having been taken by his assistant to answer another call, so he could not come, as it would leave the hospital without a doctor, and he had no dogs for the trail. Swiftly another telegram came back asking him to come whatever happened, and to get a team together. It was now night, with no moon. Dr. Grenfell went out and scoured the neigh-

bourhood for dogs. At last he got enough, and arranged with Walter, a man living near by, to come and drive the team and to start at 4.30 in the morning. Then as midnight came on Grenfell went round his hospital, visiting every patient, to see that all was well. He lay down for a short sleep. When he woke at four and looked out, he saw a blizzard was blowing. Blinding snow drove across the darkness. In a few moments a man staggered through the tempest. It was Walter. He had not brought the dogs.

"I have been watchin' the weather all night, sir," he said. "It is growin' worse. We has only a scratch team and they'll not work together right till they get used to each other."

Walter was quite certain that they could not get on at all if they tried to start before daylight, so he returned home, and the doctor tumbled into bed for two hours' more rest. Day had not yet fully dawned when another telegram came. "Come along soon," it said. "Wife worse."

Dr. Grenfell could feel the agony of the young husband thirty miles away watching his wife

suffering and dying. He looked out and saw that the gale was almost a hurricane, and it was raging from the North. Not even the doctor's own team of dogs could have faced the fury of the blizzard, and a man could hardly breathe in it.

It was impossible to start.

Noon came, and with it still another wire. "Come immediately if you can. Wife still holding out." Then to the amazement of Dr. Grenfell two creatures looking like snow-men stumbled, tired and exhausted, to his door. It did not seem possible that any man could have lived in the storm.

"We comes from Cape Norman," they said to him, "to fetch you. But," they went on, "no dogs could stand this blizzard, not till the wind lifts. The gale blew us here."

It was a fact that the gale had blown them so furiously over the sea ice that nothing but the snow, acting as a brake, had held them back from being hurled across the ice in a way that would have smashed the sledge and killed them. They had been travelling since eight o'clock the

previous evening, right through the night and on for sixteen hours.

Not till dark that evening was it possible to start. Now a lull came in the tempest, which nearly always in Newfoundland means a quiet interval before a new and even more violent blizzard. In spite of that they set out. Down they plunged to the harbour, but no ice could be seen. The stupendous tonnage of new snow had thrust the ice down when the tide went out, and the new tide had rolled in over it. The men were wading knee deep in slush and ice water. The teams of dogs could barely touch the ice through the tide. The Cape Norman team went ahead and the St. Anthony scratch team followed.

Every yard had to be won in the teeth of the storm until they had crossed the harbour to the other shore, but they were only out of the tide into great wallowing drifts of new snow. Inch by inch and foot by foot they fought their way along, climbing and climbing up the lee of the hill till they reached the crest, and then the tempest hurled itself on them like an enemy.

If the lee side of the hill was a mass of blanket-ing drifts, the other side was a house roof of ice from which the gale had swept all snow. They slid down it in the darkness, bumping into boulders, tripping over stumps. So it was through mile after mile. Either they were out of the wind and in snow drifts, or in the wind and on ice where the dogs could get no foot grip in the teeth of the gale.

After six hours they had covered only ten miles, and ahead of them lay twenty miles of sea-ice, across which the gale screamed and raged, breaking it into fragments with the sound of thunder, and driving the tide over it. It was impossible for man or dog to go forward, but they could not go back. Yet to remain still was to be frozen into pillars of ice.

Suddenly one of the men from Cape Norman recalled that a tilt¹ had been put up near that spot only a few months before. He moved off to try to find it, and was soon heard shouting to the others, "Come!" To their tremendous

¹ A hut made of logs. These are built in case of men being snow-bound by a blizzard, and in them there is often an iron stove.

relief they found not only the tilt, but also a stove in it with dry wood cut ready. A fire was lighted, the kettle filled from the river near by through a hole they cut in the ice, and Dr. Grenfell prepared to make tea. He heard something fall on the floor and saw that it was the Cape Norman man's pipe. He stooped, picked it up and handed it to the man, but he did not take it. He was fast asleep, standing bolt upright, for he had been sixty hours without sleep, and for forty-eight of those hours fighting the gale.

So they took food and rested till daylight, but with the dawn the storm raged still. The ice of the sea could not be passed with the crashing of the tide thundering upon it. Their only way was to go round a long curve of the shore. Hours and hours of travelling carried them at last to a small group of cottages. There they stopped to drink hot tea and get a little food, and at sunset the home of the young fisherman loomed ahead. No one can describe the young fisherman's feeling in the hut when, after watching his wife writhing in dreadful

pain, for many long hours, he saw the door open and Dr. Grenfell come in. She was still alive. Instantly the doctor relieved her pain, and quickly by surgery, and then by medicines, made her well, and to-day she, with her young husband, rejoice that Dr. Grenfell ever came to those shores.

CHAPTER X

A LIFE HAZARD ON THE ICE

ONE Easter Sunday morning,¹ when snow and ice covered land and sea, and when everything was still held in the grip of the winter frost, Wilfred Grenfell was on his way back from service with the sound of the ringing words of triumph over death still in his ears :

Jesus Christ is risen to-day,
Alleluia.

Suddenly, he was himself called to face death in one of its more dreadful forms.

