Northern Neighbors

Wilfred T. Grenfell

Title: Northern Neighbours
Date of first publication: 1906
Author: Wilfred T. Grenfell (1865-1940)
Date first posted: June 22, 2016
Date last updated: June 22, 2016
Faded Page eBook #20160625

This ebook was produced by: Mardi Desjardins, Cindy Beyer & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at http://www.pgdpcanada.net

NORTHERN NEIGHBORS

GOING THROUGH THE BIG DROGUE

Northern Neighbors

Stories of the Labrador People

BY

WILFRED THOMASON GRENFELL

M.D. (OXON.). C.M.G.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

Boston and New York

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

THE RIVERSIDE PRESS CAMBRIDGE

SECOND IMPRESSION, OCTOBER, 1923

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE • MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

PREFACE

"WHERE can I find that story of the 'Copper Store'?" was asked me one day.

"You can't get it; it's out of print."

"Well, why not reprint it?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

Conference with the publishers revealed that they did not know either.

The latest science teaches us that Nature conserves everything; not only matter, but energy. A number of new stories which had been graded as worth telling needed a medium for materialization. Man is nothing if not imitative. There seemed no valid reason why we should not copy man's great teacher in conservation and, like history, repeat anything that might be of interest or value. Hence, this book, *Northern Neighbors*, has become the required vehicle to meet the wishes of many friends of Labrador and its fisherfolk.

Not only "The Copper Store," but "Off the Rocks," "That Bit o' Line," "Little Prince Pomiuk," "Reported Lost," "Johnny," "Peter Wright, Mail-Carrier," and "Green Pastures" are reprinted from the volume entitled *Off the Rocks*, first published in 1906.

W. T. G.

July, 1923.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

Northern Neighbors

OFF THE ROCKS

It was Saturday night in the early fall when in our hospital schooner we anchored among Adlavik Islands. A number of vessels were there "making" the fish, which they had caught farther north. Many of them had called to pick up their freighters, or poorer folk, who had to come down to the Labrador fishery for a living, and yet had been too poor to get credit to purchase a schooner of their own. They had therefore taken passage on some already crowded craft, in return paying twenty-five cents to the master for every quintal or hundredweight of fish they should catch during the summer.

Among these, lying close beside us at anchor, was a small vessel, labeled on the bow the Firefly, though if ever in her early days she had possessed any claim to display the fascination of her namesake, there was nothing about her to betray it now. As I walked on the deck of our well-appointed little ship, I could not help feeling a real sorrow for any man who had to wrest a living from the North Atlantic in a craft so terribly ill-fitted for the purpose.

Her hull was obviously the rude design of some unskilled fisherman, and was innocent of any pretension to paint. It was probably the devoted work of the skipper, the father of a family of boys, who no doubt had helped him in that one great step towards an independent living—the ownership of a schooner. Curves and fine lines are difficult to obtain, and, compared with our graceful hull, this poor little craft looked merely a bunch of boards. Our planks and timbers were of stout oak and were all copper-fastened. Our humble neighbor's were of the local soft wood, no doubt from the Bay in which he lived, and were held together with galvanized iron nails, at the very best. Her masts and spars of local spruce compared poorly indeed with ours of staunch Norwegian pitch pine. Her running gear was obviously old, and even her halyards were spliced in many places. Our stout canvas sails made the Firefly's old patched rags of canvas look insufficient indeed to face the October gales she was sure to encounter before she once more reached her harbor far away to the southward. Her small deck space, crowded as usual with barrels and casks

and fishing boats, suggested that if by any chance a sea came over it, it would go hard with the ship and all aboard her. But there was something even more distressing about her; she was evidently "clean" betwixt decks—that is, she had "missed the fish," and the poor skipper was going home to face a winter in which little or nothing could be earned, yet without money to purchase a winter's food, and still less to devote to the many needs of his plucky little craft. If she was ill-fitted this year, what would she be next?

Churches as we conceive them are "beyond the reach" of the summer fleets "down north," but perched in many a barren island harbor on the Labrador is some substitute that serves—some fish store regularly prepared each week-end for its Sunday, or even some special house solely devoted to "any kind of religious service." Ashore was a little building devoted to "meetin's," which had been the labor of love of one or two poor fishermen "who loved the Lord." It was built of chopped upright sticks, the chinks between had once been stogged with moss, and the rough hand-sawn boards that formed the roof had once been made water-tight with rinds of birch-bark. The floor had always been the native heath—that is, pebbles—and the seats were narrow, unedged, chopped boards, seriously rickety for want of good nails. Death had claimed one of the builders; the other had gone to the "States."

That Sunday was a really raw Labrador fall morning, cold, sunless, and dispiriting. None of the craft sailed, and no work was done, as is our wont in Labrador, yet it did not look as if we could expect much of a gathering to "heartily rejoice in our salvation," for nearly every craft was "light-fished," the season was almost gone, and "t' merchants" had fixed a low price for fish. But the skipper of the Firefly upset all our calculations. For not only was he up betimes "getting a crowd," but his own exuberant joy showing out through his face—yes, and his very clothing—was so contagious that the service went with a will. Indeed, this mere fisherman, ignorant and unlearned like his Galilean forebears, radiated that ultra material thing, "the Spirit which quickens," bringing into our midst that asset without which orthodoxies, ornate rituals, and ceremonies are not only dead, but destructive.

This man made the best of everything. He moved the topply seats so that they were steadied by the outside walls, and arranged the congregation on the weather side of the building, so that their broad backs might serve to block the drafts out from the chinks. He apologized for remaining defects by saying that the holes above "will do to let 'em hear the singing in the harbor." Afterwards, as we walked down to our boats, I spoke to him of his poor luck with the fish.

"I shall have enough for the winter, thank God," he told me. He meant dry flour

enough not to starve.

The whole fleet got under way at daylight, for all were anxious to get south. Soon after midday, we reached a harbor where we wished to see the settlers. The barometer had fallen a good deal during the day, and there was a lowering look about the sky and an ominous feeling in the air. So we put out two large anchors with a good wide spread, and buoyed them as well. The harbor was none too good if the sea came in from the eastward, and a sullen ground swell hinted of something behind the present light air. By sundown the little air had fallen to a flat calm, but the swell had increased, and the barometer was still lower. We knew we were in for a storm, so we gave sixty fathoms on each chain, and got out our big kedge on the rocks with a hundred fathoms of good stout hawser to it. It was almost dark, when we saw in the offing a small schooner being painfully towed into the harbor by some men in a rowboat. The calm outside had left her helpless. Inky blackness shut everything out long before she rounded the heads, but to our great relief we at last heard her a little way ahead let go first her port and then her starboard anchor. Evidently her skipper, whoever he might be, was aware of what was threatening; we were glad to have a companion, anyhow.

Soon after midnight it began to rain, and then, with scarcely any warning, the wind struck us. Everything loose was instantly blown away, but as there was yet little sea and we always kept an anchor watch so late in the year, we did not stir from our bunks and soon, as far as I was concerned, I was fast asleep again. It was hardly daylight when I was awakened by men talking eagerly in the cabin. The motion of our ship told me at once that the sea had risen considerably, though we rode easily to our anchors. The rain was pelting in torrents, or the flying spray falling on deck, one could not tell which.

"What's the matter, Joe?" I shouted to our mate, whose voice I could distinguish. "Anything gone wrong?"

At the sound he put his head in at my cabin door. His oilskins were shining with water, and his hair was dripping also.

"The schooner ahead of us is drifting, Doctor. It's the one came in after us last night."

"Drifting! How's the wind?"

"Right into the harbor, sir. There is nothing but a watery grave for their crowd if she goes ashore. The breakers are halfway up the cliffs."

It didn't take long to get into sea-boots and oilskins, and join the rest of the crew, who were on deck before me, watching the schooner.

"She's only riding to one anchor, Joe, isn't she?" I knew he could see in the dark

like a cat.

"Sure enough, sir. She must have parted her other cable in the night. She looks a poor little craft. I expect her holding gear is none too good."

We were sheltering under the weather cloth in the after-rigging. It was still scarcely dawn, and the murky sky, over which endless clouds were scudding, looked cold and disheartening. The roar of the breakers against the cliffs behind us seemed to have a hungry sound, as if they were greedily anticipating the death knell of the poor souls on the slowly drifting schooner.

"There are women aboard, aren't there, Joe?"

"Yes, sure," he said, "and children, too. 'Tis a small freighter, bound home."

As we spoke we could see the deck getting more crowded, evidently with people coming up from the cabin.

"There's thirty or forty of them if there's a man, Doctor!" the mate shouted above the storm. "I guess they're going to try the boats if it comes to the worst. They might as well go down in the vessel. They'd never put to windward in this wind."

Meanwhile the schooner was getting nearer to us, though as the wind was blowing then she would pass at least fifty yards to the south'ard of us. It grew a little lighter as we watched. The schooner was riding to the full scope of her chain, and seemed, like some live thing, to be making a desperate effort to save herself and the human souls she was responsible for. As the larger swells came along she would plunge almost bow under, and then rise and shake herself of her enemy before he struck her again. Casks and barrels and heterogeneous lumber of every sort had all been thrown overboard to free the decks, and were even now being pounded to atoms on the rocks astern. It seemed only a matter of time before all on the devoted little schooner would share the same fate.

"Joe, that's the little schooner that lay near us last night?" I asked at last. "I'm sure that's her stern."

"It's the Firefly, as I live, Doctor. If the wind canted ever so little, we might pass them a line," he said, hoarsely. "We can only fail, at worst. I'll be glad to make one in the boat to try."

"You'll do nothing with the lifeboat, Joe. She's much too heavy. It must be the jolly-boat, and she's poor for a night like this."

There was no time to be lost. Volunteers were plentiful for the four places in the boat. Who ever knew a deep-sea fisherman to hang back when life was to be saved?

The boat was manned as much as possible under the shelter of our own hull and

a long fine line coiled in the stern, to which we attached the end of our stout double-twisted wire hawser. A second line attached to the boat was to act as a life-line in case anything went wrong.

"God give you strength, boys," was all we could say as they stood to their oars, ready to make a dash to windward.

The crazy wind seemed to howl down with extra violence as the men bent to the oars, and a fierce sea, rising up, hurled the bow oars out of the rowlocks, and drove the boat some precious yards astern. The tail of it, topping over the boat's rail, set the cox to bailing for all he was worth. Again the bow oars were shipped, and those herculean backs, toughened by years of contest with nature in her angry moods, were straining every sinew to hold their own. Now they would gain a little, now lose it again. Again an oar would be unshipped, and again the boat half filled with water. They were edging away to the south'ard, but making no headway. It soon became obvious that they couldn't get to windward. At best they could only hold their own, and if their strength failed, or an oar broke, it became a question if we should be able to get them back. If only the wind would cant a little, there was still a chance, but to expect that seemed absurd.

We soon perceived that the men on the Firefly had seen the boat, and had at once taken in the situation. A small waterbreaker was immediately emptied, lashed to the end of their log line, and flung over the side. The schooner was now nearly abeam of us, and riding not more than four hundred yards from the rocks under her stern that spelled death to every soul aboard her if she touched. Everything would be decided in a few seconds now. Even our lads couldn't stand the strain much longer. I think that, could we have read them, some of their thoughts were in little homes ashore just then. I know that I was thinking of wives and children—

But just then a wonderful thing happened. The empty cask was coming appreciably nearer to the boat. Were they making way? No, not an inch. They were still astern of our counter, which they had left, it seemed, ages ago. Surely it isn't a change of wind! Our wind-vane on the masthead hadn't budged an inch. No, it was just a flaw of wind on the water—a flaw, but oddly enough just in the nick of time! Almost unable to speak for excitement, we saw that our boys in the boat had noticed it. What would we have given at that moment to have been able to lend a hand in the boat! It must be now or never. They saw this also, and with one supreme effort our noble lads had seized the moment, and bent every ounce of strength to the oars.

If cheering could have been heard in the howling wind, we could have cheered ourselves speechless as we saw the bow man drop his oar, lean over, and heave the

cask into the boat. In less than half a minute the line was detached, fastened to the line coiled in the stern, and the Firefly's men were hauling it in, while our boat still had her work cut out to make the ship once more. The wire hawser, carefully paid out, was soon through the Firefly's hawsepipe and fast around the mainmast itself. In less than a quarter of an hour she was riding behind our ship. True, her keel was only a few feet from the rocks as she rose and fell on the mountainous swell, but the line was trustworthy, and we ourselves were anchored "sure and deep."

And so, when the storm was over, and our friends of the Firefly came on board, I don't know which of us was the most grateful, the saved or the saviours. It was only a pot of tea, without sugar, and salt tub butter which graced our humble table! It was only a crowd of men in coarse clothing, with sea-boots and blue guernseys in place of broadcloth and patent leathers, but I know that all our hearts, as we gathered around to thank the Giver of all good gifts, were full of a joy not to be purchased with dollars.

"THAT BIT O' LINE"

"HEAVE her to, skipper, and tell Jim to throw the boat out. I'm going to board that steam trawler; I see she has her gear down."

This was to the skipper of the North Sea Mission vessel in which I was at the time working among the deep-sea fishermen of the Dogger Bank.

"She's going fast, Doctor; do you think we shall catch her?"

"Run out a Spudger on the mizzen gaff; she'll come around then. She's a stranger to our fleet, I see."

"I think she joined us in the night; must have mistaken the lights, I suppose. The Short Blue Fleet passed through our weather-most vessels last night, and she's a Short Blue vessel." While he was speaking he had been hauling out our broad tri-color "Bethel" flag to the gaff end. It usually signals to the fleet for service, but hung on the gaff end it means "want to speak to you." The strange trawler blew her whistle in answer and evidently put her helm over, for she commenced to make a circle round us as nearly as her great net, sweeping over the bottom, permitted her.

"Who's the skipper of her, do you know?" I asked, handing the glasses to our captain.

"Can't say I do, Doctor; but him they call Fenian Jack had her once. It's the old Albatross—you know her, I'm sure."

"Well, let's have two good hands in the boat; we shall need them in this lop."

