FULLERTON LEONARD WALDO

GRENFELL: KNIGHT-ERRANT OF THE NORTH

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Содержание

Fullerton Leonard Waldo Grenfell: Knight-Errant of the North

I
A BOY AND THE SEA

"I wonder if Jim is ever going to get back! My, isn't it an awful storm!"

Wilfred Grenfell, then a small boy, stood at the window of his home in Cheshire, England, looking out across the sea-wall at the raging, seething waters of the Irish Sea.

The wind howled and the snowflakes beat against the window-panes as if they were tiny birds that wanted to get in.

"Mother," he pleaded, "can I put on my sweater and my rubber boots and go down on the beach and see if I can find Jim?"

"Yes," said his mother. "But wrap yourself up warmly, and don't stay long—and don't take any risks, will you, dear?"

Almost before the words were out of her mouth, Wilf was down the stairs and out in the roadway, where fishermen watched their little boats as they tossed at anchor riding out the storm.

Wilf stepped up to a big, grizzled mariner he knew, whom

every one called Andy.

"Andy, have you seen Jim?"

"Jim who?"

"Jim Anderson."

"Was he the chap that went out in the *Daisy Bell* about four hours ago?"

"Yes," said Wilf, trying to control himself, "and he wanted me to go with him, but–"

His words were cut short by a great wave that hurled itself against the wall. The spray leapt high over the stones and drenched Andy and the boy.

"It's lucky ye didn't go, boy," said Andy, solemnly. "We're watchin' for the boat now. My brother was on her, and two cousins o' my wife. She was a little craft, and a leaky one. We were goin' to patch her up an' make her fit. But we waited too long. An' now–" He drew his rough sleeve across his eyes.

The wind howled round their ears and the hail was smiting and stinging as though the storm had a devilish mind to drive them away.

"Why don't you go out in a boat and get them?" pleaded Wilf.

Andy shook his head. "It ain't that we're afraid," he said. "But there ain't a boat we have here that could ride those waves. The coast-guard tried—and now look!" He pointed to a heap of broken, white-painted timbers lying in the roadway, half-hidden from them by the whooping blizzard that threw its dizzying veils of snow before their eyes.

"That's the coast-guard's boat!" exclaimed Andy. "The sea picked her up, she did, and threw her right over the sea-wall as if she was an egg, an' mashed her flat. That shows how much of a chance there'd be for us to get through an' get back, supposin' we could find 'em. No, boy, we've got to wait."

"Look!" cried the lad, excitedly. "Please look, Andy. What's that bobbing up and down in the surf?"

The fisherman put to his eyes his worn and rusted spy-glass.

Then he gritted his teeth and bit his lip. "You stay up here on the road, boy. I got to climb down there and make sure."

Wilf stood at the sea-wall. He was barely tall enough to look over it.

He watched Andy clamber painfully down over the great rocks piled high against the outer face of the wall.

Every now and then a big wave would rise up, a green monster of hissing foam and fury, and throw itself on him like a wild animal trying to scare him back.

But men of that breed are not afraid. The stalwart figure, though often knocked down and half drowned, would struggle to his feet again and go on.

Wilf saw Andy pick up the—yes, it was a body—and put it on his shoulder, and come staggering toward the rocks. Then he clambered tediously over the stones, and Wilf saw whose body it was that Andy was carrying.

It was his boy friend Jim, who had gone out only a few hours before, with the sun on his fair hair, laughing and whistling and

shouting his gay farewell. "Be back in a little while, Wilf! Bring you a nice big fish for your supper. You want to have a good hot fire ready to cook it Better change your mind and come along." Never again would he hear that cheery hail of invitation to adventure.

Andy laid the little half-frozen figure down, carefully, tenderly, beside the wall.

"Too bad!" he said, "too bad! But the sea can be terrible cruel to the sons o' men. I wonder we keep goin' back to her as we do. Now I got to take the poor boy to his mother."

He picked up the body, and trudged off into the storm, toward the fishing-huts.

Wilf went back to his own house, thinking about the sea and how cruel it had been.

"Mother," he said, as they sat together talking over the tragedy, "isn't it queer that you can have such fun with the sea sometimes, swimming in it and rowing on it, and then all of a sudden it gets mad and kills somebody you love? Just suppose I'd gone out in the boat with Jim!"

Wilf thought it fine fun to go swimming, with the strong salt breeze to dry him off like a towel afterwards. In his ears the crying of sea-birds against grey clouds was the sweetest of music. He loved to have the surf knock him about, and the sun burn him red, and he didn't mind if pink jellyfish stung him now and then or a crab got hold of his toes. The roar of the surf sang him to sleep at night like an old nurse.

One day when the spring came, Wilf went out on the salt marshes, his gun over his shoulder, to shoot wild ducks.

He was a regular water-baby.

Round about him all sorts of sea-birds were wheeling and crying. The swift tidal currents found their way up-stream through the marshes.

Wilf, hot and tired, threw the gun on the sand, took off his clothes, and plunged into the clear, cold water.

It carried him along like a boat, and he clambered out on a green island.

"It's just like Robinson Crusoe!" he told himself. "Here I am, all alone, and nobody in sight. I can do just as I please!"

He ran up and down in the sunlight, laughing and shouting in the wind and throwing his arms about.

How good it felt to be alive!

"Guess I'll go back and get the gun," he said, "and see if I can't shoot one of those wild ducks. I'll make mother a present of it for dinner to-night."

It wasn't so easy to swim back. He had to fight against the current that had carried him to the little green island.

It was less effort to leave the stream and scramble through the reeds along the muddy bank.

Sometimes a stone or a shell hurt his foot, but he only laughed and went on.

"You just wait, you ducks," he said. "You'd better look out when I begin to shoot!"

He came to where the gun lay on his clothes, where he had been careful to place it so that no sand would get into the muzzle.

He loaded it and fired, and it kicked his bare shoulder like a mule.

But he had the satisfaction of seeing one of the ducks fall into the water, where the stream was at its widest, perhaps a hundred feet from the bank.

Here the water ran swift and deep, and it was going to be a hard fight to get that bird.

"I wish I had Rover with me now!" he told himself. Usually the dog went with him and was the best of company,—but this time he must be his own retriever.

He plunged into the stream again and swam with all his might toward the bird.

If he had been getting it for himself, he would have been tempted to give up. But he couldn't bear to quit when he thought of what a treat it would be for the whole family—a nice, fat, juicy, wild duck.

The bird was being carried rapidly up-stream by the force of the waters.

"No, sir!" said Wilf to something inside him that wanted to go back. "We're going to get that bird if we have to swim half-way across England!"

It was almost as if the bird had come back to life. It seemed to be swimming away from him.

Painfully, inch by inch, he began to gain on it. At last, when

his strength was all but gone, he caught up with it, and clutched the feathery prize. Then he swam with it to the shore.

Panting and happy, he lay down on the bank a moment to rest.

"The family won't have to go without dinner after all!" he laughed.

He grabbed the duck by the feet, flung it over his shoulder, and trotted back to his clothes and the gun. It was fun to go home with the bird that he had shot himself. But if there had been no bird, he would have been whistling or singing just as happily.

On one of his birthdays he was out in the wide, lonely marshes five miles from home. It was more fun for him to go hunting, barefoot, than to have a party with a frosted cake and twinkling candles. So, as the nicest kind of birthday present, he had been given the whole day, to do just as he pleased.

To-day, as there was still on the ground the snow of early spring, he wore shoes, but it was cold work plashing about in those slimy pools and the slippery mud among the sedges.

The birds he was after especially were the black-and-white "oyster catchers," which when it was low tide would always be found making a great racket above the patches of mussels which formed their favorite food.

They were handsome birds, with gay red bills, and a bunch of them made a fine showing when the little hunter carried them home over his shoulder.

This time he had shot several of the birds, and then the problem was to get them and bring them in.

There they lay—away off yonder, on a little tuft of, the coarse green meadow-grasses, but between the hunter and the game was a swirling inlet of salt water, and he couldn't tell by looking at it how deep it was.

So, gun over shoulder, he started cautiously to wade out toward that birthday dinner he meant to bring home.