He was walking from the church toward the hospital when he saw a boy swiftly coming toward him. The story was quickly told. Messengers had come who had driven a large team of dogs at top speed up from the south for sixty miles over the snow to fetch the doctor to an urgent case. A fortnight earlier Dr. Grenfell

¹ April 21, 1908.

had operated on the diseased thigh-bone of a young man. The patient had been taken home on a sledge. Now—through mistaken treatment at home—the leg was severely poisoned. It would almost certainly be necessary to carry through a severe operation.

Swiftly Dr. Grenfell took his surgical instruments and medicines and got into his oilskin travelling kit. He brought out his finest dog-team—powerful creatures who knew and loved him, and, as he says of them with pride, “ had pulled me out of many a previous scrape by their sagacity and endurance.” Their names were Moody, Watch, Spy, Doc, Brin, Jerry, Sue and Jack.

Bringing out his *komatik*, he harnessed the dogs to it with the walrus hide traces. Shaking out the reins he shouted “ Oo-isht ! ” and the dogs started. The men from the south tried to keep up with Grenfell, but he could not hold his strong, fresh dogs back to their slower pace. Twice he halted to let the other sledges catch him up ; but at last he let his faithful dogs run.

Twenty miles had been covered before evening, and then he stopped in a hamlet. So fast had his dogs run that the others only came trailing in after the doctor had finished feeding his team—one of his first cares. So they lay that night at that village by the shore of the frozen sea.

When he woke next morning, Dr. Grenfell found that the wind had come in from the sea, and the air was dank with fog and a drizzling rain had fallen. The snow was soft, the visibility was bad, and there were forty miles to travel.

Knowing the speed of his own team, Grenfell suggested to his friends that they should go ahead and that he should follow; the idea was that he should not have to keep his dogs and himself about during the day waiting. The first quarter of the day's journey lay on a bay where the sea made an inroad on the land.

"Meet me," said Grenfell to his friends, "by the log-tilt on the other side of the bay."

When he put his team of dogs on to the traces two hours later he felt the rain coming steadily

down. It was the first rain that year. In the bay he heard the grind and crash of the heavy ice which the sea had been smashing during the night. Chasms gaped between the ice. So he had to hug the edge of the bay instead of striking right across the ice.

However, Hare Island, a little island some three miles from the shore in the middle of the bay, had held up the ice and protected it so that an "ice-bridge," as it is called, ran, with only a few cracks, from the shore to the island. To get across in this way would save miles. Setting the team to it, he drove over the ice, having to negotiate here and there ominous crevices, in which the sea-water began to surge; but at last he reached the island.

He looked across the remaining four miles of ice between himself and the rocky headland that he must reach. The sea had broken the solid plain of ice into innumerable ice-pans, which had started grinding and crunching each other in the heaving waters; but now the east wind had driven them tightly together and held them firm—jammed in a solid mass. So

Grenfell threw himself face down on the sledge, and, the dogs straining at the traces, started swiftly over the rough ice. Mile after mile they made ; till at last barely five hundred yards lay between the *komatik* and its team and land.

Suddenly, without warning, the east wind dropped to calm. This, in itself, was dangerous, for it was the force of the wind, and that alone, which had held the ice together in one mass. The slabs began at once to ease and shift and work uneasily. Worse, however, than even this, Grenfell found by making dagger-strokes downward with the short bone handle of his whip that he was only held up now on a thin coating of ice made up of the grindings of the large slab as they were hurled upon one another by the waves. His whip-handle went right through into the water beneath. This "sish" ice was now simply falling to bits, for the wind-pressure had disappeared. In a few minutes everything would be blobs and slabs of loose ice in a heaving sea.

To go back was madness ; to go forward seemed impossible. Death stared Grenfell in the face.

Flinging off his oilskins and dropping on hands and knees by the sledge he yelled "Oo-isht!" to his team to stir them to gallop for the land. The dogs leapt forward for twenty yards. Then they paused. In an instant the *komatik* sank down into the horrible, broken mass of pounded ice and water; and with it Grenfell. It was like a ghastly, freezing, clogging marsh; too watery to stand on; too thick to swim in; and as cold as ice itself.

The dogs tried to start again; but the sinking *komatik* dragged them back and down through the ice into the water. Gripping his sheath-knife Grenfell slipped it out and slashed at the dogs' traces to free them from the sledge; but he wound the leather trace of the leader round his own wrists. He then tied his hunting-knife on to the back of one of the dogs. The leader of the team, plunging through the pounded mass of splintered ice in the freezing water, got close to a great mass of packed and frozen snow and ice, and heaved himself up on it.

"He shook the ice and water from his shaggy coat," Dr. Grenfell tells us, "and turned round

to look for me.¹ Perched up there out of the frigid water he seemed to think the situation the most natural in the world, and the weird, black marking of his face made him appear to be grinning with satisfaction. The rest of us were bogged like flies in treacle.

“ Gradually I succeeded in hauling myself along by the line which was still attached to my wrist, and was nearly up to the snow-raft, when the leader turned adroitly round, slipped out of his harness, and once more leered at me with his grinning face.”

The cold was beginning to have its dread effect, for Dr. Grenfell was conscious of that first drowsiness which, if it wins, is fatal. Then he saw the leather trace of another dog who was under the ice and could not get out. Hauling on this line Grenfell gradually heaved himself up and at last found himself lying on the snow-mass. Soon he had dragged his dogs up and had them round him.