The trouble in boarding a trawler at sea is that she cannot stop to allow you to come alongside, and it is always hard to go alongside a vessel that is under way, even in smooth water. However, it is a faint heart that never won, and no man can accuse a deep-sea fisherman of that. We were soon aboard and the big-bodied and big-hearted fisherman on the bridge was shouting out:

"What cheer-oh! Come up on the bridge. Mind the warp there. Go down below, you lads, and get a mug o' tea. You'll find the cook in the galley."

The grip the skipper gave me as I mounted the bridge left no doubt that there was a man behind the hand that gave it. Strangers though we were, we were soon good friends, for the skipper was a typical deep-sea man, with the absence of self-consciousness so delightful in men of the sea. Generosity, indeed, becomes almost a fault with them, and is often the cause of their being absolutely unable to say "no," just because "no" means hurting the feelings of some comrade who perhaps is asking them to enter, say, a saloon that they have promised the wife to keep out of.

Chancing to look up, I saw a man sitting in a sling about halfway up the funnel, which he was leisurely chipping preparatory to repainting it. On looking more closely at the man on the funnel I thought I noticed something familiar about him, more especially the head of red hair.

"That's never you, Dick, is it?" The red head turned around, and now I saw there could be no doubt about it, for the laughing countenance was ablaze with freckles. "Why, man alive, I thought you were drowned last New Year's!"

"So did I, Doctor. And 'deed so I was, till the crew of the old Europa pumped the water out of me."

"Come and tell us a yarn as soon as you are through with the funnel. I'm mighty glad to see you in the fleet again."

The watch was roused at eight bells, and after Dick had enjoyed a scrub in a bucket on deck I followed him below. The steward had spread out for all of us some steaming bowls of tea, which seemed to have driven the thoughts of the promised yarn out of my friend's red head, till I broke in: "Come along, Dick, let's hear how it is you're still above water." At last, as if he had already forgotten all about it, and when he had lighted his pipe to assist his memory, he began:

"It was last New Year's Day, Doctor. We was in the old Sunbeam on the tail end o' the Dogger. The wind was in the nor'northeast, and there were a nasty lop heaving along from overnight. 'Deed it was so bad the admiral didn't show his flags for boarding fish on the cutter."

Under our regulations if any loss of life occurred from throwing out a boat to try to transfer fish to the carrier, it meant a charge of manslaughter against the skipper of the vessel who sent his men. But the temptation to a skipper to do so is great, because the worse the weather and the fewer boats that send their fish to the market, the higher will be the returns for those that do send. Moreover, the young fellows are recklessly courageous and don't care to show the white feather when ordered to go in the little boat to ferry fish.

"Our skipper ordered the boat out, as we had a big haul, and me and Sam and Arch took her. It was pretty bad alongside the steamer among the other boats. She were shipping the lop over both rails as she rolled in the trough o' the sea. I never saw such a crowd knocked off their pins by loose boxes, and rolled into the water in the scuppers in my life. Almost every one got a cold bath on deck before they were through with it. However, our boat got clear all right at last. It was snowing at the time and looked dirty to wind'ard, so we were for getting aboard again as soon as we could. I suppose we must have been a bit careless, now we were clear of that heavy lot o' fish. For I was just standing up shouting 'A happy New Year and many

of 'em' to the Sunbeam's boat, when a curly sea caught us right under the quarter and turned us clean upside down. I grabbed hold of something hard, and found myself holding on to the thwart. Only it was pitch-dark, for I was clean under the boat. There was air enough, as we had tipped over like a trap, but it were awful cold hanging in the water. I knew it weren't much good holding on there, so I just grabbed the gunwale, and hauled myself outside. I had to go right under water for it, and I can't swim a stroke. But somehow I came up all right and caught the life-line which is rove through the keel, and out I climbed on the bottom.

"Archie was there already, but Sam had gone, and I guess he was dead by then. The driving spray kept us from seeing to windward, and we knew that was the only way help could come. We were half dead with cold, for the old boat was level with the water and pretty nigh every sea went over us. Arch soon gave up and his head went down on the boat's bottom. I kept shouting to him, 'For God's sake keep up a little longer,' for I could see a smack shaking up into the wind ahead of us, and I guessed they had seen us and were getting out their boat.

"Just then an extra big sea came along and washed us both off, me still holding on to Arch's oil frock. All I remember was striking out and finding something was holding me up. I had come up right through the life-buoy ring. I'd hardly had time, however, to cough up some of the water I'd swallowed when I felt something tugging at me, and then it pulled me right under water again. The life-buoy was fastened to the stern of the boat by a half-inch hemp line, and every time a sea came along the old boat sogged down under water and dragged me with it.

"Then it flashed across my mind what would happen. If I didn't cut that line and get loose, the same sea that would bring the boat for me would find me under water, even if I wasn't drowned before that. I felt in my pocket for my fish knife—I couldn't have opened it if I had it. I knew it wasn't there, for I could remember leaving it on the capstan after cleaning the fish. 'Deed, it seemed I could remember everything I ever did. Then I felt the tugging again, and down I went. It weren't the fault o' the life belt. It was just that bit o' line. All I could do was to get it in my teeth when I could and chew at it. But it was no good; I couldn't cut adrift, try as I would.

"Then suddenly I saw the boat coming. It got nearer and nearer. I could see some one leaning over the bow to grab me, and then I felt the old tugging again, and down I went under water. It was just as I had thought it would be. As I looked up through the water I saw the boat rush past over my head, and I knew, once it was to leeward, it could never get back to me. Then I lost consciousness. Of course, they went on and told every one I was lost. But I suppose the Lord hadn't done with me yet. For soon after, the steam carrier came along, and saw the boat, and then saw

me still fast in the life buoy. They picked me up, and after a couple of hours rubbed life into me again. So here I am, you see." He stopped and sucked strenuously at his short clay pipe as if the telling had been an effort.

Surely God's ways are not ours. Here in this unexpected way he had put into my mouth a subject that would be sure to interest the little company that gathered in the strange trawler's after-cabin. When the meal was over and the pipes alight again, while the cook-boy washed up the last remains of the meal, I produced my pocketful of hymn-books and proposed to sing. With a ready response, such as sailors generally make to such a proposal, we launched out into "one with a chorus." The various members of the crew chimed in with the nearest tunes they knew, so that it was a cheerful noise together that ascended the hatchway. Owing to the vigor displayed it reached the man at the wheel, and even he couldn't resist joining in as he steered the ship. The life buoy and its lessons served as a subject all could understand.

LITTLE PRINCE POMIUK

"WHATEVER is that schooner bound south for at this time of year, skipper?" I asked a fisherman who had just come aboard the mission ship with a "kink" (a sprain) in his back, as I looked up and saw a large, white-winged vessel bowling along to the south'ard with every inch of canvas spread to the spanking breeze. "Her decks seem as crowded as if they were Noah's Ark."

He looked at her for a long time, and then replied in his deliberate way: "I guess, Doctor, that that's the Yankee what's been down north after some Huskies. What does they do with 'em, Doctor, when they get 'em?" he asked in a tone of voice that implied that they might be going to make them into sausages.

"Why, put them in a cage, like a lot of monkeys, and get people to pay ten cents a head to look at them," I replied. "They are going to the World's Fair, and it's very little good the poor souls will get there. The Moravian Brethren at the Mission station have tried all they can to prevent their going, but they make such big promises that the poor creatures think they will never have to work again—and that's true, unless they work in heaven, for most of them will never come back to the Labrador."

"Well! May God keep 'em," he replied reverently.

The schooner soon disappeared over the horizon, and with her vanished from our minds all thoughts of her unfortunate occupants.

The Eskimo encampment at the World's Fair was a popular sideshow. Sightseers of every sort crowded in to see the "Eskimos from Labrador," just as they did the jumping elephants or the Ferris wheel.

Most popular among them was a little boy—son of a chief from the north whose name was Kaiachououk; the "trippers" liked him especially for his merry laughing manner, his striking dark face, jet-black hair, and far-away, deep brown eyes. Active as a squirrel, rejoicing in the strength of youth that had been perfected by a life in God's out-of-doors, he would make the enclosure ring with the crack of his thirty-foot dog whip and the buoyancy of his merry laughter. Many a nickel was thrown in, that little Prince Pomiuk might show his dexterity with the weapon which not a single grown man in all the crowd could wield. He could make the coin dance on the ground as his whirling lash fell on it from thirty feet away, with a loud crack that eclipsed the rifle shots from the shooting gallery hard by. It would seem that there was no more popular figure in all that vast exhibition than this child of the far north. There was certainly no one more light-hearted in all that throng than little Prince

Pomiuk, of the Labrador Eskimos.

At that time the shadow of the evil days to come had not yet fallen on him, and with boyish unconsciousness of all that the city in summer was costing a constitution only acclimatized to the Northern frost, no one was enjoying more than he "all the fun of the Fair."

But among the masses of sightseers, for whom these humble folk were only as the attraction of a Roman holiday, was a man no longer young; a man who, in the prime of life, had given of his best years for the dwellers of those very "regions beyond," from which the child had been lured.

Though still young enough to enjoy the countless attractions and appreciate the educational opportunities of the many exhibits from the ends of the earth, it was yet only a veritable call from the wild that had brought this one man all the long way to the Fair from his New England home.

There were sure to be some children of North Labrador. God would permit him the joy once again of giving in his own person yet another message to them. For many years he had been able to serve them only as one of the Lord's remembrancers, his health having forced him to return from his chosen work forty years previously.

Day after day this privileged man had the opportunity of visiting the Eskimos—day after day he reveled in the enjoyment of it.

The good days for Pomiuk, however, went all too quickly, and then came a day when his friend found him in one of the dark huts, lying on a bed of sickness. An injury to his thigh had ended by the insidious onset of disease of the hip joint, and the merry child had already commenced the living agony of the victim of tuberculosis.

A little later the Exhibition closed, and the poor Eskimos commenced their long journey to their far-off northern fortresses. Alas! the promises of wealth and personal conduct home were never realized, and the remnant of them straggled back as best they could, penniless and unfriended.

During the whole of the following winter the little party to which Pomiuk belonged was ice-bound on the northeast coast of Newfoundland. Here they passed a tolerable time in a house kindly loaned them by a Christian postmaster. Alas, Prince Pomiuk could only hobble about on a pair of crutches, and play with Evelina, a little girl born at the Exhibition.

However, this waif of the Northland still lived in the heart of his friend of the Exhibition. He sent after the boy letter after letter, till he heard that the ice of winter had once more gone and the sea was again open to the plucky fishermen, who ply their hazardous calling even among the eternal ice floes of the Arctic seas.

On one of these adventurous craft little Pomiuk had once more begun his wanderings, and it seemed as though again he had disappeared into the unknown. Letters failed to reach him, and no answers came from the silent north. It seemed indeed as if the Lord of the children had forgotten this "little one," and his friend Mr. Martin was sad of heart.

Meanwhile Pomiuk had reached as far north as the entrance to Hudson Bay. His increasing sufferings had made it impossible for the band to take him farther that year. The good Brethren of the northern Moravian station of Ramah had there done what they could to help him, and but for their kindness he would not have lived the winter through.

Meanwhile our new hospital steamer, which had met with such terrible disaster the previous year, had been put in repair once more. The long tow to St. John's had been safely managed through the skill and courage of the captain, and in June of 1895 we again steamed out through the Narrows on our journey "down north." This year we determined to carry out our great desire to push as far north as the farthest family of white settlers, wherever that might be.

Late in the summer we found ourselves off the entrance to that marvelous ravine in the vast mountains of the north named Naknak. Over the frowning cliffs two thousand feet high hung heavy banks of sea fog, hiding their jagged peaks, and roofing the weird opening as if it were the fearsome entrance to some grim ogre's cavern. Our lead found no bottom when we tried to sound it. There were breakers thundering on hidden reefs across the opening, and as these were not on the chart we were doubtful if this was really the entrance we were searching for.

However, by cautious pushing ahead we at last found ourselves between lofty naked walls, the tops hidden in wet fog; pushing on, we detected light streaming in from above, and found ourselves, as it were, in an endless ravine, closed behind us by a great black gate. Cautiously we crept along till it was dark. We were now twenty miles from the entrance, and uncertain what to do, for we were still unable to get bottom for an anchorage. Yet we knew we might run ashore in the dark if we did not bring up.

At last the watch sang out, "Light on the starboard bow." The night was still. The sound of our steamer whistle echoed and re-echoed in endless cadences between the mighty cliffs.

Then three rifle shots rang out in answer, followed a little later by a boat bumping into our quarter in the darkness as we lay drifting on the quiet surface of the fjord, and a hearty Englishman jumped over our rail.

"Who on earth are you?" he asked, "and however did you get here? The

hospital ship, eh? I've heard of her from the captain of the Erik." The Erik was the steamer of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, that comes once a year to take the catch of fur home to market; and this was George Ford, their agent, who, with his family, had for twenty years lived alone at the bottom of this seemingly terrible fjord. During the evening, which we spent together, our friend told us that the Eskimos were nearly all away hunting, but that one group, still farther up the fjord, had with them a dying boy.

It was like looking for a needle in a haystack to search for a tiny tent no bigger than one of the boulders that lay in thousands at the feet of those stupendous cliffs. Next morning, however, we climbed a high promontory and searched the shores of the inlet carefully with our glasses. There it was, sure enough, nestling in near the mouth of a distant mighty torrent that was rushing headlong down the cliffs.

"Get out the jolly-boat!" We now had our bearings of the camp, and were soon peeping into the little skin "tubik," or tent, of an Eskimo family.

Sitting on a heap at one end of the tent, covered with deerskins, was an Eskimo woman with two tiny girls, while lying on the stones of the beach that served for a floor lay a naked boy of about eleven years, his long jet-black hair cut in a straight frieze across his forehead, his face drawn with pain and neglect, his large, deep, hazel eyes fixed wonderingly on us strangers. He didn't move, even when I spoke to him, for his hip was broken as well as diseased. A man called Kupah was the owner of the tent. The little boy was Pomiuk.