First it was calf-deep—then knee-deep—then nearly waist-deep.

The cold water made his teeth chatter, but he didn't care about that. All he thought of was the precious gun. That was his chief treasure, and his first joy in life.

Deeper he went, and nearer he got—the gun now held in both hands high over his head, as he floundered along.

And just then a dreadful thing happened.

He stepped into a hole, and it suddenly let him down so that the water was over his head, and his up reached arms, and the precious gun too!

In the shock and the surprise, he let go of the weapon, and it sank out of sight. He had no fear of drowning, and he struck out manfully when he found himself in the deep water.

But he had to give up the idea of finding the gun, and the birds were left where they lay on the farther side of the treacherous channel.

It was a long, hard run home, over those five wet and freezing miles, and the boy's heart was heavy because of the loss of that pet gun.

All the while he was learning everything that outdoors could teach him, and he owes to that breezy, sun-shot, storm-swept gipsying during the summer vacations the beginning of the stock of good health that has made him such a strong, useful, happy man, able to do no end of hard work without getting tired, and always finding it fun to live.

II
SCHOOL—AND AFTER

This Robin Hood kind of life in the open went on till Wilf was fourteen. Then he was sent away to Marlborough College—a boy's school which had 600 pupils. Marlborough is in the Chalk Hills of the Marlborough Downs, seventy-five miles west of London. The building, dating from 1843, is on the site of a castle of Henry I.

The first day Wilf landed there he looked about him and felt pretty forlorn.

"I wonder if I'll ever get to know all those boys?" he asked himself.

When he was at home, he had a room all his own or shared one with his brother. Here it was so different.

He counted the beds in his dormitory. There were twenty-five of them. "How can a fellow ever get to sleep in such a crowd?" he wondered. "Perhaps they'll toss me in a blanket, the way they did in 'Tom Brown at Rugby.' Well, if they try anything like that, they'll find I'm ready for them!"

He felt the mattress. "Pretty hard compared with the beds at home, but no matter. Let's see what the schoolroom is like."

So he went into the "Big School" as it was called. Three hundred boys were supposed to study there.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Wilf. "Don't see how a fellow ever gets his lessons in a place like this."

It was as busy and as noisy as a bear-garden. Here and there a boy with his hands over his ears was really looking at a book. But most of the boys were talking, laughing, singing as if there were no such thing as lessons.

Sometimes a master might look in, or a monitor would wander down the aisle. But most of the time there was nothing to keep a boy from following his own sweet will.

"I say, Smith!" one called out, "lend me a shilling, will you? I want to buy Grisby's white rat, and I haven't got enough." A fat boy who looked as if he thought mostly of meal-times was telling everybody in his neighborhood: "I've just got a box from home. Jam and fruitcake and gooseberry tarts. Come and see me to-night in the dormitory, you fellows."

Somebody else called out: "My knife's so dull I'll never get my name carved on this desk. Give me your knife, Willoughby: it's sharper."

There were boys having fencing-matches with rulers across the aisle. There were others who took no end of pains to make paper arrows, or spitballs that would stick to the ceiling. In the corners of their desks might be bird's eggs in need of fresh air. Some of the boys were reading adventure stories, covered up to look like school-books.

In the midst of this Babel, you were expected to get your lessons as well as you could.

When it came to meal-times, you went into what was called "Big Hall," where four hundred boys ate together.

The beef was tough enough to make a suitcase: the milk was like chalk and water: the potatoes would have done to plaster a ceiling or cement a wall. How different it all was from the good though simple fare at home!

"Want to join a brewing company?" asked the boy across the table.

"What's a brewing company?" inquired Wilf.

"We buy sausages and cook 'em in saucepans over the fire—when we can find a fire."

"Yes, you can count me in," said Wilf. So it didn't make so much difference after that, if he couldn't eat what was set before him at the table.

But usually the boys brought robust appetites to their meals, for they went in heavily for all forms of athletics. The boys who didn't make the teams had to drill in the gymnasium or run round and round an open air track a mile and a half long. If you shirked, the boys themselves saw to it that you got punished.

When Wilf came home to Cheshire for the long vacations he found some poor little ragamuffins who had no fun in their lives, and started a club for them in his own house. There were no boy scouts in those days, when Sir Robert Baden-Powell and Ernest Thompson Seton were little boys themselves. It was just taken for granted that boys would be boys, and it was hoped that they would grow up to be good men, if after school hours they were

allowed to run loose in the streets. But Grenfell had a different idea.

He turned the dining-room on Saturday evenings into a gymnasium.

He pushed aside the table and chucked the chairs out of the window.

"Now any of you fellows who want to can get busy on the parallel bars," he told them, "or if you like you can go out into the back yard and pitch quoits. I'll take on anybody who wants to box with me."

The boys thought it was heaps of fun. They could hardly wait for Saturday night to come, because it meant the rare sport of banging another boy in the nose, which was much more satisfactory than throwing stones at a policeman.

After he was big enough, he used to go to lodging-houses where men slept who were down and out. He knew that drink had brought them low, and he wanted to show them better things to do.

The saloon-keepers were against him from the start. He was depriving them of some of their best customers.

"You're spoiling our business," they grumbled.

At last they made up their minds they would "get" him.

They collected a "gang" and one night they locked the door, backed up against it, and shouted:

"Come on, young feller! We're goin' to fix you!"

They rolled up their sleeves, clenched their fists, and sailed

into him full-tilt like a big, angry crowd of human bees.

Grenfell was ready for them. It was like a fight in the movies.

He had kept himself in fine condition, for he was in training to play football and he was known to be a first-rate boxer.

They flew at him, roaring to encourage one another. There were six or eight of them, but they were afraid of his fists.

"Come on, boys!"

"Hit 'im a good 'un, Bill! 'E's spoilin' our business, that's what 'e's doin'."

"Push in his face. 'Ammer 'im good 'n' proper!"

"We'll show 'im what's what!"

"'E's a noosance. Le's get rid of 'im. Lemme get at 'im once. I'll show 'im!"

So they came on, clumsy with drink, but their maudlin outcries didn't scare Grenfell a bit.

He was waiting for them,—cool, quiet, determined.

Their diet was mostly bad ale and beer, or whiskey: Grenfell was all muscle, from constant exercise and wholesome diet—the roast beef of old England, whole wheat bread, plenty of rich milk.

They were no match for him.

On they came, one after another. The first lunged out heavily; Grenfell parried the blow with his right hand and landed his left on the jaw. The ruffian fell to the floor like a log of wood and lay there. As he fell, he clutched at the corner of the table and overturned it with a mighty crash on top of him.

The second man got a blow on the nose that sent him over to the corner to wipe away the blood. The rest Grenfell laid out flat on the floor in one, two, three order.

They came at him again, those who were able to go on. They got their arms around him but he threw them off. They kicked him and he knocked them down again. They bit and clawed and scratched and used all the foul tactics that they knew.

They tried to get him from both sides—they rushed at him from the front and the rear at the same time.

Agile as a cat he turned and faced them whichever way they came, and those quick, hard fists of his shot out and hit them on the chin or on the nose till they bled like stuck pigs and bawled for mercy.

Grenfell stood there amid the wrecked furniture, his clothes torn, bleeding and triumphant. "Want any more?" he smiled.

When they saw that all combined they were no match for this wildcat they had roused to action, they said:

"Well, le's call it quits. Le's have peace."

They never tackled him again. They didn't know much, to be sure, but they knew when they had had enough of "a first-class fighting man."

Then Grenfell started camping-parties with poor boys who hadn't any money to spend for holidays. The first summer he had thirteen at the seashore.

A boy had to take a sea-bath before he got his breakfast. No one could go in a boat unless he could swim. The beds were hay-

stuffed burlap bags. A lifeboat retired from service was more fun than Noah's Ark to keep the happy company afloat for a fishing-party or a picnic.

Next year there were thirty boys: then the number grew to a hundred, and more. Not one life was lost. How they loved it all! Especially when the boat, twelve boys at the oars, came plunging in, on the returning tide, with the boys all singing at the top of their voices:

> "Here we come rejoicing,
> Pulling at the sweeps"

to the rhythmic tune of "Bringing in the Sheaves." Then, when the boat's keel slid into the sand, it was a mad rush for the best supper boys ever ate.