Death, however, still seemed inevitable ; for they were being driven to the open sea by the

¹ “ A Labrador Doctor.”

current ; and nothing could stop the tiny islet of snow on which they lay from swiftly melting and dropping them into the water. Coat, cap, gloves, overall were all gone.

Only twenty yards away lay a wider, stronger ice-block. Seizing his hunting-knife he cut the traces of his dogs' harness and spliced them all together, so that it formed one long line of tough seal-skin trace. This he cut into two. One end of each long line he attached to his own wrists ; the other ends he tied to the backs of his two leader-dogs. His tremendous sealskin boots that reached right up to his hips he took off, shook out the ice and snow-water, and tied them firmly one on the back of each of the two dogs.

Then he threw the two dogs into the water to swim to the ice-pan and pull him to it. But they—being in the water—could see nothing but the block that they had just left and swam back to it again. Once more he tried ; again they returned. He was in despair.

A flash of inspiration then came to him. He had his tiny black pet spaniel with him. Point-

ing to the ice-pan twenty yards away, Grenfell then flung a piece of ice across to the place. The little spaniel like a flash dashed over the thin shifting ice, and in a few seconds was seated like a tiny ball of black fur on the new islet.

At last the team saw what it was that their master wanted. They plunged into the water and ice, and, padding with their paws for dear life, at last climbed on to the farther floe—all save one, who sank and died. Grenfell then took the best run that he could on his little snow-raft and, leaping out, plunged through the ice, hauling himself by the two traces, inch by inch, toward the dogs, who sat on the ice-floe like anchors at the other end of his sealskin ropes. At last he hauled himself up by the lines on to the floe.

The situation was still little better. For the floe after all was of snow, and was being carried by the current out to the open sea. The wind had risen from the west and was blowing off-shore, a harsh, blistering, horrible wind that drives into your very marrow the cold of the

thousand miles of ice over which it has swept. Taking his precious hunting knife Grenfell cut open his boots and used their great length of sealskin for a rough coat to cover his back against the deathly onslaught of the wind.

It seemed, still, that now nothing lay between him and death. Slowly the pan slid seaward on the tide. When he looked to the bay entrance he saw the great breakers hurling enormous floes of ice in crashing fury against the iron cliffs. He knew that even if the snow-ice-islet on which he sat held together through the night, he would be frozen to death by morning.

What could be done? He looked at his dogs. They were his good friends, his faithful comrades. Yet there was no alternative. He must get some warmth. There was nothing for it but this: to get the skin and hair of some of them!

He dare not move much on the tottering floe; but, with his hunting knife, he killed, one by one, three of his dogs. Even as he did so he wondered whether they were not happier than he by dying swiftly, and not by inches of frost, and slow

starvation. He skinned them and wrapped their shaggy coats about himself.

The night came on, and Grenfell was ten miles nearer to the sea ; around him a cloak of the fur of his three dogs.

With the bodies of the dogs he made a feeble wind-screen. He took off his clothes and wrung out the water from them, and flayed the wind with them to try to dry them. His feet were in agony ; he picked to pieces with his frost-bitten fingers the rope-harness of his dogs and stuffed the " oakum " into his moccasins. By a strange accident he had put on some clothes that he had not even seen for twenty years—things that he had only a few weeks earlier dragged out of an old box—his college football clothes.

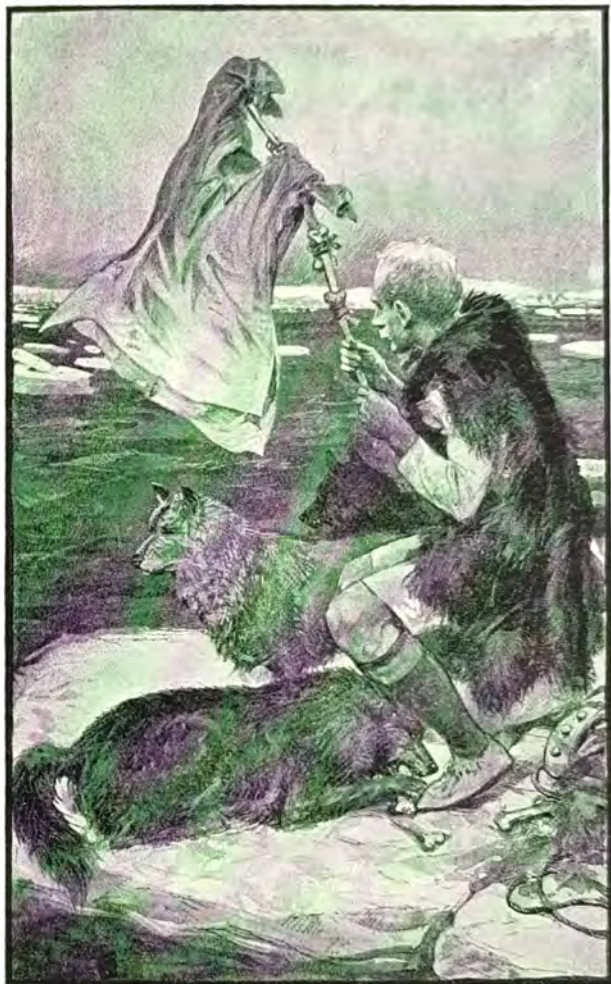
" As I stood there," he says, " in a pair of my old Oxford University running shorts, and red, yellow and black Richmond football stockings and a flannel shirt, I remembered involuntarily the little dying girl who asked to be dressed in her Sunday frock so that she might arrive in heaven properly attired ! "

Now the long night lay before him, the night

from which it would seem almost impossible that he should come into morning light in this world.