While he was at the Fair his father, Kaiachououk, had been treacherously murdered by a man called Kalleligak. His mother had married again and was away across the mountains. She had taken with her the rest of the family.

"All we can do, Mr. Ford, is to take the child back with us. It would be kinder to give him a lethal draught than to leave him to suffer here. See what Kupah says about giving him to me for good."

Mr. Ford explained to Kupah that we were good medicine men, and wanted to make the child well; that he would be no use fishing, and indeed was only a hindrance now. As I watched him narrowly to see what fate awaited Pomiuk, I saw him, in the true Eskimo style, shrug his shoulders and say "Ajauna mat," the equivalent of "It can't be helped," or "Do as you like."

Having put Pomiuk to sleep we carried him to Mr. Ford's house on an improvised stretcher. Here he was washed and dressed, and as we steamed south again the child, wrapped in a big white bearskin, was lying on the deck, following with his large pathetic eyes every movement of these strangers.

Only one treasured possession he had when he came to us besides his naked

body. It was a letter we had received for him from the Hudson's Bay agent, which had come from Pomiuk's friend of the World's Fair, Mr. Martin of Andover. In it was his photograph, and when I showed it to Pomiuk he said simply: "Me even love him." So a letter was sent back to the address given, and three months later came an answer.

"Keep him," it said. "Don't let him be lost again. I am a poor man myself, but if you will look after the child, I will pay all expenses."

As our steamer traveled south, visiting the harbors along the way, the heart of one of the brave Moravian missionaries, Brother Schmidt, was touched for the lonely child, and he gave him a little concertina to play. This served to while away many a weary hour till at length Pomiuk could play several simple tunes. Among these was a hymn he had learned at Ramah. It ran thus: "Takpanele, Takpanele, Merngotorvikangilak,"—"Up in heaven, up in heaven, there shall be no sorrow there." He would sing it for us as his health improved, accompanying himself, and ending always with his merry laughter when he noticed the men on deck were stopping to listen to him.

Out in the Atlantic, on an island, two hundred miles north of the Straits of Belle Isle, we had built one of our little hospitals. Here we left Pomiuk until in November we had to move him up the long bay. For only there are trees, which give some shelter from the terrible blizzards that make life on the outside islands impossible in winter.

During this winter a visiting clergyman saw fit to baptize the boy and gave him as a token the additional name of Gabriel—the angel of comfort.

I had to go home to England that winter, but in spirit I was often in Labrador. On my return almost the first sound to welcome me was the child's joyful laughter as he told me, "Gabriel Pomiuk, me." He had hung out of his window a Red Cross flag, tied on the end of his crutch when he heard our ship was in the offing once more. He was just crying with joy when we came tramping up the stairway.

As a true Christian should always be, Pomiuk was happy all the day long, and the tenor of his letters to his far-off friends in America is expressed best in his frequent interpolations of "me very laughing," till at last he wrote also, "Me walk with crutches now, me very glad." His affectionate little nature always made him end with "Aukshenai (good-bye), Mr. Martin, very much."

It was a lovely thing to see this stray child of the Northland blossom out into the simple Christian graces. He had many gifts sent him from American boys and girls. These he loved for their own sakes at first, and treasured closely. But soon he learned to love better the sharing of them with other crippled friends that from time

to time found their way into the hospital. His busy fingers, too, put into models of dog sleighs and kajaks (canoes) the affection in his heart for all those who were kind to him.

One day came a letter from the hospital at Battle Harbor, where Pomiuk then was. It told how he had been seized with a kind of fit and kept in bed all the week, at times lapsing into unconsciousness. On Sunday night he asked for a verse of his favorite hymn:

> "Jesus bids us shine with a clear, pure light,
> Like a little candle burning in the night;
> In this world of darkness we must shine,
> You in your small corner, and I in mine."

On Monday morning he went quietly home. In a sheltered hollow in our tiny graveyard where others weary and worn had also been laid, lies the little body of this true Prince, and on the resting-place is carved his new name, Gabriel, which means "God's man."

That night the mysterious aurora made bright the vault of heaven, its banners gleaming like the festal illuminations of some royal city. The simple children of the Northland call it "the spirits of the dead at play." But the doctor-in-charge wrote me that to him it looked a shining symbol, telling that another young soldier had won his way to the palace of the King.

THE COPPER STORE

THERE could be no two minds about Tom Sparks. It was no trouble for him to work. His keen, active mind fired with energy his strong, well-built body. He was the true type of a Newfoundland fisherman—medium height, broad-shouldered, with a frank open face betokening no little will power.

It was his greatest delight to be first on the fishing grounds, and he was ever the last to leave when a "spurt o' fish" was running. In the dark before dawn in our harbor, when the air is as sweet as sugar and the silence almost unearthly, it used to be Tom's footfall on the rocks and the sound of Tom stepping into his boat that heralded the activity of the coming day. Yet many a time you could see the tiny light twinkling away in Tom's fishing stage, as he finished splitting the last half quintal, when there was not another light in the harbor.

Tom was a "snapper fisherman," and if any boat in the harbor got a load it was as certain as daylight that Tom's punt did not go home empty.

"I wants to get ahead, Doctor," he used to say. "And then, please God, I'll build a bigger boat, a schooner, maybe, one o' these days. No man can't be sure o' getting a winter's diet with only a cross-hand skiff to work in."

It was all the more surprising, therefore, that one day when I was sitting in his little cottage he should come in suddenly, throw his cap impatiently on to the settle, and, sitting down, bury his face in his hands.

"I ain't got a bit o' heart to work, Sal," he said to his wife. "It don't seem to matter what yer catch is, yer get nothing for it. Them as gets none is just as well-off as them that catches plenty. Why should 'em make us pay for what dey loses on others?" And I could see, in spite of his efforts to keep them back, the resentful tears standing on his cheeks.

"It's just slaving, dat's what it is, and seems to me the agents down here does just what 'em likes wi' us. There ain't nowheres else to get any supplies from, and they charges us credit prices to make up for them as don't pay. Even when you does settle you's account dey won't give you no cash, and they 'tices you all they can to get more credit."

There was nothing to say, for I knew it to be too true. The truck system of trade always tells against the poor man, and when he is ignorant as well, it spells to him nothing better than slavery.

Now, Tom was always careful to "make" his fish well. He knew that it meant a

deal of difference to the price that it was worth if it was white and hard, carefully cleaned and dried. So like everything else he went at, he spared no pains in the curing, and generally managed to pass it all as merchantable, which is the highest grade possible. On the present occasion he had just taken his fish to his merchant's store, and was very well satisfied with his success with it. In his mind he almost saw the bigger boat he had so long striven for. He saw himself seated in it, going out farther than ever, "right to the 'offer banks," and then coming home loaded, and the surprise and joy of his dear wife as he tied up to the stage, while he began to "pew" it up with the sharp hoe to where it could be split and salted. He was a man with an imaginative mind, and though he scarcely would have said so, he saw also in his vision of those days a time when there would always be plenty to eat and drink, and unlimited warm clothing for Sal and the children.

So Tom had ferried his fish to the trader's wharf, and thrown it down as the custom is. He was full of high hopes, as he watched it being culled and speedily enough stored away. With not a little pride he had received from the storekeeper a ticket of the weight and quality of the fish. Then he went up the wooden gangway to the store above to get his account, and order his winter supplies. The storekeeper was very cordial and almost made Tom take more goods than he intended. For he had determined to be very "close" this winter, and to have enough left over for nails and iron work and canvas and rope to build the new boat.

But, like many of the fishermen, Tom had had no schooling, and was therefore quite unable to read. So when he met a friend outside, "who had a tidy bit of larning," he stopped him and asked him to read what was on the paper.

Poor Tom. He could scarcely believe that Levi Boyd was reading aright, as he laboriously spelled out: "You owes t' store fifty-five dollars."

"Me owes t' store? You'm sure?"

"Why, certain, boy; 'tis writ plain enough." And then at the sight of the disconsolate face: "You wasn't expecting no balance coming to yer, was yer?"

Tom's heart was bursting with anger as Levi picked out for him some of the prices—and exorbitant enough they were. Salt was three dollars a hogshead; flour was eight dollars a barrel; molasses was eighty cents a gallon, kerosene thirty cents a gallon—while his fish! Well, if the bottom had dropped out of the fish market Tom wouldn't have been more surprised.

Burning with indignation, he walked hurriedly back to the store, where he met the storekeeper, smiling as before.

"What's the matter, Tom, boy? Something gone wrong?"

For reply Tom took out the bill and pointed to the figures. "'Tis the prices, sir!

Sure they be beyant all."

"They're only the usual prices. You can see for yourself if you want to look at our books."

"But the fish were every bit merchantable," he insisted, "and you only gives me credit for ten quintals o' merchantables."

"Come, come, I'm sorry if you're not satisfied; but the price of fish has fallen anyhow this last week, and I can't find out now if what you say is true, for your fish is all bulked along with the rest in the store. You're too late now."

What could the poor fellow do more? Might was enthroned. He couldn't get his fish back to prove his point, and so had to go home broken-hearted and leave things as they were.

"No, Sal, it's no good. Us may as well take it easy like others do. Us only has to pay them's debts, if us works e'er a bit harder than others."

She had seen discontent written in Tom's face before he began to speak, and like a true woman had already decided how best to counter it, "Come, Tom, ne'er mind, lad, dey won't allers have it all their own way. Dere's One above wat knows all about 'em, and he'll put t'ings right by'm bye. 'Tis no good for you's to fight agin 'em. Dey's got everyt'ing in dey's own hands. Let's t'ank God we'm got enough for de winter."

"Yes, maid; but you knows I wanted to build our new boat dis winter, and den next spring I'd ha' caught two fish for one. But that's all over now," he added.

"N'ar mind, Tom, so as us lives. What odds about gettin' on? I suppose that's not for the likes o' we. Leastways, dat's what most dem t'inks, and I t'inks so, too, now. We'm better go on bein' content as we is."

After some time she got Tom quieted down, and his restless spirit that had been chafing under the undefined wrong done him (but of which he was quite conscious), was able to thank God for what was still left him.

The next year it seemed as if everything was against them. One of our erratic summer frosts had nipped their potatoes, and in spite of all his efforts, Tom's catch was small, and when he blurted out, "'Twas a poor summer, Doctor, and I don't know what we is agoin' to do for de winter," I could see there was some undercurrent of thought in his mind.

At last I guessed what the great question was. What should he do with the fish he had? Should he turn it in to the merchant who had fitted him out for the summer, or should he sell it privately and buy some food for the winter elsewhere? There were only seven quintals in all.

Husband and wife sat looking into the fire. The house was silent except for the

breathing of the children. Each knew what the other was thinking, for their eyes, roving now and again to where the children lay, had met, been lowered, and had met again.

Tom at length broke the silence. "What shall us do, Sal? De children must have somet'ing to eat. I knows the merchant can go without better nor we, and de fish won't pay more'n half wo't we had; and he's not goin' to gi'e us any more, you bet."

"De Bible says, 'Pay what you owes and den trust God for de rest'; but it's hard to see de children starving."

"Well, maid, us wants to do de right—but it seems to me they allers gets their share out o' we anyways."

A silent pause followed; then suddenly Tom made his decision: "I reckon I'll carry t' fish down to Mellon. I'll tell him how we is off and ask him to gi'e us some t'ings for de winter. I can't do fairer nor dat, and den if he don't, why, we must just trust de Lord to feed us, dat's all."

So on the morrow he put it all in his boat and carried it to the agent, who promptly accepted it on account and even praised poor Tom for his honesty in bringing all he had. But when Tom stammered out: "It's all we has for de winter," the agent simply said, "I'm sorry to hear that, for there is still a balance against you upon our books. I'm afraid you'll have to do the best you can." And then he turned away to speak to another man.

Poor Tom! He could no more ask for mercy from this man than he could from the big seas—that he so often faced with a lighter heart than that with which he now turned homeward to greet his wife. But she had anticipated the result, and was fully prepared to meet him with the most cheerful smiles. "I see you has got nothin', boy. But dere, n'ar mind. We has a few potatoes, anyhow, and maybe God'll send somet'ing along."

If God had not sent something along, in the form of devoted brotherly neighbors, Tom and his family would not be living to tell the tale, for it was a winter of sore trial. The long fall prevented any chance of remunerative labor, and the deep snow made work in the woods impossible. By Christmas the little stock of butter and molasses was exhausted, and for some time they had been on very short allowances of flour. At length even that was gone, and nothing but a few potatoes and some salt herring remained. Even Tom's strong nature could not stand it long. He grew thinner and thinner, and eventually so weak that he could scarcely walk.

The simple, kindly neighbors soon found out the cause of his illness; though till then he had concealed it from them, for they were nearly as badly off in the matter of

provisions as he was himself.

The neighbors clubbed together, and by a panful from this house and a panful from that, two barrels of flour were collected and brought to the family. The children could scarcely understand the need of so much generosity, for all the time the parents had been starving themselves the children had never been allowed to want, even though there was only flour. By the time Tom was nursed back to his strength, it was possible to get to work in the woods, and in a fortnight, by steady, hard work, he had brought out enough logs to pay for his two barrels of flour, for he was determined not to be unnecessarily indebted to the others. At length the spring days brought a little work incident to the return of the fishery, and so also a little more food and comfort into the home. The long, dreary winter, full of trial, hardship, and the truest heroism, was at an end. Yet all it seemed to leave in the minds of this devoted couple was the thankful memory that "de children never wanted all winter, t'ank God."

Soon after this a meeting of the fishermen was held in our harbor and, of course, as it was strictly private, it soon leaked out that the subject was the formation of a coöperative store.

Therefore I was not surprised to be asked, a day or two later, "Is dat true, Doctor, dat you'se be goin' t' start a copper store? I doesn't know what dat be."

It was a long business explaining to these men, born and reared on the truck system, that any other way to live was possible. They could not stretch their minds to imagine a cash basis of trading.

Old Uncle Ephraim, who was alleged to have "a stocking full o' t'ings somewheres," rose in the meeting to ask: "Where'll us get salt from int' spring?"

"Why, buy it at the store, of course."