His school days over, instead of going to Oxford University, Grenfell chose to enter the London Hospital, so as to take his examinations at London University later, and become a doctor.

While Grenfell was in the hospital, murder was quite the fashion in London. Many a time his patients had a policeman sitting behind a screen at the foot of the bed, ready to nab them if they got up and tried to climb out of a window.

One day, Sir Frederick Treves said to him: "Go to the North Sea, where the deep-sea fishermen need a man like you. If you go in January, you will see some fine seascapes, anyway. Don't go in summer when all of the old ladies go for a rest."

Grenfell turned the idea over and over in his mind. He had always loved the sea and been the friend of sailors and fishermen. He liked the thought of the help he could be as a doctor among them. So he decided to cast in his lot with the fishermen who go from England's East Coast into the brawling North Sea.

Yarmouth, about 120 miles northeast of London, is the headquarters of the herring fisheries, which engage about 300 vessels and 3,000 men. A short distance off the shore are sandbanks, and between these and the mainland Yarmouth Roads provides a safe harbor and a good anchorage for ships drawing eighteen or nineteen feet of water.

So one pitch-black and rainy night Grenfell packed his bag and went to Yarmouth. At the railway-station he found a retired fisherman with a cab that threatened to fall apart if you looked at it too hard. They drove a couple of miles alongshore in the darkness, and found what looked like two posts sticking out of the sand.

"Where's the ship?" asked Grenfell.

"Those are her topmasts," answered the sea-dog. "Tide's low. The rest of her is hidden by the wharf."

Grenfell scrambled over a hillock and a dim anchor-lantern showed him the tiny craft that for many days and nights was to be his tossing home in the great waters.

In answer to his hail, a voice called back cheerily: "Mind the rigging; it's just tarred and greased."

But Grenfell was already sliding down it, nimble as a cat,

though it was so sticky he had to wrench his hands and feet from it now and then.

The boat was engaged in peddling tobacco among the ships of the North Sea fishing-fleet, and for the next two months no land was seen, except two distant islands: and the decks were never free from ice and snow.

Aboard many of the boats to which they came the entire crew, skipper and all, were 'prentices not more than twenty years old. These lads got no pay, except a little pocket-money. Many of the crew were hard characters, and the young skippers were harder still. Often they had been sent to sea from industrial schools and reformatories.

One awkward boy had cooked the "duff" for dinner and burned it. So the skipper made him take the ashes from the cook's galley to the fore-rigging, climb to the cross-tree with the cinders one by one, and throw them over the cross-tree into the sea, repeating the act till he had disposed of the contents of the scuttle.

A boy who had not cleaned the cabin as he should was given a bucketful of sea water, and was made to spend the whole night emptying it with a teaspoon into another bucket, and then putting it back the same way.

Most of the boys were lively and merry, and always ready for a lark.

Grenfell, who has never been able to forget that he was once a boy, got along famously with them, and was hail-fellow-well-

met wherever he went.

Once, when he was aboard a little sailing-vessel, he was playing cricket on the deck, and the last ball went over the side.

He dived after it at once, telling the helmsman to "tack back." When the helmsman saw Grenfell struggling in the water, he got so rattled that it was a long time before he could bring the boat near him.

At last Grenfell managed to catch hold of the end of a rope that was thrown to him and climb aboard.

But the cricket ball was in his hand!

III
WESTWARD HO! FOR LABRADOR

"In eighteen hundred and ninety-two
Grenfell sailed the ocean blue–"

from Yarmouth to Labrador in a ninety-ton ketch-rigged schooner.

This wasn't such an abrupt change of base as it sounds, for it meant that the Royal Mission to the Deep Sea Fishermen, which works in the North Sea, had decided to send a "Superintendent" to the coast of the North Atlantic, east of Canada and north of Newfoundland, where many ships each summer went in quest of the cod.

If you will look on the map, you will readily see how Labrador lies in a long, narrow strip along the coast from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to Cape Chidley. This strip belongs to the crown colony of Newfoundland, the big triangular island to the south of the Straits of Belle Isle, and Newfoundland is entirely independent of the Dominion of Canada. Fishermen when they go to this region always speak of going to "the Labrador," and they call it going "down," not "up," when it is a question of faring north.

The tract that lies along the north shore of the St. Lawrence,

west of the narrow strip, is also called Labrador—but it belongs to Canada. Generally "Labrador" is used for the part that belongs to Newfoundland.

"Labrador" itself is a queer word. It is Portuguese. It means a yeoman farmer. The name was given to Greenland in the first half of the sixteenth century by a farmer from the Azores who was first to see that lonesome, chilly country. Thence the name was moved over to the peninsula between Hudson Bay and the Atlantic.

Cabot sailed along the coast in 1498, but the interior remained unseen by white men till the Hudson's Bay Company began to plant their trading-stations and send their agents for furs in 1831.

Jacques Cartier said Labrador was "the land God gave to Cain," and that there was "not one cartload of earth on the whole of it." Along the coast are mountains rising to 7,000 or even 8,000 feet. There are many lakes inland, 50 to 100 miles in length. Hamilton Inlet is 150 miles long, and from two to 30 miles wide. The Hamilton River which empties into it, in twelve miles descends 760 feet, with a single drop of 350 feet at the Grand Falls, the greatest in North America, surpassing even Niagara.

The population is about 14,500 in more than half a million square miles. There are some 3,500 Indians, 2,000 Eskimos, and 9,000 whites (along the coast and at the Hudson's Bay posts).

It was to such a "parish" that Grenfell came in 1892, that he might give the fishermen the benefit of his surgical knowledge

and practical experience acquired not only on the land but aboard the tossing ships in the North Sea.

A ninety-ton boat is a tiny craft in which to make the voyage across the Atlantic. Grenfell must have known just how Columbus felt, four hundred years ago, when he said to the sailors of his tiny caravels "Sail on! sail on!"

First there were head winds for eleven days.

"Wonder if the wind's ever goin' to quit blowin' against us!" muttered a sailor, as he coiled a rope to make a bed for a dog in the stern. "I'm about fed up with this kind o' thing."

The man to whom he spoke was in his bare feet, washing the deck with the hose. "What does anybody ever wanna go to Labrador for, anyhow?" he grumbled back. "It's a lot better in the North Sea. More sociable. You get letters from home an' tobacco regular. An' you can see somebody once in a while."

"Shore leave's no good to a fellow in Labrador," the first man went on, as he watched the dog turn round and round before lying down. "Ain't no place to go. No movies nor nuthin', just fish an' rocks an' people lookin' thin an' half-starved."

"You ever been there?"

"No, but I was talkin' with fellows that got shipwrecked there once. Gee whiz, what's that?"

"That? That's an iceberg. Didn't you ever see an iceberg before?"

"No. Looks like a ship under full sail, don't she?"

To the north out of the grey mist on the water loomed a

mountain of ice.

"Glad we didn't run into the old thing," the dog's friend went on. "They say what you see stickin' out o' the water's only a small part of it."

"Yes, that's right. 'Bout six-sevenths is under water. Lemme tell you, the fellers that sail a schooner like this up to the fishin' grounds have gotta know what they're about. Ever hear about the *Queen* an' how she got wrecked?"

"No."

"Well, it was a fog like it is over yonder, an' the *Queen* was off Gull Island, close to Cape St. John. She didn't know where she was. They didn't have no lighthouse in them days.

"Well sir, it was December, long toward Christmas an' the wind was howlin' like a pack o' wolves. The poor little ship—she wa'n't much bigger'n this here boat o' ours—drove plumb on the rocks.

"There was six passengers, one of 'em a lady. One of the men was a doctor—he was her brother.

"They got off the boat when she drove ashore an' they climbed up onto the top o' the island. They didn't have nothin' with 'em 'ceptin' only an old piece of a sail. What was that to feed on, all winter? They knew there wouldn't be anybody comin' that way till the nex' spring.