“Lie down,” he said to his biggest dog, and pushed the creature down full length on the ice. Then he cuddled near to the warm animal with one hand against its hair. He slept. In the strangest sense surely that ever befel mortal man he was “Rocked in the cradle of the deep.” Midnight came. He awoke to see the moon rising and the islet still moving with horribly smooth progress to the open sea. Then the wind moved round, and dropped to a dead calm. He lay down once more, and slept again. He did not feel then, nor at any time in the adventure, any fear. He knew he would almost certainly die; but he was very sure that death was new life and that Easter meant something very real. When he awoke he was almost out at sea, which had quietened since the calm fell; he had drifted away from the bay.

“A flag I must have.” This was the thought that hammered in his brain as he woke again. But how, on what pole and with what fabric?



"FROZEN AS HE WAS, HE TOOK OFF HIS SHIRT, TIED IT TO THE BONES, AND WAVED IT TO THE IRON CLIFFS."

He started to take the dead dogs' legs to pieces and tie the bones together into a flag-pole with pieces of the harness rope of the dogs. It was a weird and ghastly flagstaff that bent and swayed. There was no flag in the tiny world of that snow-islet, save his shirt; so, frozen as he was, he took it off, tied it to the bones and holding it above his head waved the drunken structure to the iron cliffs.

Dawn came. He thought that he saw men on the cliffs, but his eyes mocked him; he soon realised that they were trees. He fancied that he saw a boat leaping up and down on the water between the ice-floes; but it turned out to be a lump of ice.

The sun came up more strongly; he took out his sodden matches to dry and then searched for transparent ice to make a magnifying glass to light the matches, and fire the fat of the dogs and rope to make a smoke that might be seen from the land.

Suddenly there was a flash like that of a wet oar in the sun far away; then the black line of a boat's hull. It was no delusion. It would

still take an hour to force the boat through the ice-slush to him. Minute by minute the time went by.

“Don’t get excited!” shouted the men in the boat as they drew nearer. “Keep on the pan where you are.”

Then the boat butted into the pan and a man leapt out grasping Grenfell’s hand in a grip of steel, but unable to speak a word for the feelings that surged in him and brimmed at his eyes.

A flask was opened and Grenfell gulped some hot tea. The living dogs were slung aboard. The rescue was achieved, though not ended, for it took hours thrusting the ice-pans apart to make a passage, getting out of the ice to pull the boat across the pans and rowing through open water before land was reached.

As they went along the story of the rescue was told. Four fishermen had been out the evening before cutting up frozen seals that they had killed six months earlier. One of them, George Davis, suddenly caught a glimpse of a black something on the ice. He hurried home, ran to the house of a friend, George Reed, the

one man on that settlement with a telescope. He was at his supper, but rose at once, rushed up to the lookout in the dusk, and could just see through the twilight that a man was out on the broken ice.

How could he be rescued? He was miles away across broken ice which the sea was hurling on the beach with great crashing breakers. By daybreak a crew made up of George Davis, George Reed, his two sons and George Andrews, had volunteered to go out, and away they went, plunging through peril to the rescue.

The experience of the rescuers was told to a friend by George Andrews.¹ This is a part of his story.

"I knowed thar was a chance o' not coming back at all, but it didn't make no difference. I knowed I'd as good a chance as any, *an' 't wa' for th' doctor, an' 'is life's worth many*, an' somehow I cou'dn't let a man go out like dat wi'out tryin' fur un, an' I think us all felt th' same.

"Us 'ad a good strong boat an' four oars, an' took a hot kettle of tea an' food for a week,

¹ "Adrift on an Ice-pan" (Houghton Mifflin).

for us thought u'd 'ave t' go far an' p'rhaps lose th' boat an' 'ave t' walk ashore un th' ice. I di' 'ope to find the doctor alive an' kept lookin' for a sign of un on th' pans. 'Twa' no' easy gettin' to th' pans wi' a big sea runnin'! Th' big pans ud sometimes heave together an' near crush th' boat, an' sometimes us 'ad t' git out an' haul her over th' ice t' th' water again. Then us come t' the slob ice where th' pan 'ad ground together, an' 't was all thick, an' that was worse'n any. Us saw th' doctor about twenty minutes afore us got t'un. 'E was wavin' 'is flag an' I seen 'im. 'E was on a pan no bigger'n this flor, an' I dunno whatever kept un fro' going abroad, for 't wasn't ice, 'twas packed snow. Th' pan was away from even th' slob, floatin' by hisself, an' th' open water all roun', an' 'twas just across fro' Goose Cove, an' outside o' that there'd been no hope. I think th' way th' pan held together was on account o' th' dogs' bodies meltin' it an' 't froze hard durin' the night. 'E was level with th' water an' th' sea washin' over it all th' time.