"You doesn't mean pay cash for salt, does you?"

"At this store things must be paid for in cash."

"Cash for salt—well, dat's de limit!" and the old man simply collapsed with a woebegone expression on his face.

Then Uncle Alfred, another of our village savants, arose and wanted to know, "What'll us do if it be a bad fishery, Doctor? Where'll us get a winter's diet?"

"The traders don't give you food or salt for nothing; they don't run a charity," was the answer. "You really pay for all you have. Only you pay a great deal more, because you pay credit prices, and now the man who does well pays for the man who does badly. But you can see from the number of traders there are that everything is paid for and we really do earn enough to live on."

WINTER TRAVELING

It had never occurred to Uncle Alfred that he could own real cash and "tide himself over a bad time."

These folk are not talkers, and it was difficult to get them on their feet at all; but the burden of the next speech was understood to be: "Us reckons t' Gov'ment'll have to stand t' it."

Another wiseacre chimed in that he didn't see what the Government was for, if it wasn't to keep poor people from starving. The Government has been looked upon as a kind of inexhaustible supply intended to send along unlimited barrels of flour whenever the traders would not give a man a winter's diet, and often enough, also, to pay the traders when they had given it. It was a milch cow that gave milk perennially, and they never realized it had to be fed—and by them.

The only answer possible to these remarks was, "If men cannot earn enough to live on, then they must get out and try and live somewhere else—or they cease to be men."

One doubtful soul suggested, "You says the copper store won't give us no credit in the fall; but perhaps the traders may give us." The answer to this, that appealed to

all hands, was, "What did Tom get last fall?"—for they all loved Tom.

The crucial point came when old Skipper Matt, who had been an over-sea sailor in his day and "knowed a thing or two," asked, "If salt is one dollar a hogshead in St. John's, will the store charge two dollars and forty cents for it?" When they were assured that they would share whatever gain was made, and there seemed to be a prospect of reducing the prices at present in vogue, all hands voted for the "copper store."

So the White Bay Coöperative Store was formed with thirteen members who were unitedly able to allow eighty-five dollars in cash for the capital. A queer eighty-five dollars it was, too; old enough, some of the silver dollars were, and had lain in boxes many a long year till the heirs had almost forgotten they were still negotiable. Naturally enough we had to invite some outside shareholders, and this we arranged. In the fall the first consignment of goods was sent down. I have a copy of that first order now before me as I write. To me it is a precious, though a humble document. We could not afford a large stock, so we asked Uncle Alfred, Skipper Tom and the others how much they would expect to pay for with fish that they could honestly call their own and was not owing to the trader. Alas! some already owed all they had and more besides, and could not begin with the coöperative store till the next year, though they all said they would live on grass in the spring to avoid having to incur debts on credit—and I verily believe some of them did. When the list was completed we found we could order enough to carry all hands through the winter and a small stock to keep on hand from which those who earned money from furs in the winter could purchase.

"How're us goin' to get the coöperative fish to t' market?" was a question over which there was much shaking of heads and no small anxiety of heart, for the traders who had carried it for us before could scarcely be expected to freight for us now. Then came the difficulty of how to pay our debts, because the mails were both infrequent and unreliable, and to send cash was out of the question. We finally arranged to pay by checks, the three members who wrote best signing their names on them like a proper finance committee. Few though the checks were, this system had to be abandoned, as it was a great labor, and when the three names were accomplished they had strayed all over the check till the amount was almost illegible. So we appointed an agent in St. John's, who also kept all the accounts and only sent us copies "way down North."

The next spring would come the crisis with the traders, for no one who had joined the store would expect to get supplies from them, and some could not yet afford to buy from the store for cash. None wished it known, therefore, who the

shareholders were, and every man who put in a share had his name in blank and a number issued instead on his paper.

The goods were stored in an old house lent for the occasion, and there was no external sign of the store until we began to see our way a bit clear and painted all across the house, "White Bay Coöperative Store."

In order to get a photograph of the first Labrador coöperators we had to get a group of all the able-bodied men together, so that the real members were not distinguishable. One man had to be known visibly as the manager, and for that post we chose a promising young fisherman who could write. He kept the store open only when it was necessary, spending the rest of his time fishing like the others.

Many are the adventures the store met with in its career. Its misfortunes were largely due to that common failing—lack of wisdom; but this has been slowly remedied in the school of experience. Before ten years rolled away the good results of the store were clearly evident. A fine schooner called the Coöperator had been added to bring down our goods and take our fish to the market. Slowly but steadily the store grew in strength, and the men in independence. The church, the school, and the houses grew in efficiency and comfort. There was not a man in the harbor but had a dollar to his name and a dollar in the store as well. Half-clad and half-naked children had almost entirely disappeared. Three or four other little stores had grown up along the shore and were small but valuable examples with regard to the price of goods.

At that time Uncle Alfred confided to me: "If ever the store goes down, Doctor, we'll all have to leave White Bay. How did us ever do without he?" And Uncle Ephraim, whose years were long ago lost in the tale of decades, when I asked him if he were sorry his time was nearly run out, answered cheerily, "No, no, Doctor, not sorry, thank God. The Lord have 'lowed me to see good times—and some hard times, too, praise His name. But at the end He have let me see this here copper store, which have given many of we folk a chance we never 'lowed we should live to see come to White Bay again."

Two decades have nearly passed since the store first started, and the store still flourishes. The Great War has come and gone, and the huge advance in prices makes us almost wonder that we ever thought the prices of those days high. What would we not give to-day for flour to be eight dollars and molasses eighty cents! War! War! War! It has left its baneful traces all the world over. The victors have, as always, suffered with the vanquished; and the impoverished markets and inflated prices have brought ruin to many and hunger and cold to the innocent and helpless, way down here.

The Copper Store still stands, though many of its charter members have passed to where all men must pass. More than ever it is the one safeguard of the White Bay people. Tom, now white-haired and no longer able to lead the Bay in matters of physical energy, is still, with his good wife beside him, a blessing and a boon to the village. "If I want to get a blessing for my soul," said a visiting trader to me not long ago, "I don't wait for Sunday, I just run up to Tom's cottage and spend a while with the dear old couple up there. It's like a fresh breeze from heaven." Tom is still poor, but he has never known what it was to have to beg his bread, even through the hard war years that claimed his only son, who "fell in action," as Tom will fall himself. He told me that "ne'er a cent has been spent in twenty-six years for loading or unloading de Copper Store Schooner. Not but what some doesn't do their share on times, but you sees, Doctor, dis is a real copper store, and de others does the job for us and says nothing—so that's all there is to it."

ON THE ROCKS

"Mr. Cyril Martin wants to see you, Doctor," said a young woman, who was bouncing a fat baby in her arms as I stepped out of the boat at a little fishing village on the East Labrador coast last fall.

"Who is Mr. Cyril Martin, and where does Mr. Martin live?"

"I'll show you'se, Doctor," and without further preliminaries I found myself hustling along a narrow rocky path to nowhere after the pattering young woman, as Alice pursued the White Rabbit down the famous hole, though the path apparently led into the wilderness. No house was to be seen at that end of the beautiful inlet that formed the harbor. Mr. Cyril Martin seemed to have successfully camouflaged his residence, and to have sought seclusion for some reason from the company of his neighbors.

Suddenly we brought up opposite a tiny studded hut, the roof of which so nearly resembled the ground that it had escaped notice. My guide disappeared through the tiny door without knocking, I following. As I entered I tripped up over an obstruction on the floor. It proved to be a heap of rags, and lying on it a gray-bearded, silver-headed old sailor, who was struggling to get up to greet me. A bright-eyed smiling old lady, clad in a triumph of patchwork, rose from a half-barrel stool, with a piece of sewing in her hand, and bade me welcome with the dignity of a Fifth Avenue hostess—there was a refreshing genuineness about her greeting.

"We was sorry to hear you was dead last winter, Doctor, and so we was after when they said it were only your mother"—which served to start the conversation, though it left me at first with the meretricious disadvantage of feeling I must have risen before my time.

In one corner of this hut, twelve by fourteen feet in all, a cubby-hole was boxed off and screened with rags, that had evidently served their last function in every other capacity. The birch-bark rinds of the roofing afforded a homely effect even to the tiny shack, but their condition suggested unseaworthy antiquity, especially under the shadow of a Labrador winter.

It has been my lot to visit many poor homes, but this one had something peculiar about it. Dire poverty was written only too patently over every inch of it. Indeed all the possessions of the owners, which were quite in keeping with the entourage, lay open to view and told their own story of hunger and want. And yet there seemed some refinement about it, which left one without the usual feeling of resentment. Here

was poverty—dire poverty, but no squalor. The usual repulsive accumulation of a thousand remnants that have been saved only through the universal desire to own something was absent. It is common to all human grades of society, this sheet anchor to "things" which Margaret Deland satirizes so cleverly in her essay on their tyranny. It was the absence of this that made all the difference in one's ability to sympathize with these two strangers. In some odd way one felt that though they were exactly as human as one's self—that they possessed their souls. The old lady, catching my eye fixed on the cubby-hole, at once apologized.

"It's my room, Doctor. Mr. Martin took me in, and give me that part of his house for myself."

Six by six I was calculating. What a fortunate thing she is so short! Having no door to it saved some space, however.

"I took her in," repeated the sailor from the floor. "You see, Doctor, her son took her house to use for his own family when her man died, and then she had nowhere to go."

I thought I had known the meaning of "Given to hospitality"—but this old man of the sea had graduated from a more advanced school than I.

"Tell us about yourself, Mr. Martin. Why do you want to see me?"

The uncombed hair and unshaven beard, the sordid rags of the bedding, and the fact that there was not even a fire in the cracked stove couldn't hide the fact that there was a man with like passions to myself in the poor half-paralyzed body that lay stretched before me.

"Well, Doctor, the Lord has put his hand down on me, and here I am, and I can't do a thing, except what the old lady does for me—Mrs. George Green, she is—what spent one winter at hospital. I owns this house, and I gave her room, and now she bides by me when she could go to her sister what has a comfortable house, seeing she has her 'bit o' Government' (twenty dollars per year). She'd take her too, but her won't leave me to bide here and perish like a dog."

The old lady had noticed me looking at the strange place for a sick man to be lying. "I keeps he out there, Doctor," she apologized, "cos he can't move hisself, and I can't move he either, so he bides there between the stove and the door so when I be's out he can tend both so long as there be's any wood, that is."

"You has to walk round he," was her apology, a quick reply to the doubt she saw in my eyes as to the propriety of the arrangement.

"When did he get the stroke?"

"Last fall, twelve month, Doctor. He never wanted for nothing till then. Sister come to see him. She said she couldn't cure he, and his leg be getting worse all the

time. Firewood is the trouble, when t' snow comes t'ik I can't get it and there be no one to cut a junk off for we neither."

"How do you get food?"

"I caught a barrel of fish myself and me and Mr. Martin together got a barrel before he was took."

"I can catch 'em yet, I can," came from the rag heap, "that be, so long as I can get into t' boat."

"The Government 'lows me twenty dollars a year, but I ain't got it yet t' year. I most wishes you might be able to say a word for me—but the trouble is t' firing, we can't get it, nohow."

Then in a quieter tone he went on, "I 'lowed the Lord would take me last winter, Doctor. Charley from t' Crick took care of we, and he were to have my t'ings. He had my gun, and he have my table and a few t'ings. I got part of a barrel o' flour for myself for my fishing punt and one net, and Jim, he fished the other two for we on halves, and so us got flour enough, and t' old lady had hers from her Government—but t' molasses were two dollars and forty cents a gallon and sour at that, Doctor. Us only had one bit of meat t' winter, 'cept a bit a neighbor sent over now and then, and there aren't ne'er a one near by now to spare any. Thirty-two pounds of oleo us had and isn't all out yet, t'ank God. That's all us had—flour'n molasses and grease."

"And a bit of sugar," said the old lady, producing an old tin. "T' merchant let us have it for ten cents." She showed it me with a touch again of that pride that possession gives. But it was damp brown molasses sugar at that.

"How long does a barrel of flour last you two?" To be quite accurate, she led me over to "the bar'l." There was about six inches left at the bottom.

"Us got he last October out of my Government' and us had a bit left when he come. No, us don't eat much, no more'n some birds, I'm thinking."

I caught a merry twinkle in her eye. "You've got some left still?" I ventured. It seemed rather an unkind remark after it had slipped out, but she answered:

"Oh yes, bless the Lord, enough still for a time," and she carefully covered up her most valuable possession.

Then the old man began, "You sees, Doctor, I'se been a sailor overseas. I'se been all over t' world. I knows Plymouth Hoe as well as I know these rocks. A bad man—a bad man—used to swear powerful. And I didn't care for nothing whiles I had my health. That's why t' Lord put His hand down on me. But I did have hopes He'd take me last winter. But maybe He forgot. The nurse, she come on dogs to see me, and she give me this blanket, and it be all right, t'ank the Lord, in t' summer. But it's getting cold o' nights now, and no fire neither. Yes, I had another blanket. But she

wore out, and I had to patch her. T' school teacher from America send we a fine dickey for out hunting, so I split the fur off her, and sewed her into my blanket," and he showed me his second and last covering, a shoddy border with a split open "kossak" or outside dickey, regularly crucified into the middle of the so-called "blanket."

"She don't hold much warmth," he remarked, philosophically, holding up the covering in question in his well hand. "I did 'low some one might like to come here to stay t' winter in return for finding t' wood for we. You see I owns this house," he added, with all the savour of sailors who have wandered much without any home or property of their own.

"But, my dear Mr. Martin, wherever would you put him if he did stay?" as I looked apprehensively around.

"Oh, there be's room for two on the lofting," he said, "though I has my two nets up there, and my cast net. I 'lows I could change them for a bar'l of flour," he suddenly interjected as this thought of a second line of defence flashed across his mind. "Charley, he wanted them from me last winter, but I wouldn't part with them. I've kept 'em for t' old woman," he said in a half whisper. "Maybe she'll need 'em one of these days. No one can get them there" he broke in, in a defiant tone. And he looked fiercely up through the hole into the loft, as if, though he couldn't get up to defend these nets, he kept continuous guard beneath. I hoped he might not think that I had any designs on them, and looked the other way, almost blushingly.