"The crew, they stayed on board: they said they was goin' to get off some o' the stuff for 'em all to eat while they was cooped up on the island waitin' for spring.

"But the storm done 'em dirt. The wind came on to blow harder'n ever, an' pretty soon the sea she just picked up the ship an' hauled her off and—crickety-crack!—she went slam-bang to pieces on the Old Harry Shoals. Didn't have no more chance than a paper bag at a picnic. No sir, there weren't one man saved out o' the whole crowd.

"So there was them six people stuck up on top o' the rock."

"Did they have to stay there all winter?"

"Now you wait a minute. I'm a-tellin' you. Some time 'long in April there was a hunter come that way duck-shootin'.

"He shot a duck an' it dropped in the big waves runnin' and jumpin' on the beach.

"He got out o' the boat to get it—an' it weren't there!

"'Mercy on us!' says he. 'I shot that duck just as sure as I'm soaked clean through. It musta fell right here. What's become o' it? Where's it gone to?'

"He looked round and looked round like Robinson Crusoe huntin' fer somebody. He looked up an' he looked down, an' it wa'n't no use. Wa'n't no duck there.

"'It musta been magic,' he says. 'Magic. Somethin' queer about this place!'

"Then he sees little pieces o' wood churnin' around in the foam.

"'What's happened here?' he says to himself. 'Musta been a ship went to pieces here some time.' 'Cause he found some o' the splinters had letters on 'em showin' they used to be parts o'

boxes, an' pretty soon he finds a life-preserver that says on it '*The Queen*, St. John's.'

"'Guess I'll climb up to the top o' the rock an' take a look,' says he. So up he climbs, the birds flappin' round him an' screamin' 'cause they're afraid maybe he's goin' to hurt their eggs.

"Up an' up he clumb, an' he gets up to the top. The grass is long an' green an' the soft yellow buttercups is pretty—but what he sees lyin' there in the buttercups ain't pretty at all.

"Six dead bodies lyin' there stretched out, with the piece o' the old torn sail over 'em. The bodies is fallin' to pieces, but in the fingers o' one is some flesh torn out o' the next one to it.

"Then he finds a little book with writin' in it where one of 'em had been writin' down as long as he could what happened.

"Well sir, what the writin' said was this. He couldn't hardly make it out it was so faint. It said by an' by they drew lots to see who was to be killed for the rest to eat."

Here the man with the dog drew a long sigh and said: "That's a fine kind of a country to be comin' to, ain't it, where things like that can happen? I'm glad I ain't in Doc Grenfell's rubber boots. He's goin' to stay. I thank my lucky stars I don't have to. I'll sure be glad to get back to Yarmouth once more. I used to think it was a hole in the ground, but it's heaven compared to what we're comin' to."

"Wait a minute, wait a minute!" said the other, "I ain't finished tellin' you. Lemme get through. I was sayin', they drew lots, an'—the lot fell to the lady."

"They was goin' to eat the lady!" exclaimed his comrade, in horror.

"Yes, sir, that's what they would 'a' done. But her brother he said he'd take her place."

"An' then what happened?"

"They don't know no more after that. The writin' stops there."

"Say," said the dog-fancier, disgusted, "that's no place to have the story stop. Get a fellow all strung up and then dump him off that way without knowin' how it ended."

The man with the hose began to bind up a leak with a bit of tarpaulin. "I ain't made it up outa my head," he said. "I'm just tellin' you what happened. An' it seems to me the story did have an end, all right, 'cause there they were all lyin' stretched out cold the way the hunter found 'em."

The listener shivered. "Say, can't you tell us a more cheerful yarn?"

The story-teller shook his head. "Mos' Newfoundland an' Labrador stories is like that, Bill," he said. "Grey, like the fog an' the face o' the sea.—Guess I'll go an' put on some more clothes. This wind sure does bite clear into the middle o' your bones."

"Yes," said the other, "an' the sea's gettin' colder every minute. Say, Jim, I hope the watch'll keep his eyes peeled to-night. I'd sure hate to run into any o' those there bergs. Don't like the looks o' that one we seen just now. One o' those'd be enough to send us all to Davy Jones's locker in a jiffy."

For five days more they ran on, all the time through dense

fog. Then—the grey mist lifted, and the lovely green of the land appeared. At least, it looked beautiful after so many days at sea.

But what was that? Over the evergreens a tall plume of black smoke rose.

"The place is burnin' up!" said Bill to Jim.

"I counted thirteen places where she's on fire. What is that anyway?"

"That's St. John's," answered Bill, a little proud of his knowledge. "Capital o' Newfoundland."

"Where're we gonna land, with this fire goin' on this way?"

"Dunno," said Bill. "We'll run in farther, 'n' then we can see."

Grenfell was at the prow, looking at the burning city. Some of the ships had burned down to the water, right at the wharves. Chimneys were standing up out of the ruins like broken, blackened fingers pointing at the sky.

People came running down through the smoke and the flames.

"Got anything to eat?" they cried.

"Not much!" shouted back Grenfell. "But what we've got you're welcome to!"

"Is there a doctor on board?" was the next hail.

"I'm a doctor," called Grenfell.

"Glory be!" came the answer. "There'll be plenty for you to do ashore, Doctor!"

So instead of rest and comfort after the long sea-voyage Grenfell and those with him had to peel off their coats and plunge right in and help with both hands right and left.

It was with heavy hearts a few days later that they said good-by and started north for Labrador where there were people who needed them even more than the burned-out folk of St. John's.

They ran across the Straits of Belle Isle, through which the River St. Lawrence flows to the Atlantic, and the sun flashed on a hundred icebergs at once, in a glorious procession.

The seabirds were fighting and crying over the fish.

The whales were leaping clean out of the sea, as if they were playing a game and having lots of fun.

Grenfell laughed aloud as he watched them. "I say, boys," he said to the sailors, "don't you wish you could jump out of the water like that?"

"I wish we had all the oil there is in all them whales!" said Bill, who had a very practical mind.

Into the very middle of the fishing-fleet they sailed.

Flags of welcome were run up to the mastheads of the schooners. There were about 30,000 Newfoundlanders in the whole fleet, on more than 100 schooners—and Grenfell's boat was a little bit of a thing compared with most of them.

But they all knew that the small boat had sailed clear across the sea to help them, and they all wanted to show how glad and grateful they were that a real doctor had come to their help.

Pretty soon the little boats coming from the schooners were flocking round them like ants about a sugar-bowl.

One man came after all the rest had gone.

His boat was little better than a bunch of boards with a dab

of tar here and there.

For a long time the rower sat still, looking up at Dr. Grenfell, who leaned over the rail gazing down at him.

By and by the fisherman broke the silence.

"Be you a real doctor, sir?"

"That's what I call myself," answered Grenfell.

"What's your name?"

"Grenfell."

"Well, Dr. Greenpeel, us hasn't got no money, but–"

He stopped.

"I don't care about the money," Grenfell answered. "What's the trouble?"

"There's a man ashore wonderful sick, Doctor, if so be you'd come 'n' see him."

"Sure I'll come!"

Dr. Grenfell was over the rail and in the fisherman's poor tub in a jiffy.

He was taken to a mean sod hut.

The only furniture was a stove that looked like a big tin can burst open.

The floor was of stones from the beach: the walls were mud. Six children were sitting in a corner, about as dirty as the mud walls, and just as quiet.

A woman in rags was giving spoonfuls of water to a man who lay on the one bed coughing till it seemed the poor fellow must cough himself to pieces.

"Well, well," said the Doctor. "We must fix him up." He didn't tell the woman that her husband had both consumption and pneumonia.

He left medicine and food and told the poor wife what to do. Then he had to go on to others who needed him.

It was two months before he could come back to this lonely spot—and then he found outside the hut a grave, covered with snow.

On that first voyage Dr. Grenfell had to see nine hundred people who needed his help!

One was an Eskimo, who had fired off a cannon to celebrate when the Moravian mission boat came in.

No wonder he felt like celebrating—for the boat only came once a year!

The gun blew up—and took off both of the poor fellow's arms.

He lay on his back for two weeks, the stumps covered with wet filthy rags. When Grenfell finally got there, it was too late to save him.