“ When us got near un, it didn' seem like

'twas th' doctor. 'E looked so old and 'is face such a queer colour. 'E was very solemn-like when us took un an' th' dogs on th' boat. No un felt like sayin' much, an' 'e 'ardly said nothin' till us give 'un some tea an' loaf an' then 'e talked. I s'pose 'e was sort o' faint-like. Th' first thing 'e said was, how wonderfu' sorry 'e was o' gettin' into such a mess an' givin' we th' trouble o' comin' out for un. Us tol' un not to think o' that; us was glad to do it for un, an' 'e'd done it for any one o' we, many times over if 'e'e ad th' chance;—an' so 'e would. An' then 'e fretted about th' b'y 'e was goin' to see, it bein' too late to reach un, an' us tol' un 'is life was worth so much more'n th' b'y, fur 'e could save others an' th' b'y couldn'. But 'e still fretted.

“ 'E 'ad ripped th' dog harnesses an' stuffed th' oakum in th' legs o' 'is pants to keep un warm. 'E showed it to we. An' 'e cut off th' tops o' 'is boots to keep the draught from 'is back. 'E must 'a' worked 'ard all night. 'E said 'e droled off once or twice, but th' night seemed wonderfu' long.

“ Us took un off th’ pan at about half-past seven, an’ ’ad a ’ard fight gettin’ in, th’ sea still runnin’ ’igh. ’E said ’e was proud to see us comin’ for ’un, and so ’e might, for it grew wonderful cold in th’ day, and th’ sea so ’igh the pan couldn’ ’a’ lived outside. ’E wouldn’ stop when us got ashore, but must go right on, an’ when ’e ’ad dry clothes an’ was a bit warm, us sent un to St. Anthony with a team.

“ Th’ next night, an’ for nights after, I couldn’ sleep. I’d keep seein’ that man standin’ on th’ ice, an’ I’d be sorter half-awake like sayin’, ‘ But not th’ doctor. Sure *not th’ doctor.*’ ”

As Grenfell on the boat came into the little village harbour he found every man, woman and child there thrilled with joy that “ the beloved physician,” whom they had given up for lost, was found, and that on that Easter Monday morning he whom they thought dead was alive.

He could not walk, for his feet were severely frost bitten—as were his hands. He stumped ashore with his feet covered with rags and oakum, his body in the blood-smeared skins of his dogs. So they set him in a sledge and hauled him over

the snow back to his hospital, where he lay in bed in the agony of getting life back into frozen hands and feet.

In his house to-day is a bronze tablet. On it are these words

To the Memory of
Three Noble Dogs

Moody

Spy

Watch

Whose lives were given

For mine on the ice

April 21st, 1908.

WILFRED GRENFELL.

St. Anthony.

CHAPTER XI

DOWN TO THE SEA IN A SHIP

WHEN you go aboard the *Strathcona* (which was presented to the Mission in 1899 by Lord Strathcona), you come on a strange blend of smells. There is the fragrant, pungent odour of piles of branches and logs, of fir and juniper, spruce and birch, to feed into her hungry furnaces; for coal is a costly luxury on the Labrador coast. There is, at times, also the rank stench of whale-meat for the powerful dogs who drag the *komatik* across the snow and ice to take the doctor and his stores to a lonely settlement where a patient awaits him. And if it is the right time of day and you stray along the afterdeck fragrant smells come up from the cook's galley.

Cutting wood is a long stiff work and even wood costs money; so the *Strathcona* helps out her engines with sails. Original sails they are in some ways, for, with the main mast in the

place where the foremast usually stands, i.e. ketch-rigged, the doctor carries above his main-sail an oblong top sail. With the six sails all set to a stout breeze the ship runs three knots an hour faster than she can on her engines alone. In other words the engines can pull five knots out of her, and her sails lift the number to eight.

Built at Dartmouth in Devonshire, she was fitted at Yarmouth in 1900, and has run ever since, though her iron plates are getting thin.

If you stand with the doctor at the wheel and are allowed to steer, you will read round the circle of the wheel the words, "Jesus saith, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." At the peak of the main-mast flies the blue pennant with the words, "God is love."

There is a sound of splashing on the deck. The doctor, stripped to the skin, has let a bucket down over the side with a rope into the Arctic water, and, pulling it up, has poured the glittering cascade over himself in the sparkling morning air. He is a great believer in the healing and strengthening of the whole man that comes

through letting the water, the sun and the air play on the naked body.

His young visitor aboard ship lying down in the cabin under four folded blankets feels himself to be a flabby decadent in comparison with this vigorous, braced doctor treading the deck up above in perfect athletic trim.

This early morning thrill of the bucket of cold water is sometimes varied by a favourite exploit of the doctor's (though it is not often a possible one) to dive off the ice-platform of a floe into the ocean.

Arising out of these dawn-activities we hear of a slip of paper put up in the doctor's cabin of the *Strathcona* that shows that Mrs. Grenfell is a humorist too, and happily not too overawed with the fame of her husband. He is an incorrigible early-riser, so she pinned up there by his little mirror a picture of a caterpillar lecturing to a group of worms, showing a bird eating a worm. The caterpillar is saying, "Now, remember, dear children, the lesson for to-day—the disobedient worm that would persist in getting up too early in the morning."