While we were talking it had begun to rain torrentially outside. The little guide lady moved for the first time to avoid a bad drip. Indeed I had forgotten her, and now she moved only to cover better the fat baby, for the rain was without partiality descending equally through the roof on the Just and Unjust alike.

The old lady also rose abruptly and improvised a temporary dam to keep the rising flood on the floor from overwhelming the old sailor.

"He can't move, you see," she apologized to me as she paused before me.

"Can't swim, I suppose," I hazarded. Again the merry twinkle of her black eyes in these most depressing circumstances suggested how the soul can rise above things material.

"Oh, I has a bit o' felt to mend he with," she added, referring to the roof, "but Mr. Martin, he can't climb any longer" as if she thought of him still as he used to be lying out on a yardarm reefing a topsail in a gale of wind on the Atlantic. "He can't climb now—and I am no good to get on a roof myself. Sixty-eight is getting on, you knows, Doctor."

"Don't apologize. Why doesn't your neighbor come in and mend it for you?" I

asked.

"Oh, he says he has no time."

"Some folks think they won't have time to come when Gabriel blows the trumpet for them," I replied.

"'Deed they won't, Doctor. But *them* aren't the busy ones here," and she looked at the broken man on the rag heap as much as to say, "that's not his kind, Doctor."

"You and Mr. Martin have had a lot of experience in this world," I said. "Is it a kind world, or a cruel one?"

"The most folks is kind, Doctor, but them doesn't all think."

"Mrs. Green," I asked, "why don't you leave this house and go to your sister? I can send you down in a motor boat."

"What'll happen to he if I goes away now, Doctor? He were good to me, and took me in when I had no home."

"And what'll happen to him if you *do* stay here into November? You know you can't get fire for kindling till Xmas. You'll be warm and fed with your sister anyhow."

"I would't leave he now," she said, and her bright eye again caught mine. I almost thought she winked. Anyhow her eyes just said, "Quit fooling." And once again in these meanest of material surroundings I felt like a child learning some new truth.

It was obvious that Mr. Cyril Martin was on his beam ends, like a certain other sailor who said, "No sun appeared in many days, and no small tempest lay over us, and all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. Yet I believed the Lord."

I had been nearly two hours in the house. Both the man and the woman had had a strange attraction for me. Their simple directness made me feel exactly as if I were myself in their position, with their problems to face. They did not ask for a thing. Only they put it as if it were some extraneous problem they wanted advice upon. It allowed one's mind to forget the continuous demand for help that it is our lot in life to have to meet, and instead of resenting, however distantly, another possible attempt to get things, one felt all the joy of an adventure. Yet if his view was right that it was "the Lord putting his hand down on him," what was the good of our struggling?

I put it to him plainly as such. He said nothing, evidently waiting for me to show my hand.

"I know *I* should struggle for all I was worth—that's what God does it for; to wake us up to do things worth while," I suggested.

To my surprise Mr. Martin began to cry. "You'se English," he stammered. "My father was English. Come from Dorsetshire." And his fierce black eyes looked up

through his tears, and the smile of the sun chasing clouds away broke all over his face. "Of course the Lord will help all He can," he began. This was his fixed intuition —though I'm not sure he saw the depth of it.

"Yes, I expect He always does better than we could. Now, would you like to pray before I go?"

"I was going to ask you," he said. The burden of his petition was just "We thanks you, Lord, for all you has done for we."

I went away almost ashamed of my water-tight boots and oilskins compared with his rags. I felt I had been given the best of any morning's blessings, both a challenge and a stimulus to my faith in life. Have you ever been absolutely convinced that the Lord needed your help? It seems a pity sometimes these pleasures can't be purchased. Life is such a joyous venture, but life's tragedies seem so momentous. Horatius called for men to stand at his right hand and hold the Tiber bridge against ten thousand. Men jumped for the honor and joy of it. It was David who said, "Thou wilt show me the path of life. At thy right hand are pleasures, forevermore." (Ps. 16:11.) There can be no other satisfactory explanation of our temporary stay on earth.

We left what we could to tide matters over for a time, and promised to get him removed to the "House of the Poor" at the capital—where at least he would be fed and warmed and sufficiently clad. In this we were eventually successful. But it seemed so poor at best—to remove this old seafarer from every one whom he knew and from his life environment to await death among strangers in a city. We have no home in the north for the deserving aged. All worn-out old folk suffer with the dread of this ending. But so far it has been all we can do, and the profound thanks of the old couple hurt like a knife—for we had not been able "to do unto the least of these" that which we should have liked them to do for us in their places.

JOHNNY

Johnny Duffy was the oldest son of a poor Roman Catholic fisherman living about eight miles from hospital, in a tiny cottage by the sea. One winter day, when everything was deep in ice and snow, Johnny's father was away in the forest with his dogs getting wood, and his mother had gone out to a neighbor's house, which was some way off, for houses are not close together where Johnny lives, in Labrador. When his father drew toward home he made out a number of children coming slowly over the snow, hauling something with them. Alas! when they were near, he saw that it was his Johnny whom they were dragging by his shoulders and one leg. His other poor little leg was hanging down, broken, and trailing along on the snow. He had fallen off the sleigh, on which they had been tobogganing down the steep hillside, and had broken his thigh across the middle. In old days (only a few years ago) Johnny would have had to lie in terrible pain, and could not possibly have seen any doctor for months. Now, however, his father could leave the little boy with his mother, and hurry away over those eight miles of snow-covered hill and barren to St. Anthony Hospital.

It did not take Pat long to travel that eight miles, yet, oh, how endless they seemed to the poor fellow! The wondering dogs had never before known him to shout and hurry them along so fast. Gallop and strain as they would, they could not satisfy their master. What could it mean?

At length they topped the last hill, shot down like an avalanche some six hundred feet on to the snow-covered ice of our harbor, and a few minutes later, panting and exhausted, they were trying to bury themselves in the snow in front of the little hospital, to get shelter from the biting wind.

Was it only a piece of "luck" that the father found that the Doctor had not yet started for a village some sixty miles to the south? Why, lying right there against the hospital was another big team of dogs—two days they had been traveling, and had arrived only half an hour before, bringing word that the good priest at Conche was taken ill with sudden bleeding, and wanted medical help in hot haste. At that very moment the Doctor was packing the familiar medicine box in the hall, and his man Rube was in the larder stowing away some rough food in the nonny bag, in case they were caught out during the long journey.

"Whatever is the matter, Pat, you seem to have dropped in from the North Pole from the look of you?"

"'Tis an accident, Doctor. My Johnny's killed himself. Can't you come back with me at once?"

His distress was so evident, and the pleading so heartfelt and urgent, there was no possible answer but one.

"Yes, at once, Pat, of course. Here, Rube, sling this old box on the lend-a-hand komatik, and lash in well. The road is hilly, and it's dark now. Go in, Pat, and get a cup of tea, Rube and I'll be ready in two minutes to race you home."

There were great tears welling up in the poor fellow's eyes, as, with a husky "God bless you, sir," he followed the maid to the kitchen for some hot tea, which, indeed, he was badly in need of, having been out in the woods since morning.

Our barking dogs were soon straining at their traces. It was dark, and only the hospital lights reflected on the snow enabled us to be sure that every knot was tight. There was a flash of steel as Rube drew his big hunting-knife across the stern-rope, which lashed the komatik to a driving-post, and then the straining dogs leapt off into the night before ever a word was given them. "Hist! Hist! Damson! Haul in there, Spot! Haul in!" There was no need of lash or spur, for the keen cold night air made the snow surface crisp for the komatik, and braced the dogs' magnificent muscles, while the fact that they knew their food was still ahead of them made every member of the team anxious to get the journey quickly done. Soon we were overhauling Paddy's team, for having impatiently swallowed his tea boiling hot, he had gone ahead to give us a lead.

"Look out, sir," we heard him shout. "You'd better loose your dogs. 'Tis terrible ice on the cliff side going down to Crameliere Bay," and Rube had scarcely time to lean forward and slip the traces from the bowline before our faithful "Lend-a-hand" komatik shot forward at a pace no dog could hope to attain, and the gathering momentum of each second warned us to cling close, if Johnny were to be the only one with broken bones that night. Down—down—and down! Now and again a shower of sparks warned us that still some snags of rock were jutting out through the generous mantle of the snow. But Rube and I were lying full length on the crossbars, as close to the ground as ever we could get, so that we might not capsize or be shaken off. Fortunately we did not strike anything. I say fortunately, for we went down with our eyes shut! The pace and the darkness made open eyes only an additional danger in such a descent.

Pat's haste had not allowed him to use even his drag of chain. Moments were hours to him that night. What might not be happening to Johnny while he was away?

Our faithful dogs were leaping on top of us almost as soon as the level bay ice brought the komatik to a standstill. To them it was the highest degree of good sport,

and they were showing their joy in their boisterous dog way, tumbling over us and one another in their excitement.

"'Tis just there, Doctor," came echoing above the whirring of our runners, as right below us a single twinkling light came into view far down the last hillside toward the sea.

Already they had heard us, those anxious watchers, and we saw the light flare up as some one brought it to the open door. "'Tis welcome you are this night, Doctor. Come in, sir—sure Rube knows where to get food for the dogs. Come—Johnny's a bit easier, thank God, but it's longing for you we've been ever since Pat started."

No one could mistake it. The thigh bone was obviously broken in the middle, for as the child lay on his back on the settle, the right knee and foot were at an angle with the little fellow's body that made one creep to look at it.

"Get a plank, Pat. We must start work at once, for I have to be off at daylight." Pat, who was already clearing things away, a most necessary proceeding in so tiny a room, at once went out and brought in his only board, covered thick with ice and snow. It was not easy planing it smooth, still wet from the thawing ice. But the men of the sea are the "handy folk," and with them obstacles are merely things to be overcome.

Meanwhile Johnny had grown drowsy, and at length had dozed off to sleep. In a minute or so, however, an involuntary twitch waked the little fellow and he uttered a cry of pain. Fortunately we could spare his father, and he went and held the child in his strong arms to comfort him. As soon as ever weariness overcame his fear, the boy would fall off to sleep again only to wake with a cry of suffering that made us feel miserably slow-fingered as we toiled on, padding the splints and making all our preparations. Midnight had long passed before the lad was laid out on the rude table to have his limb set.

Only a few breaths of a heavy sweetened vapor and Johnny was off to a land of dreams, where twitching muscles would not give him pain, and whence even the straightening and grinding of the broken bone could not bring him back.

Two o'clock—"He'll do now, Pat, till morning. You must keep watch by him till he wakes. I shall sleep here on the floor, and you will call me as soon as he stirs, for I must be gone at daylight, as I told you. My assistant will come over and be with you till evening."

"'Deed I will so, sir," said Pat. "There's no fear that I'll close my eyes this night." He had not seen chloroform given before, and he was still not quite convinced that Johnny would ever wake again. "No fear, Doctor—lie down—lie down." Already his wife had placed their only mattress on the floor in the corner.

The red glow of the early morning, reflected from the boundless snow outside, was stealing through the little window as I woke after a sailor's rest of a "watch below." The dim outline of Patrick Duffy keeping watch without a movement by the side of his little child was only just discernible, for even the tiny flame of one small lamp had been necessarily tempered to their scanty store of paraffin. He turned at my slightest move, and seeing I was awake, whispered, "Johnny has just wakened up, Doctor. He has slept like a lamb."

"Put the kettle on, then, for we must be starting. I am to meet the priest's messengers at the Long Lake Narrows an hour after sunrise."

Already I could hear, outside, the wakeful Rube calling the dogs from their hiding-places, and also the voice of some other driver, taking his team off betimes to the forest up the bay.

Johnny was wreathed in smiles when I went over to the corner where we had arranged a level fracture-bed for him. I might have expected the look of fear, for he could only associate me with having pained him. But the plucky little chap had forgotten his woes, and was lost in the delight of cuddling the curly black head of my faithful retriever. "No pain, eh, Johnny?" No answer—only a look at his father, as if to ask, "What does he mean?" and he went on playing with his new friend the dog. So I took it that the splint fitted, and was able to insist on Pat getting a nap "to onct."

It was a glorious morning as we drove right out of the harbor mouth over the firmly frozen sea, galloping round the feet of the beetling cliffs that form so ominous a landmark when the hospital steamer visits this cleft in the hills during the summer time. Only a short hour and the hummocky ice had shut from our eyes all sight of the harbor, where the little fisher lad lay. On our return journey we would call and take him back with us to hospital so that we might set up the leg in plaster.

When the off-shore winds which herald the coming of our brief summer had at last blown the heavy field ice from the Coast, and we were able to loose the hospital ship Strathcona from her bonds, our first cruise of the season was to steam around to Crameliere Bay. As we sounded our whistle, whom should we see but Johnny Duffy running nimbly down the now mossy hillside toward the beach. As he scrambled aboard he reported proudly that he was helping Father with his boat, and would soon bring to Mother his share of the harvest of the sea.

REPORTED LOST

The Atlantic coast of Labrador stretches from north to south almost six hundred miles, and is swept along its entire length by the frigid waters of the polar current. It is shut in for seven months out of twelve by the relentless rigors of a sub-arctic winter. Not till late June is it possible to penetrate the ice fields that fend off all intending visitors. The days of its brief summer seem all too short to the plucky fishermen who then work their way north in pursuit of the great shoals of cod. These fish are distinctly influenced in their movements by the changing temperatures of the sea. As fall approaches they retreat into the deeper waters, where it is supposed that they lie more or less torpid during the winter months. With the advent of spring they again approach the shore, "striking the land" first to the south, and then farther and farther north. The movements of the fishing fleets depend on those of King Cod, so that from July to October the great bulk of fishermen are away north of the Straits of Belle Isle.

Late one October when the snow lay over the land once more and young ice was beginning to form in the bays, we were bound out of the great fjord known as Hamilton Inlet. It was growing dark and we were still twenty miles from the entrance, when the watch called out, "There is a small boat lying off, Doctor, and waving a flag for us."