They do queer things on that coast when they have no doctor handy to tell them what to do.

For instance, a baby had pneumonia, and the mother dosed it with reindeer-moss and salt water, because that was all she had to give it!

A woman was done up in brown paper so the bugs wouldn't bite her.

One man set up in business as a doctor and gave his patients

a bull's heart dried and powdered for medicine.

Another man said he knew how to get rid of boils. "I cut my nails on a Monday," was his cure.

They would take pulley-blocks and boil them in water and then drink the water.

To tell how the wind blew they would hang the head of a fox or wolf or a seal from the rafters and watch the way it swung. A wolf or fox would face the wind, they said, but a seal's head would turn away from it.

For rheumatism you must wear a haddock's fin-bone.

Green worsted tied round your wrist was a sure cure for hemorrhage.

If you had trouble with your eyes, you ought to get somebody to blow sugar into them.

Little sacks full of prayers tied round your neck were a great help in any sort of sickness.

A father tied a split herring round his boy's throat for diphtheria.

This shows what Dr. Grenfell was up against when he came to Labrador with his "scientific notions" about what ought to be done for sick people.

One day, just as the Doctor had cast anchor between two little islands far out at sea, a little rowboat came to him from a small Welsh brigantine.

"Doctor!" a man called out. "Would ye please be so good an' come ashore an' see a poor girl? She's dyin'!"

The Doctor didn't need to be urged. He went ashore in the rowboat. In a rough bunk in a dark corner of a fishing-hut lay a very pretty girl, about eighteen years old.

All summer long, poor thing—the only woman among many men—she had been cooking, mending, helping to clean and dry and salt the fish.

Nobody asked if she was tired. Nobody asked if she wanted a vacation. She had done her faithful best—and now, worn out, she was cast aside like an old shoe.

One look told the Doctor that she was dying.

The captain of the brigantine, who was tender-hearted, and really cared for her, had decided that this was a case of typhoid. He told the fishermen to keep away—for the germs might get into the fish they were preparing to send off to market.

So he had been the nurse. But all he could do was feed her. For two weeks—during part of which time she was unconscious—she had not been washed, and her bed had not been changed.

Outside it was a dark night, and the fog hung low and menacing over the water. The big trap-boat with six men, and the skipper's sons among them, had been missing since morning.

The skipper had stayed home to take care of the poor little servant girl. While he sat beside her wretched bunk, his mind was divided between her plight and his anxiety for the six men out there in the angry, ugly sea.

"I wonder where the b'ys are now," he muttered.

Then he would go to the door and peer out under his hand into

the night. Nothing there but the dark and the mystery.

"'Twas time they were back,—long, long ago!" he would say. "'Tis a wonderful bad night for the fog. I doubt they'll find their way in. I should 'a' gone out wi' them. But no, she needed me! Poor girl! The Lord, He gives, an' the Lord He takes away: blessed be the name o' the Lord!"

Wiping his eyes on his rough sleeve, the captain came back and helped the Doctor put clean linen on the bed and wash the poor girl's grimy face.

She was unconscious now: her life was ebbing fast.

The captain went to the door again and again. Outside there was no sound but the low moaning of the night wind in the blackness. The fishermen, afraid of what the mysterious disease might do for them, were keeping their distance.

Suddenly as the captain glanced on the pale face of the girl, he gasped.

"She's dead, Doctor, she's dead!" The Doctor felt her heart. It was true. The spirit of the brave little maid had gone at last beyond the beck and call of men.

It was midnight, and over the dim and smoking lamp the captain and the Doctor decided that the best thing to do was to make a bonfire of the girl's few poor effects.

So they took her meagre clothes and miserable bedding out on the cliffs, piled them, soaked them in oil, and set them afire.

The flames leapt high and made a beacon to be seen afar.

Out there on the black face of the deep six hopeless, helpless

men in a trap-boat, groping their way blindly, saw the flames and took heart again.

"See!" they cried to one another. "Look there! Up yonder on the cliffs! They're givin' us a light to steer by!"

They drove their oars into the yeasty waves again with strength renewed. Little did they know what it was that had made the light for them.

When at last they dragged their boat ashore and hobbled to the hut, they saw the body of the girl, the lamp, and the captain and the Doctor making the body ready for the burial. They entered the hut, and were told what had happened.

"B'ys," said the foremost, "she's dead. Mary's dead. The last thing she did was to give us a light to show us the way home. Poor girl, poor little girl!"

Once when a small steamer Grenfell was using had broken down, he found shelter in a one room hut ashore.

The inmates had few clothes, almost no food, and neither tools nor proper furniture. There was nothing between them and the Aurora Borealis but ruin and famine. There were eight children. Five slept in one bed: three slept with the parents in the other bed: Grenfell in his sleeping-bag lay on the floor, his nose at the crack of the door to get fresh air.

They all suffered from the cold, for there was not a blanket in the house.

"Where's the blanket I sent you last year?" asked the Doctor.

The mother raised her skinny arm and pointed about the room

to patched trousers and coats.

Then she said, with a good deal of feeling, "If youse had five lads all trying to get under one covering to onct, Doctor, you'd soon know what would happen to that blanket."

First thing in the morning, Grenfell boiled some cocoa, and took the two elder boys out for a seal-hunt.

To a boy on the Labrador, a seal-hunt is the biggest kind of a lark. If it is winter, the seals may be caught near their blow-holes in the ice, and hit over the head with a stick called a gaff. In summer, they must be shot from a boat.

One of the boys, when he thought the Doctor was not looking, emptied the steaming fragrant cocoa from his mug and filled it with water instead.

"I 'lows I'se not accustomed to no sweetness," was his excuse.

The boys proved the jolliest of comrades and the best of huntsmen. In the nipping wind they rowed the boat where the Doctor told them, so that he could shoot. He had on a lined leather coat: but they had only torn cotton shirts and thin jackets to face the raw dampness of the early morning.

But they laughed and joked and carried on, and didn't care whether any seals were found or not. The hunt was unsuccessful. When Grenfell left, however, he promised the boys they should have a dozen fox traps for the winter.

Their eyes shone, and they grasped his hands. It was to them a princely, a magnificent gift.

"Doctor, Doctor!" was all they could say. "What can we do

for ye?"

"Go out and catch foxes," said the Doctor. "We'll see what we can get for them when you catch them."

Next summer the Doctor, true to his word as always, came back and found the little house as bare and bleak as before. But the boys met him with the same old broad grins on their faces, cheerful as the sunrise.

"See, Doctor!" They flourished the precious pelt of a silver fox. "We kep' it for youse, though us hadn't ne'er a bit in the house. We knowed you'd do better'n we with he."

So Dr. Grenfell said he would try. He went to an island where Captain Will Bartlett made his home. This Bartlett was the father of "Bob" Bartlett who captained Peary's ship, the *Roosevelt*, on the successful trip to the North Pole in 1909. Father Bartlett was famous round about for sealing and fishing, and he had not only a thriving summer trade of his own but a big heart for unfortunate neighbors.

"Do your best for me, Captain Will," said Grenfell, handing over the skin.

"That I will, Doctor!" answered Bartlett heartily. "Drop in on your way back."

The Doctor did so—and he found Captain Will had put aside a full boat-load of provisions of all sorts for the starving family.

Happy in the thought of the good it would do, Grenfell started back for the promontory at Big River where he had every reason to expect the family would be watching for him anxiously.

As he neared the land—he saw no one moving. The boat was beached, and the Doctor went up to the house.

The door was locked: there was no one within hail, though he shouted again and again.

Grenfell knew this absence must mean that the whole family had gone to the distant islands for the fishing.

So he broke in the door, piled the things he had brought inside, and wrote a letter.

"This is the price of your pelt. Put all the fur you catch next winter in a barrel and sit on the top of the barrel till the spring, when we are coming back again. Be sure not to let anybody get it from you at a low price."

During the winter, accordingly, the family put by the furs that they got from the animals which the boys caught in their traps. In the summer, Grenfell took the pelts to the nearest cash buyer, and with the money supplies were bought in St. John's. The poor fisherman found that he had more food than he needed, so he sold the surplus, at a fair profit, to his neighbor.