Restless and active, Dr. Grenfell must be out with the dawn. The red light coming up across the glowing ice and snow, with the sea between the ship and the rocky shore all blues and mauves, finds him at the bows ready to have the ship "up anchor" and out along the coast. With him is Fritz, sniffing the morning air,—Fritz the wonder-dog, the smooth-coated, strong, big, kindly but grimly fighting dog, of unknown ancestry—though with Newfoundland somewhere in that giant form—who worships his master and fears nothing. Fritz is brown and black, "like toast burned in the making," says Mr. Fullerton Waldo.¹

The morning breeze blows through the doctor's crisp, grey hair. Watching him there at the wheel you see the essential Grenfell—the Grenfell that is one with the Sir Richard who faced fifty odd great Spanish ships with his one little ship, the *Revenge*, the Grenfell who serves the King of kings, whose blue pennon flies from the mainmast, with the heroic daring with which Sir Richard served his Queen Elizabeth. His

¹ With Grenfell on the Labrador." See Preface.

grey-brown eyes shine in his bronzed face above his brown sweater. His grey flannel trousers are tucked into high leather boots.

His ship is itself an almost living expression of himself. She, he will tell you, has towed nineteen little boats at once out of peril into safety. She has weathered storms when every other ship in the area has gone ashore or foundered. She has rescued Finns, Labradorians and many others from wrecks. She has carried the doctor to thousands of patients and borne patients from isolated cabins to the hospital where life is given back to them.

If you want to see Dr. Grenfell in the very essence of his nature and yet discover that there is that within him that goes beyond your deepest plumb-line or your farthest vision, you must see him on that ship in conflict with elemental enemies.

First watch him when the *Strathcona* is fighting a gale, say off Cape Norman, with the long Atlantic combers breaking across the deck and the wind thrumming and shrieking in the rigging while the good ship leans over under more

canvas than any other skipper dare carry and the gulls shriek above his masthead. There with the Doctor at the wheel the fight of the soul and mind and man (incorporate in ship and his seamanship) is pitted against the stupendous forces of ocean and wind, fog and rock. This lifts him to ecstasy. To make heaven for him, add to it the terrific fight of the Strait ice with the Atlantic ice when, as Dr. Grenfell says, "They go at each other, with a roaring and rending like huge wild animals, rampant and foaming and clashing their tusks."

There at the wheel, as his friend Fullerton Waldo says, "as he looks out over the sea and guides the prow, as if it were a sculptor's chisel, through calm or storm, there comes into his eyes a look as of communing with a far country; his soul has gone to a secret, distant coast where no man and but one woman can follow."

There is, however, another fight that thrills him; indeed, he takes the fight with the storm to reach and win the other fight; it is when he fights Death across the body of a man. Armed with scalpel and rubber gloves, anæsthetics and

antiseptics ; allied with sun and air and food and the spirit of healing, he concentrates every force in his being on the furious fight with disease and death. And every port in Labrador ought to be marked on the map with the crossed swords that show a battle—a battle to which the *Strathcona* has carried him ; and that he has won against death ; a battle in a war that has left behind it, not graves and maimed, limping bodies, but happy homes to which those who seemed dead have been made alive again.

Dr. Grenfell writes his books or scribbles the log of the *Strathcona*, or jots the record of his patients, lying face down on the floor of the cabin as the ship heaves and rolls in a gale or perched on a pile of fir logs on the deck. When he has scribbled the MS. with his pencil in the midst of a rush of work and carried it home with him, Mrs. Grenfell will take it and set the ragged sentences in order and mend the rents in the clothes with which the thought has been hurriedly dressed.

Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell keep eternally young. He admits that he proposed to her within a few

hours of meeting her on the *Mauretania*. She, startled, said, "But you do not even know what my name is."

"That doesn't matter," came the swift reply. "I know what it is going to be."

It is characteristic that he won even this—the best victory of his life—upon the sea.

Soon he was near the shores of Lake Michigan at the beautiful home of Mrs. MacClanahan and her daughter, Anna Elizabeth Caldwell MacClanahan, who has ever since been the comrade of the doctor in his enterprises and adventures.

They play together like children. They will chase one another round the deck of the *Strathcona*, throwing bits of firewood off the pile at one another in a fight that is fast and furious, while (as Fullerton Waldo, who has watched the game, tells us), "the distracted Fritz, the dog, cannot make up his mind whether he is in duty bound to bite his mistress or his master."

Indeed, Dr. Grenfell will invent a game at any moment anywhere. It happened, for instance, that I was in Ephesus a few weeks after he was there, and found that in the street outside the

theatre, in which the "Diana of the Ephesians" riot took place, Dr. Grenfell had suddenly improvised a dramatic fight in which he was St. Paul trying to force his way into the theatre, while his friends were the Apostle's friends trying to prevent him from going into peril of death.

The *Strathcona*, however, is not only a ship of passage to carry him to his battles with death; she is herself the scene of those fights. For she is a miniature hospital with a few bunks for patients (the *Torquay* cot, for instance, and others). The doctor's operating theatre is the spot at the foot of the companion ladder under the hatchway, which is usually blocked as to light by the heads of other waiting patients who watch the operation with eager curiosity. The light that shines on the operating tables comes from a hanging paraffin lamp.

When the *Strathcona* puts into a small harbour instantaneously boats put out and are all around her with people clamouring for healing. Some will be taken aboard and carried down the coast to St. Anthony's Hospital, or up to Battle Harbour Hospital. There will almost always be

men with great swollen painful forearms. They have cut or rubbed themselves, so that the skin has broken and the offal of cod or some other fish that the man is cleaning infects the arm and poisons it. These swellings the fishermen call "water-whelps." When Dr. Grenfell's lance has let out the pus from the swollen arm, disinfectant has been applied, and the arm is comfortable, there comes a light into the fisherman's eye that is a signal that he would do anything in the world for this doctor who has come something like two thousand miles from his homeland to "heal the sick."