"Slow down, then, and let's see what they want."

Soon a dingy with four hands was alongside. "Can you carry us to some place where we can get the mail boat, Captain?" a tall fellow called out. "We've lost our vessel on White Island reef, and we've no way to get back."

"Very well, come aboard; but what vessel is it?"

"The S.S. Sparrow, from Rodney Harbor. She belongs to Captain Flowers."

"Oh, the Sparrow, is it? Where did you say you ran her ashore?"

"On White Island reef."

"Did she sink at once?"

"No, we had time to beach her; but she's full of water, and we've been living under a sail waiting for the last mail boat from the north to take us off. But it's terrible cold and there's no firewood."

"Has Captain Flowers gone south?"

"Well, no, sir; he's waiting for the mail boat also."

"All right, go down aft and get some tea. The hospital is full aboard, so you'll

have to sleep where you can—engine-room floor, I guess. Haul up their boat there and lash it in board. Tell the chief not to fire any more. We shall anchor shortly for the night."

Our visitors appeared to be uneasy as they saw us head off for the White Island and gradually draw in toward the reef. And when at length we had cautiously hauled in to four fathoms of water and let down our anchor, the spokesman came to me and said: "What are you going to do?"

"Wait till daylight and survey the wreck," I replied. From where we lay we could plainly see the boat lying on her beam ends.

A little later he came back saying: "We'd like to go aboard the Sparrow, Captain, if you'll let us, now we're so close."

"Sorry I can't allow it," I answered. "The anchor watch is to see that no one leaves the ship till I do."

As dawn was breaking I was awakened by the faint sound of muffled oars, and leaped off my bunk just in time to discover that our four passengers had succeeded in throwing their boat out, and were stealthily pulling toward the wreck. It was but the work of a moment to send our crew after them, and I shortly heard the runaways grumbling exceedingly as they were unceremoniously shoved aboard over our rail.

It so happened that Captain Flowers was the keeper of a saloon which had given rise to much trouble on the Coast, and we had reasons to suspect that he had purposely cast away the Sparrow for the sake of the insurance on her. Even a cursory inspection strongly confirmed our suspicions, so we steamed on to the hospital, landed our sick and the shipwrecked crew, took aboard a few useful implements and returned the same night to the wreck. After a few days' labor our efforts to float her proved completely successful. We were able to free the hull of water at low tide, and found that the leak was a large round hole which had been punched from the inside with a crowbar, and a jagged mass of splinters was bristling on the outside. We succeeded in plugging the leak and on the top of the next tide we successfully floated our prize and took her in tow.

We decided that we would anchor the Sparrow in a safe spot while we went over to see Captain Flowers and tell him what we had found out. The conversation held early next morning when we called at the saloon and told our story will not bear repeating. The upshot was that the wreck was put up for sale, and I was able to purchase it for fifty cents. Solemnly we drew up the bill of sale, signed it, had it duly witnessed, and I paid over a one-dollar bill, receiving fifty cents change.

Two days later, with the help of the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, we hauled our steamer up on to the "hard," or beach, and their shipwright safely

executed all necessary repairs. We had previously taken the precaution to photograph the damage.

Now began our long six hundred mile tow to the south. Once in a breeze of wind we parted the hawser, but secured the schooner again, and having purchased a new hawser at one of our ports of call, we set out for our last long tow with four hundred miles of the journey safely accomplished.

It was a fine afternoon in November when we put to sea, but it was already late, and the winter night fell rapidly. The wind rose strong with the oncoming darkness, and we were forced to steam fifteen miles out to sea in order to safely round a cruel series of breaking rocks which lie off the worst headland on the Coast. By midnight a heavy sea was running and we were obliged to go "dead slow," for the Sparrow, wallowing in the huge swells, would first run almost over us even though she was at the very end of all the warp we possessed, and then, dragging behind again, the slack line would come suddenly taut with a dangerous jerk. It was my midnight watch below, and I seemed hardly to have fallen asleep when I was awakened by a dripping, oil-clad figure in my cabin who shouted at me above the roar of the gale: "The Sparrow's gone, sir."

"Gone where?"

"Parted the hawser, sir."

"How's the weather?"

"Dark as pitch and thick with snow; 'tis a dirty night, sir."

"Can't you see anything?"

"No, sir."

"Very well; put the ship about and heave her to till I come on deck."

Rolling into those great swells, washed now and again by the tail end of a sea, it seemed a long wait for the morning. But it came at last and there, sure enough, every now and again visible through the driving snow as she rose on the crest of the surging waters, rode the gallant little steamer Sparrow.

We worked up to her and lay by to see if the gale would moderate, for it was impossible to get aboard her in such a sea. But the signs of the sky all pointed to worse weather; and our ship was small enough on a winter's night in the North Atlantic. So at daybreak we were forced at last reluctantly to abandon her and seek safety from the still rising storm under the nearest land we should find. No one can tell our feelings as we took one last look at her riding masterless to fight alone the unequal battle with those waves.

After the storm was over we spent three days searching those watery wastes in hope that even yet we might bring help to the little vessel. But nothing was ever seen

of her again, and the great ocean hid in its bosom the traces of yet another crime.

It was the end of November, two years later. The days were short and the nights long and dark, and every vessel that came in to harbor had a thick coating of ice about her decks, and shrouds that looked like sugar. Every soul who could do so had left the Labrador for the winter, and the Coast was already wrapping itself in its impenetrable blanket of ice. The hospital steamer Strathcona had gone into winter quarters, and I was just leaving for England, when a cablegram was placed in my hand. "Barkentine Maggie reported lost on Dusky Islands, Labrador. Please investigate." It was from Lloyds, underwriters, and therefore demanded immediate attention.

We had seen the barkentine at anchor before we left for the south. It seemed an odd thing that she should have been on the Coast so late. In the official protest of the vessel's loss which we now obtained from the shipping office, we found that the ship had started on her voyage to the Mediterranean market loaded with five thousand quintals of fish; that while passing through a narrow tickle the rudder chain had broken, and the vessel, broaching to, had run hard and fast on the rocks. Great efforts had been made to save her, but all in vain; and though the crew had clung to the pumps till the ship was on her beam ends, their efforts had been of no avail and they had been forced to abandon her to save their lives. The wreck had been put up for auction and sold for eighty dollars to our erstwhile friend the saloon-keeper, and former owner of the luckless Sparrow.

Without seeing the vessel we could only accept the facts as stated. To go down and investigate would mean both risk and expense, for it would be necessary to hire a steamer and take her six hundred miles to the north so late in the year, while the chances of saving anything seemed infinitely remote.

Some said, "Go and try." The majority counseled, "Don't be such an ass."

However, we decided to attempt it. We forthwith hired a small steam trawler, shipped a crew, took a diver and much wrecking apparatus, and left the Narrows on our voyage of discovery one snapping evening just after dark. Three days later our little ship, a mere mass of ice, hove to off Dusky Island. She was so coated that all spare hands were constantly employed chopping the rapidly accumulating ice from every exposed surface. All night we drifted about, unable to venture near, but at daylight we drew in toward the land. What an exciting moment it was! Would our quest be fruitless?

Suddenly a shout from the watch greeted my ears and a joyful cry of "There's her spars away on the lee bow!"

"She hasn't canted over much, either," said the skipper, as we drew in near

enough to see round the point of a big island. "And what's more, no sea is going to get in there to hurt her."

She was set up so high on the rocks, and seemed so trim-looking for a wreck, that we were all mad to go aboard her at once. But she was beset about with ice, and after we had anchored as near as we dared go, it took our boats a long time to get alongside her. When at last we climbed over her sides we found that instead of the confusion that a hastily abandoned wreck would suggest, perfect order reigned on deck. Hatches were not only closed, but firmly sealed. Evidently no cargo had been jettisoned to lighten the ship. Every door was neatly closed. The once broken rudder chain had been carefully repaired. The ends of such ropes as were left were all well fastened. One block from the dismantled running rigging which was loose on deck, was carefully marked, in indelible pencil, "topgallant haulyard," as if some lubber who did not know how to reset square rigging had labeled it, with the intention of putting it in its right place next spring. But, oddest of all, only the starboard pump was in running order, and the brasswork necessary to work the other was on the shelf in the round-house.

The statement that the ship was only abandoned to save the lives of the crew was patently a false one. There was some little water in the well, but after thawing out the pumps and pumping for four hours the Maggie was dry again.

Not an hour was to be lost if we were to get our prize south that winter. So while the skipper took soundings round the vessel to find the best way to haul her off, the diver was sent down to examine the damage to the hull. Meanwhile another party worked with a boat at each hatch, carrying the undamaged fish cargo over to the hold of our steamer and so perceptibly lightening the abandoned ship.

By the following night, though the constantly making ice bothered us a good deal, the big anchors had been laid out and a line hauled taut to the ship winches. The diver's sketch of the ship's bottom showed she was only chafed in the neighborhood of her forefoot, and that at high tide she was now only aground forward. It would be high tide next day at eleven. All the fish had now been moved from the forward hatch of the vessel.

At last the fated hour arrived. "All hands on the winches," shouted the skipper. Tighter and tighter the stout warps strained. "Give it her, boys, only one more. Now —now, jump on the levers"—and then a creak, a shiver, a long-drawn groan, and the good ship Maggie once more floated free.

To break into the store, rig the vessel, revictual her, and replace all things necessary for a long voyage lost us yet another precious day. All night long our crew stuck doggedly at work. At length, having appointed our mate as captain on board

the wreck and giving him two watches for his prize crew, we tried the most serious task of all, the "limbering up." The two great anchor chains fastened to the mainmast were drawn through the hawse pipes and securely spliced to the ends of our doubly twisted steel-wire hawsers.

Slowly we towed out in the early dawn, a strong headwind blowing off the frozen land. By night a heavy sea was running and the Maggie was plunging into it at the full length of both hawsers streaming astern—one-sixth of a mile behind us—so that even the bright mast headlights which we had given her were invisible for long periods together.

In spite of all our indomitable skipper's care, one of the hawsers parted, and was only repaired after anxious maneuvering. Often, as we learned afterward from the prize crew, the ship lurched so heavily into the seas that it was impossible for any one to live on deck. Indeed, even her lofty jib-boom was broken by her diving.

On the fourth morning we made the land, coming in upon it through a driving blizzard of snow and sleet. We were glad enough to haul in under its welcome shelter and nose our way along till the familiar Narrows of St. John's Harbor opened up once again. It was only then that we dared count victory ours; and we steamed into the desired haven with all our bunting flying.

Captain Flowers was found guilty of "willfully casting away the ship with the purpose to defraud the underwriters." Four years' imprisonment was the sentence which the Court imposed, but death released the old man long before his term was finished. The saloon "down North" has remained closed through all these intervening years. As to the Maggie, she lived many a long day to sail our northern seas and redeem a reputation which had been so nearly lost for her on the Dusky Island.

PETER WRIGHT, MAIL-CARRIER

Amidst the scattered and scanty settlements of the Northland the great problems of the outside world afford little interest to our people. Thus many years ago speaking to one man about the great victory of the Japanese over the Baltic fleet, I was not surprised when my auditor turned around and asked: "Who be those Japans, Doctor?" as if they were a tribe of Eskimos in North Labrador. The irregularity of our communications with the outside world certainly affords us some excuse; but the difficulty in giving schooling to the children is the more potent factor. We are, therefore, better acquainted with events no longer current, so that when I asked a man a while ago if he knew who was the greatest man in England, he replied cheerfully: "Yes, sur; I guess he be Mister Bright." Even the factor at one of the large posts of the Hudson's Bay Company receives only one mail a year from the outside world. He has his daily paper put on his table every morning. But his information is always exactly one year old.

It is little wonder, therefore, if, like the rest of the world, our main interests are in ourselves and our own doings, and if we know, perhaps, more details about our neighbors than is good for either us or them. Indeed, few things happen along our shore which do not soon fly from mouth to mouth, and human characters cannot always stand such a test. I have known a peripatetic parson himself to be actually caught trouting on Sunday, in blissful ignorance of the heinous offense he was committing! "For t' parson was adrift in t' week-days." You may imagine how he startled the village by arriving on Sunday morning, trout pole in hand, a fine string of speckled beauties dangling by his side.

So in our minds we who see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep, and have no doubt of His oversight of our affairs, grade our Christians by the way they do their daily work, and by their answer to the immediate call of duty.

All this is my excuse for telling you the story of our little mail-carrier, Peter Wright.

In the ordinary acceptance of the word, Pete could not be called an athlete, body, soul, or spirit. Yet his prodigies of endurance and devotion to duty have taught us at least to rate both a strong will and a loyal heart high among the essential assets of the true sportsman.

In a burst of confidence Peter once informed me: "I t'inks I is fifty-eight years of age, Doctor." (And this was before Dr. Osler frightened us from becoming sixty.) He

stands only five feet three inches in his stockings. His weight is one hundred and fifteen pounds, or rather less now, for he seems to be growing smaller year by year. He is perfectly erect, has piercing, deep-set eyes with heavy eyebrows, and answers questions almost as an automatic machine responds to a penny in the slot, shutting up with a snap. In this he is unlike his neighbors, whose attention readily wanders during any prolonged conversation. Pete never was a gossip. He was born and reared on our Coast, though of English descent. He is unmarried. In his early days his attention was given to fishing and to hunting like the rest of us. But years and years ago, in the dim vistas of the past, he was appointed one of Her Majesty's mail-carriers, and that position he has held ever since. Some think him a special creation.

In summer the mails come to our village from the nearest point on the recently built railway line more than one hundred and fifty miles away to the south of us, until that road is closed by the struggling trains getting buried in the snows. Then the post comes all around the Island by carriers, and reaches us from the north and west.

Some of the carriers drive large teams of dogs. Others, like Pete, having steep hills to climb and dense woods to struggle through, prefer "shank's pony," for they can then make short cuts, dodging from drogue to drogue of trees, and cross ice-covered bays that would not be safe for dogs. When the sea permits it, our letters come by steamer, and then Pete has only to row along thirty miles of coast between her ports of call. This he does crosshanded and alone in his tiny punt, the roaring surf of the open Atlantic rolling in on the cliffs beside him being his only companion.