Year after year this was kept up, and when the father died he left Grenfell $200 in cash to be divided among the children.

Thus the Doctor had the satisfaction of bringing this family up from a blanketless poverty, on the flat brink of starvation, to something like wealth in a land where a man with fire-wood, lettuce, dogs, codfish in the sea and a few dollars in hand thinks he is well off and piously thanks Heaven for his good fortune.

As for the sealers—the men who stand a chance to make

anything are those who buy what they call a ticket to the ice—that is to say, a share in a sealing venture—and go out from St. John's in the steamers or sailing vessels at the beginning of March. The ship has sheathed wooden sides a foot and a half thick, and is bound with iron at the bow, to aid in battering the ice-pack. For the auxiliary engine 500 tons of coal are carried: and a crew of 300 men will use 500 gallons of water in a day—but the easy way to get more is to boil the ice, so nobody worries about that. Tragedies of the sealing fleet are without number. The worst have happened when blizzards caught the men out on the ice-floes far from their ship. One captain saved all his men by having them pile up their gaffs and lie down on them for cat-naps. Then he would make them get up and dance like mad for five minutes, while he crooned "chin-music" to them. Thus he saved them from freezing to death. In that storm the *Greenland* of Harbor Grace lost 52 of her 100 men. Grenfell tells of sixteen fishermen on Trinity Bay who, without fire or food or sufficient clothing, after thirty-six hours of suffering dragged their boats ten miles across the ice to the land.

The Southern Cross in 1914 was coming from the banks with 174 men and a full load. She was lost with all hands, and her fate remains a mystery. A life-belt picked up on the Irish coast was all that was ever recovered from the doomed ship. In the same year the men of the *Newfoundland* were caught out on the ice and unable to get back to the ship. Of the company seventy-seven lost their lives and forty-two were crippled.

Two boys and two men were tending seal nets when a "divey" or snowstorm blew them helplessly to sea. They crashed on an island, but ere they could land they were blown off again. During the night and the morning that followed, both men and one of the boys died. The other boy dressed himself in the clothes of the three who died, and kept their bodies in the boat.

They had caught an old harp seal, and he ate its flesh and drank its blood. On the third day he gaffed another seal as it floated past on a cake of ice. Then he had another drink of warm blood. Two days later he killed another seal.

By that time he began "seeing things." He thought he saw a ship in the distance. He clambered out of his boat and hobbled five miles over the ice, only to find that it was not a sail that he had seen, but a hummock of ice. The only thing to do was to make his way back over the weary miles to the boat he left.

On the seventh day, with despair gnawing at his heart, one of the sealing fleet, the *Flora*, came in sight.

It was dark, and this was his one chance of rescue. He shouted with all his might. But the boat immediately backed as if to leave him.

He screamed again, and the merciful wind caught up his voice and carried it to the vessel.

He shouted once more: "For God's sake, don't leave me with my dead father here!"

Then the ship hove to, and when the brave boy was lifted aboard the watch explained to him:

"Ye see, lad, the first time we heard ye call we thought it was sperrits."

They picked up the boat as well as the boy, and finally put them aboard another vessel that was going toward the lad's fatherless home.

Grenfell went out with the sealing fleet and took his full share of all the hardships of the mariners who from boyhood look on sealing as life's great adventure. While they are still tiny tads, the boys of St. John's and the outposts practise leaping across rain-barrels and mud-puddles. They are looking forward to the time when a running jump from one cake of ice to another may be the means of saving their lives. To "copy" is to play the game of follow-my-leader: and so the boys use the phrase "a good big copy from pan to pan" when they mean it is a long leap between.

There is uncontrollable excitement aboard a sealer when the prize is in sight at last. Perhaps the ship has been buffeting the ice for many weary days, bucking the floes and backing away again with the lookout in the crow's nest scanning the horizon in vain with powerful spy-glasses.

But at last the joyful cry is heard: "Whitecoats!" or "Dere'm de whitey jackets!" In less time than it takes to tell the men swarm over the bulwarks with their gaffs and knives and are deployed among the seals.

The "whitecoats" are the helpless young ones, mild and innocent as puppies, with great tears in their eyes and as pettable as woolly lambs if the sealers did not have to steel their hearts and

think of their own young ones at home. Can you blame the man with the knife, any more than you blame the butcher who serves your household with lamb chops, if he goes to the red-handed slaughter with might and main? Those "whitey jackets" may spell to his family the difference between starvation and sufficiency if not plenty. He cannot afford to let sentiment interfere with his grim business.

The young seals are gaffed without trouble: the old ones are shot. The adult males are called "dogs"—and a "dog" hood seal, brought to bay and standing up on his flippers like a bear, is an ugly customer. It needs two men to tackle him, and if they are not careful he will bite off an arm or a leg in a jiffy. Yet the "dog" takes to the water, if he can get there, without paying the slightest heed to what becomes of the mother seal or the young one. He is generally a poor defender of his own family.

For the hood seal family consists of but the three. Father—the "dog" hood—blows a big skin bag over his head when he is attacked, and the blows of the gaff rain upon it harmlessly. So terrific is his bite, when he gets a chance at his assailant, that the Newfoundlanders say the carcass itself can bite after the head has been cut off. A mature "dog" seal weighs from 600 to 900 pounds.

Bucking the ice to get at the main herd is a big part of the battle. Sometimes the skipper shouts: "Bombs out!" Then the blasting powder is produced, and the cry comes: "Hot poker for the blasts!" The fuse is then touched off with the red-hot

implement. The bomb is thrust into an ice-crevice, whereupon all hands "beat it" as fast as ever they can—and a little bit faster.

Then comes a deafening explosion that rocks the ship: and the ice rains on the deck in chunks, like bursting shells in an artillery bombardment.

With all the watchfulness, and the desperate risks the skipper takes as he drives the vessel into the pack ice, there is an excellent chance of missing the main herd entirely. An "Aerial Observation Company," started by a plucky Australian flyer at Botswood, was successful in showing the sealers of 1922 where to go, by dropping letters on or near the ships—but they could not make their way through the ice to the place indicated. During 1923 the fog was so dense that the sealing-season was almost a failure.

On his first voyage to the sealing grounds Grenfell saw the seals like black dots by the thousands, all over the floes as far as the horizon. The ships butted and rammed their way into the thick of the herd, the men overjoyed at the prospect of plenty. As soon as the engines stopped they were over the side, booted and sweatered, in a jiffy.

There was plenty of work for Dr. Grenfell. Many a man twisted his leg or his ankle as he slipped between the blocks of ice. Presently there were thirty or forty at a time surrounding him begging him to put some liniment in their eyes to cure the snow-blindness due to the fierce glare of the sun upon the ice-fields.

The Eskimos, not having glasses, use spectacles of wooden

discs with narrow slits, and do not suffer so much—but very few of the sealers from "the Old Rock," as Newfoundland is called, think to provide themselves with smoked glasses.

One day Grenfell was kept busy for a long time rubbing arms and legs and anointing smarting eyes. The men were nearly all scattered about on the ice, near and far, when he got through—so he thought he would drop over the side and watch them at their work. By this time it was late afternoon.

Till now, a strong wind had been blowing, and this had kept the ice packed together. The wind died down and the bits of ice began to "run abroad" as the sailors say. Grenfell and a dozen men with whom he found himself were far from the ship, and darkness was fast coming on.

Of course they had no boat, and the only way they could get back to the ship was to float on one piece of ice to another. They had no oars with which to propel themselves—all they could do was to beat the water with the seal-gaffs.

This was so slow a process that by and by they gave it up, and decided to wait for the ship to come and find them. The ship by this time was out of sight.

It grew colder and colder after the red sun went down. They had a little sugar and oatmeal. This they mixed with snow and devoured. Then they took their "seal bats" and cut them up with their big knives. They dipped the pieces in the fat of the dead seals, and with these they made bonfires to let the ship know where they were.

In the light of the occasional blaze of their beacon fires they played games to keep from freezing. "Leap-frog" and "one old cat" were the favorites. Men not accustomed to the toughening Northern life might have been whimpering with the piercing cold and the fear of the sea's anger by this time. Not so with these men.