Many of course have to be taken back to the hospital for cure. So the *Strathcona's* nose is turned toward the south and to the well-known harbour where the principal hospital is situated.

Sailing into the St. Anthony harbour you come to a clean double-decked dock. From it tiny tramways run to all parts of Dr. Grenfell's settlement round the harbour. On the rails are little hand-cars that carry goods up to the different buildings.

One line runs to the clean, well-arranged, simple, but efficient hospital. To that dock one ship, the *Prospero*, has brought in a single summer on four journeys two hundred and fifty patients for the hospital. Here in one angle of the hospital is the verandah in which the lung patients take their sunbaths in the crisp healing air. Inside the hospital are the wards where the doctor will have the windows flung open. Over there is the operating room, and beyond the X-ray apparatus.

Here in this ward is a man with a badly-poisoned hand that has been cleaned out and disinfected and bound ; apart from hospital he would have lost his hand ; and with his hand he would have lost his power to earn a livelihood sailing after the fish and seal. Over there is a little boy with twisted feet whom the doctor is strengthening in his limbs, so that he will be able to run about like others, and when he is a man, sail the seas and earn his living. There is a woman who is nearly blind with cataract ; in a few weeks she will be going back home with her eyes clear and strong so that she can run her

house again and look after her husband and children.

So we might run through the beds in the wards and find in each a story of lives saved or homes saved from misery ; and we should, as we came out, see new meaning in the words that are over the hospital. " Faith, hope and love abide, but the greatest of these is love."

From the dock of St. Anthony's Harbour another little tramway runs with boxes of food-stuff from the ship to the Orphanage, where thirty-five children, who have neither father nor mother, live and grow sound and strong in body, mind and spirit ; with rows of small beds in the light, bright dormitory and a happy chatter all over the place. Over the entrance to that house runs this inscription, " Suffer little children to come unto Me."

The little tram-line carries a load of wool from the dock in its small hand truck to the Industrial School, where the boys and girls make strong, attractive rugs, on which are designs of cheerful polar bears and seals and fur-clad Eskimos. Other buildings, small and

large, make up the harbour settlement. Here steam is seen surging out of a fine modern laundry; there the buzz of the lathe and the song of the saw draw our eyes to the machine and carpenter's shop; yonder is the little school of the settlement; farther on the co-operative store side by side with a trim little inn.

The co-operative store has a very striking sign-board hanging. On one side is a ship with the name *Spot Cash*; she is in the midst of a tremendous tempest with waves threatening to engulf her, and mighty icebergs that look like crushing her. Beneath the ship is this inscription:

“There's no sinking her.”

If you walk round and look at the other side of the signboard, you discover a team of powerful Labrador dogs—the famous fierce and powerful “huskies” dragging a sled laden with boxes to the door of a settler. Underneath this picture are the words:

“Spot cash is always the leader.”

What, we may well ask, does this astonishing sign mean? It is really the sign of one of Dr.

Grenfell's fiercest battles. He found that some traders were making disgraceful profit out of the poor settlers by barter. They would bring tea or pork or clothing fabrics, and change them for skins of sometimes ten or even twenty times the value of the food that they brought. So Dr. Grenfell, in face of a storm of criticism, set up a system of co-operative store-keeping by which the settlers bought and sold (so to speak) to themselves.

Some Jersey cattle ; a bird-house with the inscription, " Praise the Lord, ye birds of wing," and the homes of the workers of the little settlement and hospital complete the picture of this industrial colony, on which Dr. Grenfell can look down with gratified and excusable pride in some rare hour of leisure spent in the little tea-house on top of the hill overlooking harbour and colony and sea.

If you went up to his home by the hill, you would stand with the doctor there in the wide and open window of the living-room looking out on the hill, all wild and wooded, covered with snow sparkling in the crisp sunlight of the cold

clear air. In the fireplace logs crackle and burn merrily—just as Grenfell's own spirit burns with a clear, warming, merry, crackling flame of happy radiance.

In the glass-enclosed, verandah porch on the wall are the great brown, spreading antlers of a reindeer, with snow-shoes, fishing rods and reels ; a rifle and a shot-gun, and a hanging-bowl of healthy blue lobelia—South Africa's flower blooming near the Arctic circle. If it were in the short summer you would see out by the paths the fragrant flowers of purple monkshood, pink fireweed and blue lupins.

Close to the doctor's elbow, where he can reach a hand out, when he can snatch time to read, stand those three books of that tremendous and splendid giant wanderer—the six-feet four-inch lover of gipsies, George Borrow—"Lavengro," "Romany Rye," and "The Bible in Spain." Near by is that other book of wandering on the open road, Kipling's "Kim"—that alluring Indian waif of mischief and loyalty who is "the little friend of all the world." In a place by themselves he sets the books that tell the story

of heroes of action. His heroes include General Gordon, Lord Lawrence of Indian Mutiny fame and Havelock and Outram. Action and laughter are always with him ; so beside the lives stand the humorists. He chuckles endlessly over Mark Twain's " Tom Sawyer," and " Huckleberry Finn," while he loves W. W. Jacobs' great, bluff, rolling sailor-men as though they were real, living persons.