The distance for each carrier's route varies. Pete's is about one hundred miles "on the round." Now this task would involve no special fortitude or heroism in a country where houses are frequent and where roads exist; where rivers are bridged and arms of the sea have ferries; where dense woods have paths and trackless barrens are "poled"; where travelers going to and fro keep communication open and afford a chance of help to any one overtaken by accident. Nor would it be such a task if "people wasn't lookin' for you reg'lar," so that you could choose your weather for traveling. But Pete's round possesses none of these facilities. There is no road at all. There are no bridges and no ferries. Scarcely any one ever travels the paths except where a solitary trapper crosses them in his fur rounds. Houses in certain places are as far as twenty miles apart. There are mountains to climb and rivers to cross, bogs to navigate or circumnavigate, interminable barrens and large lakes.

When May comes and brings spring to those in more genial climes, the rivers are fretting dangerously at their winter bonds, and any unexpected moment may find their freedom again. The lakes are subtly undermining the icy bridges which we have

used all winter. They are still so like the trusty ones with which we have become familiar that the unwary will surely be caught. Meanwhile the ponderous mantle of the winter sea is breaking-up, and suddenly yielding to the persuasion of the strong westerly winds, has more than once broken from the land while some traveler has been crossing the wide mouth of an open bay. So he and his have gone seaward on a barque that seldom, if ever, brings him back home again. All that we know when one of these accidents occurs is that "Jack was seen at ——, but never reached the spot he was making for."

SHOEING DOGS

Yet this stretch of country is Pete Wright's "regular beat." Year after year this small solitary man has compassed that round ten to twelve times each winter. Regular as clock-work, he turns up at each of his appointed stations once a fortnight. The man comes and goes like a meteor.

We were pitying ourselves one night as we turned into our comfortable sleeping bags on the floor of our host's tilt. Pitying ourselves because it had been a heavy day on our dogs, and it was nearly ten o'clock before we reached the rude shelter. When I woke in the morning as the gray dawn was stealing in through the little

window, I thought I heard a movement by the stove. There seemed something almost uncanny about it till I made out what it was and could distinguish a tiny erect figure sitting bolt upright, where none had been overnight. It proved to be Peter Wright. He had arrived about two in the morning, noiselessly stationed himself by the stove and, recharging it, had gone straight off to sleep, sitting on the settle, without a word to any one, as satisfied as if he were in a feather bed.

Now this place was the rendezvous of three carriers. The one from the westward was late, and Pete did not get his mails handed over until nine in the evening. He had thirty miles to his next station and the temperature was twenty below zero. At ten he rose to start. "What, Pete, never going to leave at this time of night, are you?"

"Why, my dear man," he replied. "With a moon like this 'tis better in the woods than when them nippers [mosquitoes] is about. So long, Doctor," and with that he went out absolutely alone.

A good day's travel is thirty miles. On a sick call he has covered forty-five miles. "I only counts on two and a half miles an hour; but I find I soon kills out them that travels four for the first day or two."

Pete carries nothing with him but his precious mails. These, at times, weigh sixty pounds and over when he sets out, and the heavier they are the prouder he is of them. On one occasion, the southern carrier having been late, Pete had only two unstamped local letters to carry and when we met him by the way he was almost too ashamed to stop and speak to us, though many men would say: "Us gets the same pay for the round and has less to carry." And yet others: "It ain't worth our going at all for two letters. Us'll let them two bide over till next mail." Not so Pete. Though some think his only a humble work, to him it was always a post for which he, Pete Wright, was responsible. No one else would do it if he left it undone, and therefore must he go if there were no letters at all. All the same, on that occasion he felt it a sort of lack of confidence, due possibly to some fault of his, that he should have so little entrusted to him.

Once he was even more crestfallen. On our southern journey we met him one night joyfully staggering along under a huge weight of mail matter bound for the same tilt at which we were preparing to stay the night, so we, being the largest recipients of letters in our district, were anticipating the opening of the mail bags over tea.

At last the seal was broken, the twine cut, and there fell out on the floor an innumerable quantity of the identical kind of packages. They proved to be simply one large consignment of patent-medicine advertisements. If we had had faith in the testimonials to their extraordinary value, we should only have been left the more

sorry, for it was as impossible for us to get any of that elixir vitæ as to get strawberries and cream. Meanwhile, Pete had previously been bemoaning because he left one bag behind as he was physically unable to "spell" the two on his back at once. The mails are carried in waterproof bags and so slung over the back as to bring the main weight high up between the shoulders. Pete never carries either compass or waterproof covering, though in spring he arrives sometimes in fog as thick as pea soup, or drenched to the skin by what he calls with a contemptuous smile only a "sou'westerly mild."

He has arrived in one village after midnight, only his deep-set eyes visible, his handkerchief tied over his mouth and frozen there, so that it would take full ten minutes to thaw it off, up to which time he could not utter a single word. He carries nothing to eat but a cake of hard bread (or ship's biscuit), as that does not freeze as soft bread does. But these later years, having fewer teeth left, he has to moisten the aforesaid biscuit before he can demolish it. Now, when lakes are frozen to the bottom and rivers are twenty feet under snow, this is no easy task. So Pete has to depend more and more on his knowledge of boiling springs, for he never yet was "nish" (tender) enough to stop and boil the kettle when he had to lose time melting snow for water. Indeed, he never carries an axe, though no traveler who thinks of personal comfort would ever venture out in this country in winter without one. In our country an axe means a fire, a tilt for shelter and a hot drink, if one happens to be overtaken in the woods.

"After March month comes in, I does carry soft bread," he confided to me. It was a kind of indulgence he allowed himself after the back of the winter's work was broken.

It was only by chance I discovered that Pete possessed any frailties common to our kind. For my hostess once told me she occasionally persuaded him to accept dough-boys, "with a bit of chopped pork and molasses pounded in to stop 'em freezing, and cos Pete says they gives a won'erful light to his eyes."

Our folk regard one thing about him as doubtful. He travels every day, considering the imperious call of the mail superior to that for Sunday rest. We might understand this when there are "sealed" letters (magic word) in his bag. But as they usually are only of the class that contains "I hope this finds you well, as it leaves me at present, thank God," we are a little fearful for Pete's moral welfare. As a rule Pete responds to the mail as an arrow to a bowstring, though "However hard pushed I is, Doctor, I always tries to get two hours' sleep in the twenty-four." And he once said to me, half apologetically, "I don't reckon, Doctor, when a man has an easy mind that five or six hours is too much."

Peter smokes, by doctor's orders, after each of his two meals. "I finds it does me good on times," he says. But he admits that he finds the pipe at night "sweet enough." Tobacco was originally ordered him for a kind of asthma from which he was suffering; but I more than fear that that can no longer be blamed for the continuance of the habit. If he exceeds the prescribed two pipes, he says, "It does me harm, I 'lows."

Pete's two inseparable friends are his small knobbed stick, which he cut himself in the woods many winters ago, and his snow rackets. Large and round they are, not built for speed, but to keep him up. "The least sink breaks my step," he says, "and that soon tells. No, I never takes 'em off, not even on hard ice. You see, I was always terrible on rackets from a boy."

Pete seems to love every one. He is always ready to oblige, and never happier than when the space on his back, ordinarily monopolized by his official bundle, permits him to carry also a ten-pound tub of butterine, or a couple of gallon jars of molasses, "just to oblige." It isn't for the filthy lucre alone that Pete works. His magnificent remuneration is ten dollars a trip, and out of this when there is more than he can carry he must hire another man to "spell what's over." It is lucky for Pete he does not have hotel bills to meet as he journeys from place to place. There would be little left of the salary beyond enough for "skin boots" if he were charged for meals. But there are no hotel bills on the coast; we are quite incapable of an idea so original as to ask Pete to pay for anything.

So when Peter's last cruise is finished and he, in common with all of us, can carry only his record with him over the final trail, we shall all expect him to hear his Master's "Well done."

He says he has been a little nervous of late about a pack of wolves which followed the western carrier, for "you see I only has my old stick to help me." But some of us wink slyly when the wolf story comes up, for we pity the wolf that would try to digest so indestructible a phenomenon as Peter Wright, mail-carrier.

PADDY

A CALL had come in one winter morning for help from a village thirty miles away. A mere bagatelle with a good team of dogs, if we could run light, and if there was any surface to the snow. But in this case a nurse was needed as well as our operating outfit, and a recent heavy storm made the usually well-beaten trail along the seaboard even a tougher proposition than forcing a pathway along the blazed trail through the woods. By crossing the country we could shorten our distance by a league or so, and also travel the last ten miles on the sea ice of a large bay, which one might reasonably expect to be better wind-swept than the closer leads along the landwash.

Our driver with the baggage and faster dogs broke the path for us, while I followed with the nurse in her "woman box" on a light whalebone-shod sleigh of hickory. But in spite of our best energies, progress was slow. The snow was so very treacherous that twice our sleigh had capsized coming rapidly down steep slopes, as the bow sank into dangerous holes, and this to the great discomfort of its occupant.

Evening was coming on when we at last broke out on to the great bay and we were therefore already unable to discern the low-lying promontory projecting out into the sea on which stood the village we were looking for. Having "cooked our kettle" and rested the dogs under the clumps of trees by the landwash, the nurse being "game" we decided to go ahead, realizing that delay might rob us of the whole value of our visit.

Heavy seas driven by the recent storm heaving in under the ice had smashed it up only to leave it to freeze again into fantastic pinnacles and hummocks that made progress in the increasing darkness both difficult and painful. To make it worse a dense fog set in soon after we left the land, and it became necessary to stop at frequent intervals and consult as to our next move, since, like tenderfeet, we had overlooked our compass.

The time went by quickly. The fog robbed us of any chance of getting a bearing from the stars, and by eight o'clock the darkness was intense. Suddenly our driver ahead shouted loudly to me to stop. His dogs had come right up to an ice edge, against which he could hear the lapping of the open sea. Obviously we must retrace our steps, and that as quickly as possible, for the chance of a sheet of ice breaking off and carrying us seaward was entirely probable. With the greatest care we moved alternatively, trying to keep away at right angles to the water. But an hour's work

only brought us to yet another ice edge, or perhaps the same again. Thereupon the process was begun once more, and this time, after another hour, we found ourselves amongst much rougher ice. Now and again one of us would fall off a high hummock edge, or walk right into the perpendicular face of a pinnacle, striking it first of all with his face.

Judging that this time we must be nearing the land, and anxious to double our precautions, both sledges were now halted; and taking a course from each I tried by continually calling to keep going in a straight line, and if possible find some steep vise —that would indicate that we had made a landing. But the plan proved useless, bringing me in about a quarter of an hour right up to the sledges again, only now on the other side of them. Both driver and nurse assured me that they had not broken orders and moved an inch, and it was obvious that I had circled right around them.

Hungry and tired, we decided to have supper, and to discuss staying where we were for the night, for we felt sure that we were near land by the nature of the ice. We could not be certain, however, that the fog would lift with the dawn, and both for our own sakes, and that of our prospective patient, we were eager to push ahead.

It had come my turn to wander off and try again for land. I had pushed on till the answer to my call was so faint from the sledges that I dared go hardly a yard farther, when suddenly a tremendous noise came right beneath my feet, and some animal dashing between my legs made my hair stand on end. From the whirr and whizz, followed by another, and another, that broke the silence, I was aware, as soon as my equanimity was restored, that I had lumbered right on to the top of a covey of willow grouse, and was actually walking on the land. The dogs were soon jumping up around me, keenly interested in where the partridges had been. When peace was restored the leader insisted on starting off in the direction which we felt must be wrong for us, for judging by the level nature of the snow, we must be on the neck of some headland. She seemed so confident, however, knowing now we were looking for a house, that we decided to leave it to her, for we could not, anyhow, tell her which of the scattered cottages we wanted.

It was midnight when the dogs halted and came back to the komatik, wagging their tails, obviously to tell us they had found what they were looking for. It proved to be a tiny house wrapped in darkness, and almost entirely buried in with snowbanks. A light, however, was soon kindled inside, for our big team of hungry wolves had already burrowed down under the house and were growling at and fighting with the owner's dogs, immediately beneath where the family slept.

"Sure, 'tis yourself, Doctor, and 'tis mesilf's glad to see you, and 'tis Biddy that's—But sure, there's a lady with ye, and me talking while she stands outside.

And where may ye be bound for on a night like this?"

It was well below zero and Paddy had just jumped out of a warm bed and was standing by his open door. So we were glad enough it was a good-natured man whose house we happened upon, though we knew that he had eight children, and a perennial scarcity of other assets. A fire was soon crackling in the stove, and the family having been rearranged so as to afford more floor space, we essayed to produce and cook some of our own provisions. Paddy would, however, have none of it. Sure he had a tin of milk in case the priest had to be sent for, and his honor wouldn't be satisfied if he didn't open it for us. A prolonged search produced also a small bag of sugar, for 'tis molasses the Murphys always used for themselves for sweetness. 'Twas baking day, glory be to God, or there'd have been no loaf bread. But sure the youngsters were that hungry in the winter-time that there was most always a batch of it in t' oven, while as for pertaties, there was more Murphys in t' room than in t' cellar come Christmas these days.

There was no more sleep for Paddy that night. Our dogs must be fed, after he had adapted the only available space—his storeroom—for our nurse's private sleeping compartment. And then there was watch to keep and breakfast to get, for we must hurry along at daylight, having missed our objective in the fog by something like three miles.

While we breakfasted, Paddy had harnessed up his team and gone on ahead without giving us a chance to thank him. For he wanted us to have his trail to guide up, and to prepare the Macreadys for our arrival.

Our case went well. We made hospital again three days later, and beyond sending a few small mementos to Paddy for his kindness, he soon passed from memory in the multiplicity of functions that demanded one's attention.

Prohibition came into force the following year, and a real live policeman was "wished upon" our district. His livelihood was of a predatory variety, and practically half of all fines were his prerogatives. It was the only possible plan to assure devotion to duty.