The night wore on—and suddenly out of the darkness they heard the welcome sound of the little steamer crunching her way through the ice-pack.

The wrath of the skipper leaning over the bow was almost more terrible to face than any ice-storm would have been.

Did he respect the Doctor of the Deep Sea Mission? He did not. His tongue-lashing included them all.

"It was the worst blowing-up I ever received since my father spanked me," says Grenfell with a laugh, remembering that anxious night.

Later, the skipper came to him. "Doctor," he said, "the truth is I was that torn in my mind while ye were gone, and that relieved of worry when I came on ye in the ice-pack, that I do not know the words I may have used. If I was wicked or profane—the good God forgive me. It was my upside-down way of saying my gratitude to God for His salvation."

The Doctor's day's work was not yet ended. He clambered down into the hold, a man ahead of him carrying a candle and matches. In his hand was a bottle of cocaine solution, for some of the men were suffering such agonies with the snow-blindness

that they were all but out of their minds. They would moan and toss in frenzy, hardly knowing when the Doctor came to them.

"It hurts something wonderful!" they would cry, brave men as they were. "Can't ye give me something to stop it? 'Twere better dead than this!"

It was hard to get down into the hold at all, for the ladders were gone, and as the vessel rocked the seals and the coal were sloshing about below-decks where the men lay sprawled among them.

"Is anybody here?" the Doctor would call, as he poked into a dark angle.

No answer.

He would try again. "Any one in here?" There might be a fitful wail from a far corner. Then the Doctor would have to clamber over and round the casks and throw aside potato sacks and boxes. Sometimes his patients, in a sodden stupor, hidden away at the bottom of everything, could not be found at all.

In these filthy, reeking holds, enduring all discomforts for the sake of perhaps a hundred dollars payable weeks hence, the men somehow recovered from their ailments and throve and grew fat on pork and seal meat, fried with onions. Whenever the rats were especially noisy, the wise ones said it meant a gale: but sometimes the rats and the wise men were wrong. It was no place for a man with a weak stomach, that gallant little sealing-steamer!

On Sunday the men religiously refused to go out on the ice, though the seals tantalizingly frolicked all about them. The seals

seemed to know how the pious Newfoundlander observes the Lord's Day. The animals stared at the ship and the ship stared back at them. Then in great glee the seals took to their perpetual water-sports, in which they are as adept as the penguins of the Antarctic.

"I have marveled greatly," Grenfell says, "how it is possible for any hot-blooded creature to enjoy so immensely this terribly cold water as do these old seals. They paddle about, throw themselves on their backs, float and puff out their breasts, flapping their flippers like paws over their chests."

While they lay off Fogo Island, watching the seals, the great pans of ice, rising and falling with the heaving of the sea, beat on the stout sides of the *Neptune* as on a drum-head. Sometimes to avoid an awful drubbing the *Neptune* would steam a little ahead, very much as a swimmer dives into a breaker to cleave it before it combs over and carries him off his feet. Grenfell himself, loving a bout with "the bright eyes of danger," left the ship and went out on the ice and tried to climb one of the bergs, stranded in the midst of the ice-pack. It was like a living thing striving to fight its way out—something like a polar bear surrounded by "husky" dogs worrying him and trying to pull him down.

As a sky-scraper gives to the wind, the berg was rocked to and fro—eight feet or so with every wave that struck it. It fell on the pans like a great trip-hammer, backed away and came on again, the ice groaning as though it were a living creature in mortal agony. As pieces fell off into the sea the waves leapt up, the way

wolves might leap about a running caribou. In such a battle of the ice with the ice, a man knows what a pigmy he is, measured against the mightiest natural forces.

The *Neptune* escaped a ramming—but her neighbor, the *Wolf*, was not so lucky. The *Wolf* had rounded Fogo Island in an offshore wind that treacherously offered her a clear channel close to the land. As soon as she got round, the north wind, as though a demon impelled it, brought the ice crashing back and pinned her fast. An immense floe of ice, massing in upon the doomed ship, piled higher and higher above the bulwarks.

"Get the boats onto the pans!" Captain Kean shouted to his men. It is just what they have had to do on many an Arctic expedition when the ice has nipped them.

They took their food and clothes—but Captain Kean, the last to leave the ship, of course—saved nothing of his own except his life. And it was the closest possible call for him. Just after he jumped, the ice opened like the Red Sea parting for the hosts of Pharaoh. Down went the *Wolf* like a stone, and as she tossed and heaved and gurgled in her death-throes the ends of her spars caught on the edges of the ice and were broken off as if they were match-wood. The sea seems to dance above such a wreck with a personal, malicious vengeance.

It was the old, sad story for the captain and his men. They would have to walk ashore, three hundred of them, over the miles of cruel ice. At home, their wives and children would be waiting and hoping for a grand success and a good time. Instead, after a

forced and weary march of days,—going perhaps three hundred miles,—with much rowing and camping, father or brother would stagger in, his little pack of poor belongings on his sore shoulders, and throw it down, and say with a great sob: "'Tis all I've brought ye!"

It is a pitiful thing indeed for a man to have traveled hundreds of miles to board a ship, in the hope of a few dollars for the risk of his life, and then to have the sea swallow up his chance, and turn him loose to the ice and snow, a ruined man. When a captain loses his ship, whatever the reason, it is almost impossible for him to obtain a command again.

IV
HAULED BY THE HUSKIES

There was great excitement at the little village of St. Anthony, on the far northern tip of Newfoundland.

Tom Bradley was coming back from a seal-hunt, and his big dogs Jim and Jack were helping him drag a flipper seal big enough to give a slice of the fat to every man, woman and child in the place.

Tom had a large family, and for nine days they had tasted nothing but a little roasted seal meat.

Finally Tom took his gun down from the nails over the door. It was a single-barrel muzzle-loader, meant for a boy, but he was a good shot, and had often wandered out alone over the frozen sea and come back with a nice fat bird or even a seal to show for it.

"Where be you goin', Tom?" asked his anxious wife.

"Out yonder." He jerked his thumb toward the wide white space of the ice-locked ocean.

She ran to get his warm cap and mittens. "When'll you be back?"

"I dunno. Not till I get a seal. Us has got to have somethin' to eat, an' have it soon."

She found an old flour-bag, and tied up in it a few crusts of bread.

"You'd ought to keep this here," said Tom.

"No, Tom. You can't hunt without nothin' to eat. We'll manage somehow. We'll borrow."

"Ain't nobody to borrow from," answered Tom. "Ain't nobody round here got nothin'. We uns is all starvin'. Hope Sandy Maule's letter gits to that there Dr. Grenfell."

"Who's Dr. Grenfell?"

"He's a doctor comin' out here from England. He's goin' to help us."

"Will he have anythin' to eat?"

"Yes—he'll have suthin'. But he's got lots o' friends in England an' America—an' he can get 'em to send things."

"What'd Sandy Maule write?"

Tom was poking a bit of greasy cloth through the gun with a ramrod. Everything depended on the way that gun worked. He mustn't miss a shot—there was no fun in that long, hard hunt on the ice that lay ahead of him.

"Sandy Maule wrote, 'Please, Doctor, come and start a station here for us if you can. My family and I are starvin'. All the folks around us are starvin' too. The fish hain't struck in and bit like they should. We're cuttin' pieces outa the sides o' our rubber boots an' tyin' 'em on for shoes.' Things like that, Sandy writ to the Doctor."

Mrs. Bradley drew the sleeve of her thin, worn calico dress across her eyes. She was a brave woman, but her strength was nearly gone. She did not want her husband to see her cry.

"It's all of it true," she said. "If I could only get a little fresh milk to give the baby! Might as well ask for the moon."

She did not speak bitterly. She would stay by her man and live for her children to the end.

"Well," said Tom, trying to sound matter-of-fact, "we'll go out with the ole gun an' see what we get." Not one of the little boys was old enough to go, but the dogs Jim and Jack leaped up, wagging their tails and fawning upon their master.