If you opened his Bible you would be astonished to find two names on the fly-leaf with these words written beside them :

" My inspirers."

Who are these two ? They are George Borrow—the man who loved to tramp the open road, would fight the bullying, great tinker in Dingley Dell, and walked Europe from end to end, talking over a dozen languages as he sold Bibles as colporteur for the Bible Society—and an old picture of a man looking through a telescope—Jeremiah Horrox.

Who, then, was Jeremiah Horrox ? He was a quiet, lonely, country clergyman, the son of a farmer's son, who in 1640, nearly three centuries

ago, was the first man to observe the transit of Venus, and thus to help forward the astronomical thought that has changed so much life for the world. "It inspires me to think what a poor, lonely clergyman could do," says Dr. Grenfell.¹

The hours for rest are few, however; even when he plans a little leisure an incident like the following will occur.

Over the telegraph line at St. Anthony a message came ticking:

"Do your best to come and operate me I have an abscess under right tonsil will give you coal for your steamer am getting pretty weak.

"Captain J. N. Coté,
"Long Point."

Hardly is that wire through before another follows from Captain Coté (who is a French-Canadian), "Please come as fast as you can to operate me in the throat and save my life."

Dr. Grenfell at once sees the scene in his

¹ This story is told in full by Fullerton Waldo, "Grenfell on the Labrador." Revell. 1920.

mind's eye. Captain Coté is the keeper of an important lighthouse a hundred miles away to the east, round through the Straits of Belle Isle and across to the other shore past Blanc Sablon Bay.

The promise of coal was, of course, not in the nature of an attempt to lure Dr. Grenfell. The suffering lighthouseman knew that his life might depend on speed and that coal could ill be spared by the *Strathcona*. It was simply a promise to refill her bunkers if she used her coal in getting to him rapidly.

So Dr. Grenfell cast off the steamship and put her out to sea, sailing first north and then swinging west through the short cut of Carpoon Tickle. But the wind was dead in their teeth through the Strait. The gale piled up the waters against the *Strathcona*; so they anchored in shelter. Haste was essential; but the *Strathcona* had once steamed all night against such a head wind as this, and had in the morning found herself just where she had been at nightfall; and tons of coal wasted in fuel.

The first faint, grey tinges of dawn found the

screw of the steamer again throbbing. Dr. Grenfell cut every corner and got every ounce out of her engines to hurry on to save the man whose breathing was being gradually stopped by the swelling abscess that was choking him. Every sail is spread and tons of coal hurled into the furnaces as she careers diagonally across and down the Straits towards Blanc Sablon on the other side of the narrow straits—only some hundreds of yards short of the ten miles in width. As they butt nearer and nearer to the shore and the lighthouse, they see putting out a tubby motor-boat bumping over the waves.

Are they too late ?

No ; for there in the bows is Captain Coté himself. He has come out in order to get with the utmost swiftness into the doctor's hands on the hospital ship. Up he came on deck—very shaky and gasping. Down the companion ladder he was led into the saloon. The tin paraffin lamp was held to cast its rays down his throat. Dr. Grenfell gave him doses of novocaine as a local anæsthetic. Then the long scissors went down the throat ; the cut was made in the

abscess, and once more the lighthouse captain could breathe freely again.

Five and a half tons of coal had been used ; and that coal the Canadian Government restored in gratitude for the service to its valued lighthouse officer.

The Captain, now that the agony was over, was glad of fresh faces to look at and new minds to share ideas with. He told how for eighteen days the fog had never lifted and no ship had been sighted, though many unseen ships must have been guided by his light, which had burned all those eighteen days—using two thousand gallons of oil ; while his fog-horn—blown by fifteen horse-power petrol-engines—bellowed right across the ten miles of water in the Straits and could be heard on the opposite shore.

The doctor (after the grateful lighthouse man had gone ashore) put out once more to the sea in his ship with, so to speak, another scalp at his belt, another life, not taken, but saved ; out again,

To the gull's way and the whale's way
Where the wind's like a whetted knife.

* * * * *

On the Labrador coast the work of healing runs now from India Harbour Hospital in the north, past the school and dispensary at Domino Run, to Battle Harbour Hospital, and then across the Straits to St. Anthony's Hospital on the east coast of Newfoundland, down to the St. John's Seamen's Institute of which King George V. laid the foundation stone by touching a button in Buckingham Palace, which, by electric power, swung the stone into its place, two thousand miles away.

It is up and down these shores that Dr. Grenfell in the *Strathcona*, and the other ships, from the *Albert* through the *Sir Donald*, the *George B. Cluett*, the *Emma E. White*, and the rest that he used before her and will use after her, plies his traffic in daring loving-kindness and active healing good-will. Broken into by the period of service at the front during the war as a Major, and by his visits to America and Britain to strengthen the support of the work of the Deep-Sea Fishermen's Mission, Dr. Grenfell always swings back like a compass-needle to the Northern waters and the people whom he

knows and loves and who love him. That work he does—as he will be careful to explain—not in a spirit of painful sacrifice, but for the love of it—for the love of serving his God ; for the love of following in the footsteps of the Great Physician and for love of the sea that calls him. For, of him, as of so many of his blood, it is true, as John Masefield says, that :

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the
running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied ;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-
gulls crying.

THE END