Tom had only part of a dog-team: when he or his neighbors made a long trip they borrowed from one another. What one had, they all had.

As Tom stood looking at the dogs, he couldn't help thinking: "One of those dogs would keep the family alive for a while. But I sure would hate to kill one of the poor brutes. They've been the best friends we ever had." His wife knew what he was thinking, though the dogs did not.

Then he spoke. "Gimme a kiss, wifey." He smiled at her brightly. "Cheer up. This little ole gun and me'll bring ye enough to eat for a long time."

She kissed him, and off he trudged, the dogs leaping beside him and trying to lick his mittened hands.

Away out yonder on the ice was a little black speck. He strained his eyes to see.

"There's one!" he muttered. "Now, how to get up near enough. If the dogs comes with me they'll sure scare it away—it'll go poppin' into its old blow-hole afore I kin git it."

Jim and Jack were sitting on the bushy plumage of their tails, their bright eyes fixed on their master, waiting for orders. They would have loved it had he told them to chase that black speck far out at sea. They would have gone on till they dropped, at his lightest word.

"No, boys, you wait here," he said. "You're goin' to help me haul it back—when I get it. But gettin' it is somethin' I gotta do all by my lonely. Now, you stay right here an' wait for me. Don't you dast to come no nearer!" He shook his finger at them solemnly.

They seemed to understand. They curled up and lay down in the thin powdery snow-blanket.

"Now then," muttered Tom, "I gotta creep an' creep an' crawl an' crawl till I get near, an' then I gotta lie down an' scrape along on my tummy same as if I was a seal myself. That's what I gotta do."

Suiting the action to the word, he started on, watching all the time that little dark spot on which all depended.

He could imagine the children waiting at home and asking their mother every little while: "When's Papa comin' back? Is he goin' to bring us somepin' to eat?"

"I wonder if that there Grenfell man is ever goin' to git this far north?" Tom asked himself as he crept toward the seal. "If us could only git a chance to sell our fish for better'n two cents a pound, after us gets 'em salted an' dried! Them traders, they bleeds the life outa us. They say Grenfell when he comes is a-goin' to fight them traders an' put 'em outa business!"

The swift wind was throwing stinging bits of ice, sharp as needles, in his face. He drew his cap about his ears more closely and plodded on. The further he walked the further away the seal seemed to be. He was half crouching as he walked: he wished he might cover himself with a skin and crawl on all fours. But if he started to crawl now—he felt as though it would be a year before he could get near enough to shoot.

"Please, God"—he spoke to God as naturally as to his family—"bless this ole gun an' make her shoot straight and he'p me knock that seal over, the first shot. For it don't look like there's goin' to be more'n one shot, an' if I don't kill her there's my whole family's goin' to starve and mebbe a whole lot o' other people that's a-lookin' for what they think I'm a-goin' to bring back."

Now it was time to flatten himself down on the ice and scrape along, like another seal. It was hard work—try it yourself, if you don't think so!—and it took lots of patience.

Now he could see the seal raise its head and look about. He mustn't give it a chance to ask questions of the wind, because the wind might say: "Look out, Mr. or Mrs. Seal! There's a man creeping and creeping toward you with a gun, and in a minute that man is going to shoot, and you'll be sorry you hung around here and didn't dive through the ice the very first second your nose told you you'd better!"

He raised his gun, and prayed again—this time a very short prayer: "O Lord, bless this gun!" And he fired.

The black spot had not vanished. It was motionless. "Did I

hit him?" Tom asked himself. "Better try another shot an' make sure."

He was a long time sighting—and he imagined the spot moved a little as he did so.

Then he fired again.

There it was still. Now he dared to believe he had hit the seal. Dragging the gun he crawled nearer and nearer. Still the seal did not move.

Now he could see the whole animal clearly.

The sight was joyful.

"Glory be!" he shouted. Then he jumped up and capered about madly on the ice. It was a nice, fat, luscious, flipper seal and dead as a door-nail. Enough for a banquet for all of the tiny village of St. Anthony. And if Dr. Grenfell should be there when he and the dogs got back with it, the Doctor should have the largest, tenderest, juiciest steak of all.

The wind was setting toward the dogs. He could barely see them there, far, far behind him—making a black spot where they slept, exactly as though they were another seal.

So he put two fingers to his lips and blew a long, shrill blast.

It was the signal for which they had been waiting. On they came like two wild young race-horses, each eager to be first to greet their master.

They must have known well enough that he had killed the seal. They had hunted with him so often that if they had been human the man and the dogs could hardly have spoken to each other and

understood better.

"Good old Jim! Good old Jack!" The dogs bounced round him like india rubber, mad with delight.

"Look what we gotta take back! Ain't that somethin' to make the old lady's eyes pop outa her head? First big seal's been caught off here for months! Enough to save the whole village from starvation. An' you dogs is to have some of it too, all o' you. Here's to begin with!"

He drew his clasp-knife and snicker-snacked two good-sized bits from the tail of the fallen monarch. He threw the meat to the dogs, who had it down in a gulp and a swallow and then stood with their ears up, like the Jack-in-the-pulpit, to know if there would be more.

"No, boys, that's enough to start back on!" He produced straps and ropes from the bread-bag and rigged up a harness so that the dogs might haul the seal, giving himself the end of a rope, to pull more than his share of the heavy carcass.

"Wisht we could git a coupla polar bears too!" he laughed. "But I don't know how we could pull to the shore any more'n what we got here. Well, when we've got this et we'll be comin' back fer more, won't we, boys?"

And the dogs, tugging and wagging as they plodded shoreward, seemed to agree.

In spite of the weight of the seal, the trip back did not seem nearly so long. For you know how it is—when your heart is light any burden you carry doesn't count for nearly so much.

Tom Bradley in spite of pulling so hard was singing to himself like a kettle on a stove. And the dogs, too, would have spared breath to bark joyously, if huskies ever barked. But no well-bred husky makes remarks of that sort.

Tom stopped to rest, and sat on an ice-hummock, the dogs with their heads against his knee, their tongues lolling out.

"'Member that time we chased the ole bear?" he laughed. "That was the time I couldn't do nothing with you! You was young dogs then, an' you got so excited you wouldn't listen to nothin'!

"You just went a-racin' an' a-tearin' on from the time you seen 'im. O' course, as a driver don't have no reins, an' we only got a whip, we can't pull you up if you really wanta go. We can just holler 'left' an' 'right' an' 'stop' an' 'go ahead.' But my oh my! We sure did stack up against trouble that day.

"You an' the rest o' the team, you waded right into that bear before I'd got you cut loose from the traces. The air was full o' bear-meat an' dog-fur flyin'. Guess the bear didn't know no difference between you an' wolves. There's many a man has made the same mistake.

"There was old Mr. Bear standin' up on his hind legs battin' away like he was wound up, handin' out punishment like it was a boxin' match, and you fellows hollerin' bloody murder.

"You done more'n wolves would 'a' done. Wolves wouldn't 'a' tackled a bear that way—unless it was a great big crowd o' wolves an' one lone, lorn, small bear.

"He was a buster, he was, an' there was only six o' you. But you stood right up-ta him all right! You remember, don't you?"

Jim and Jack flopped their tails on the ice as if to say yes. Their mouths were wide open—it looked as if they were laughing in delight to be reminded of the battle.

"Say, you dogs certainly are the willin', hard-workin' fellers when you're fed up right. I believe you'd rather haul a sled than eat. You rascals! 'Member the time you et my gloves just as I was goin' to start? I had to larrup outa you that trick you had when you was young o' gobblin' your own harness when you wasn't watched. I sure do hate to hit you. One o' these whips 'll bite a hole in a door twenty feet off: I've seen ole Pop Rinker drive a nail in a board with one.

"When we get back, if that ther Dr. Grenfell has come we'll get some other dogs an' take him out for a ride. He'll have to have a team o' dogs. Can't get along in this country without you dogs—not till they have reindeer. Heaven knows, the Doctor'll have miles and miles o' country to cover, to get round to all the people hereabouts that needs him. Ain't it a great an' mighty blessin' this country's now a-goin' to have a doctor all our own, all our very own?"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.