Constable Scrimgour proved himself a paragon. Though I had been a magistrate for many years, my total unacquaintance with the law and procedure had made our annual list of convictions hitherto so modest as to be almost negligible. In one bad case of slander we had bound over the offender to go to tea every night for a week with an injured lady and, to insure execution, had dropped in ourselves. Another whose "unruly member" had made trouble in a village had been condemned for six months to hoist upon her lintel, "Keep the door of my lips, O Lord, that I sin not with my tongue." We had no jailer and this method had avoided extravagance.

But suddenly one day, while our new guardian of the law was still covering himself with glory, I found myself sincerely rueing my judicial responsibility. It was a lovely morning, and I was returning from hospital much elated with the progress of my patients, when I met our new friend evidently in search of me.

"Good-morning, officer. Nothing wrong, I hope?" For he had clicked his heels and stood at the salute as if he were receiving an admiral of the North American Squadron.

"Want to see you privately about a case, sir."

"Very well, come along then, and let's get it over," and we adjourned forthwith to my office.

"It's Paddy Murphy, your honor. I want a warrant against him for moonshining!"

"Paddy Murphy! Why, he hasn't had enough molasses to make a single noggin of, beyond what the family eats; and I'm sure he hasn't any other kind of stuff to make it out of."

"That was what made me suspicious, your honor. Didn't I see how they was having no shortage, and this a bad fishery as well?"

Alas, there was no help for me, and with a guilty feeling as of doing something behind a good man's back, I gave the sergeant what the law compelled.

Court was called a week from that day. A case in court is an entertainment no man of spirit would miss in a country where moving pictures had not penetrated, and all kinds of diversion can be counted on one's fingers. In due time the fateful day approached, and I was told that Paddy had come to town and was eager to see me. The new law ran that a hundred dollars fine or three months was the minimum that could be imposed. Every one knew not only that our good friend was not the possessor of a hundred cents, but that if he was taken from his family during the winter months they would certainly freeze to death, for they depended entirely upon him for their firewood. Moreover, they would assuredly starve as well, for the oldest boy was yet far too young to earn enough to feed the rest, and alas, the Murphy family, like the ravens, had never troubled about storehouses and barns, or been guilty of undue anxiety about to-morrow.

Knowing by experience the honesty of our people and the absolute certainty of Paddy's convicting himself if allowed to, I tried to forestall even his volubility when at length he shamefacedly walked into my office. I hastened to assure him that I knew he would not say he was guilty.

"Guilty is it, Doctor dear? It wasn't doing harm to any one I was after. Just making a drop o' the crature that the Murphys have been brought up to all their lives. No, I'm not guilty, and what that spalpeen is making all this bother about, only the

Holy Father knows."

"If you say that in court to-morrow, Paddy, do you know you'll have to pay a hundred dollars or go to prison?"

"Sure, and what'll the rest of the Murphys do at mealtimes, Doctor? What'll they be doing to fend for theirselves whilst I'm away? For you knows yourself, Doctor, that cash is beyond the reach of the Murphys of this coast."

A good hour was just thrown away on Paddy. I could not get him to understand either the crime or the rigidity of the law, and my repeated advice to hold his tongue even failed to help.

All the village was present and all the villages from along the shore that could "bring it to bear," when the trial came off. Paddy, quite at his ease, walked in with the constable. First he wanted to sit by the judge and then to light his pipe, being unaccustomed to so much public attention. It was a bad beginning to be told by the policeman, whom he regarded solely as a personal enemy, "You can't smoke here." But he recovered quickly enough to reply, "No offense meant," and with an eye henceforth on the officer, to return the pipe to his pocket while he reached for a seat.

"You must stand up while you are in the court," only brought forth "Moind who y're talking to, sorr," and Paddy sunk into the armchair reserved for a fellow magistrate.

When he had at length been persuaded to comply with the ritual consonant with the dignity of the law, I reminded him of our conversation in the office and then warned him he need not plead guilty. But so little did it enter his head what I was trying to get at, that the policeman had to repeat the challenge almost into his ear, "Are ye guilty or not guilty?"

"Eh?"

"Are ye guilty or not guilty?"

"Who says I am? Tell me that, will ye, ye landlubber?"

"I'm asking ye whether ye are guilty or not guilty," replied the imperturbable minion of the law. "If ye ask me another, 'tis the law itself I'll be taking you to, ye southern foreigner."

"Paddy," I broke in, "this is the law, and I'm asking you—Did you make the whiskey or not? Don't you remember what I told you? Don't you remember I am a magistrate?"

His "Faith and I do, Your Majesty" would have been too much for my gravity if he hadn't immediately followed it with, "And who else should have made it, then?"

Incorrigible honesty is the bane of our judiciary, where only the dishonest man pleads "not guilty."

"Do you mean you are guilty or not?"

"'Tis guilty I'm telling you I am," and the case ended abruptly with a hundred dollars or three months, there being no other alternative open. The court felt like a graveside, the company sneaking silently away. Every one was thinking of the wife and the octave away in the cove. As for Paddy, with his eternally sunny disposition, he would soon adapt himself to any place, and, besides, the people of our village were rigid teetotallers.

At last I found myself alone with the criminal, who was wanting to know what he was to tell Bridget.

"Tell her, you—" I was going to say something uncomplimentary to his reasoning powers, but what service would it be? "Oh, go and tell her if you don't bring me a hundred dollars before next Saturday noon, you'll be out of harm's way for three months, and may the Lord have mercy on your crowd."

While working in our garden on Saturday half an hour before the time appointed, I spied Paddy, who oddly enough prided himself on his punctuality, trudging over the hillside in search of me. He carried something in so large a handkerchief, that at first it appeared he had come to settle his debt in kind. But having carefully unwound the garment on a stray rock, he invited my inspection of the contents. I counted forty-nine dollars and fifty-three cents in old small bank-notes, and odd coin of many ancient vintages.

At a numismatic bureau they might have been worth more. But I had to explain to Paddy that His Majesty the King only accepts coin at face value, and that I wanted as much more in half an hour.

"But 'tis all the neighbors had, Doctor, and sure, can't he wait till t' fish comes in t' year for t' rest?"

"He says he can't wait after twelve o'clock, Paddy, so you must hurry, or it's locked up you'll be, as sure as your name's Murphy."

More surprised than disappointed, Paddy packed up his parcel and disappeared jauntily in the direction of our own village.

Now, on our Coast religious denomination rather than any other one factor, determinates the habitat of an individual settler, the various creeds for the most part keeping in separate villages. Our own was essentially Protestant, Paddy's essentially Catholic, while our respective attitudes towards intoxicating beverages were those of the Puritan and Sir John Falstaff. Moreover, knowing our poverty, due to the terribly high cost of living, as I watched my victim trudge off to spend his last half hour in a good Puritan village, I feared he was following a forlorn hope.

Half an hour later, with real sorrow at heart, I found myself once more in the little

courtroom, pondering over the new problem of a grass widow and eight children. I felt it was necessary to see that some provision was made in our winter environment for our unexpected and unwelcome guest. At that psychological moment a sprightly footstep on the bare wooden stair, followed by the grinning face of Paddy Murphy himself, terminated my reverie.

"'Tis all here, Doctor dear. Sure my good friends couldn't see me left," and the great red handkerchief was once more solemnly unknotted and unwound. Sure enough, this time the whole hundred was forthcoming. As Paddy showed no desire to state where he had procured it, I forbore to question him, and merely gave him King George's blessing and my own warning to keep clear of the "crature" in future, which he assured me he would do, and so far as I know, he has done.

A day or so later the mystery of the treasure was unearthed. A young married fisherman, an unimpeachable prohibitionist and a prominent leader in the church, with the tender sympathy of the people "who go down to the sea in ships," having just the necessary balance stowed away in a stocking, had been unable to endure the idea of hungry and cold children. So he had literally emptied the stocking into the red handkerchief. I naturally felt forced to upbraid him for his improvidence, at which he pretended great humiliation. So much so that he finally consented to my going halves in the investment, provided the whole conspiracy were kept absolutely silent.

All that I pined for at the time was a moment of the talent of G. K. Chesterton for properly airing paradoxes. Why should we teetotallers be adding to a deplenished pocket a further skeleton for our cupboard, just because that rascal Paddy Murphy had made molasses into moonshine?

GHOSTS

GHOSTS? Of course we all believe in ghosts, whether we say we do or not. Anyhow, a creepy feeling went all down my spine when one day a thin, meanly dressed man suddenly confronted me with a smile, sardonic as I ever conceived a material smile could be, and offered to shake hands. His general contour, and his get-up, were entirely strange to me, but an odd sense that I had seen him before and ought to know him, flooded my mind.

But Bill—Bill, who had been my engineer for so long, was dead. He was drowned at sea a year ago. And yet the altered appearance could not convince my perturbed mind that out of the thing that stood before me, Bill was not looking at me. "Bill, is that you, or are you dead?" was the sanest expression my cerebrum succeeded in evolving.

"It's me all right, Doctor!" came back the answer in the familiar English of our Coast. "A British barkentine picked us up at the very last minute." Bill showed material signs of extracting a pipe from his pocket and wishing to sit down, after which he told me the following yarn.

"We were bound in for St. John's from t' Island late in t' fall. The engines needed packing before us laid her up for t' winter. It were only thirty miles to the entrance of the harbor, and so us only put aboard food for a day, and a couple of tons of coal. When us left home the wind was moderate, and soon fell away almost to calm. Everything went like a dream till suddenly a breeze sprang up from the sou'east. It freshened mighty quickly, gradually drawing ahead of us, and us pressed our little vessel all she could bear, so as to drive her on quickly under the shelter of the cliffs."

Fierce blasts of wind fell down on them each time they passed a cove or inlet, but they got safely along till they were rounding the northern head of St. John's harbor itself. Then suddenly a real hurricane hit them, together with heavy snow, and nearly blew them over. In spite of all their efforts they made no headway, indeed they gradually lost ground, and though they raised every pound of steam that they could, they found themselves slowly falling into the trough of the sea. One big sea, as high as a cliff, at last rose up alongside, and had it hit them fairly would have sent them all straight to Davy Jones's Locker; as it was it swept the deck of everything loose and filling her to the rails poured down the companion hatch and flooded the engine-room above the plates.

There was only one thing to do if they were to save their little ship. That was to

put her before the wind just as quickly as they could. She had only a small topsail used to steady her in a beam lop. Seconds seemed hours while trying to turn in the maelstrom, though thanks to her steam they were in reality soon before the gale, but now heading out southeast by east into the open Atlantic. Home and safety lay only a few yards from them, but there was no arguing with that breeze, while it was impossible to head her up to the seas which hit her in the face with the skilled malice of a prize fighter. Out into the open they had to go, fervently praying that the storm might be but the tail end of a cyclone, which would soon pass over them, for the seething cauldron of that wintry sea was writhing as water would in the flames of Hell.

As they ran farther and farther from the shelter of the cliffs, the seas became mountainous, and when the early darkness of December shut down upon them, they none of them expected ever to see the daylight. The boat was only an old iron trawler. She had been a fish cutter, serving with the Short Blue Fleet in the North Sea in the 'eighties of the last century. When classed as no longer fit for that terribly exacting service, she had been bought up and condemned to be used on the Labrador Coast, once again in the fishery business. As a model, she was perfect for a sea boat. Her construction also had been all that human ingenuity in a British shipyard could put into a boat of her size; and in her long life she had weathered many a gale in which larger vessels had disappeared. But she was almost in her dotage now, and her long out-dated powers left little doubt as to the outcome, if the storm held on. Game to the end, however, she would go down like a superannuated champion hurled back into the ring after his day was done.

There were six in the crew—all Newfoundlanders, and every one seasoned by many hard knocks of this same kind since their boyhood. So grimly they buckled down to fight it out, and not a moment was lost in vain regrets or even for the rest which ordinary bodies demand. Their handful of coal was already almost gone, so while they tore off the canvas boat covers, and feverishly converted them into a square sail to keep the ship before the sea, they let the fires out to save coal in case of that last chance which the optimism of these Newfoundland vikings with the faith of children just naturally expects.

During the night the seas coming over her had broken in all her skylights, and she had shipped a good deal of water, so it was absolutely necessary to again raise and maintain a few pounds of steam on the donkey engine in order to keep the water out of the engine-room. Morning found them still afloat, the gale as furious as ever, and the watches still straining their eyes over the waste of waters. Only mountains of sea met their view, but not a man left his post.

At daylight the improvised sail was hoisted on a pole and served well. To nurse their little store of remaining coal they began to burn what wood they could find in the ship, for they were still forced to keep the pump going. The first things to be sacrificed were the tables, lockers and bulkheads, and then the cabin floors. Next day the inside lining of the deck, the closets, and the deckhouses were cut up. They had a good lifeboat, so when the third morning came and they were still afloat the jolly-boat had to join the hecatomb. In the heavy sea they had not dared lift her into davits, so they chopped her up as she lay on her blocks, which followed her eventually into the insatiable flames, that were themselves clamoring relentlessly, as if they had sensed the import of the fury of the icy waters outside.

That day smoke was seen on the horizon, and terrible as the weather was, they made out that the vessel must certainly cross the course upon which they were drifting. The captain, still in the wheel-house, a post he never once left till he left it for the last time, ordered all the steam they could get, and just as quickly as they could get it. With that order, the last of their coal went into the furnace, with not a few rags soaked in oil, so as to throw up as much smoke as possible. Every one knew that it was a race for life. The stranger's smoke was obviously crossing their bow; yet all they dared to do was to run on before the seas, for they were already partly water-logged, and not for one second could they let her broach to even half a point.

Neck and neck it seemed at first a race with death with at least a sporting chance of being seen and saved. Every valve was screwed down and every ounce of pressure raised that could be put on her, though it far exceeded the official limit of her aged boiler. To blow up is a seaman's risk anyhow and was accepted naturally. If it had been only a question of a couple of miles ahead it would have been all right, for she flew along as in the best days of her youth before the wind and sea, responding, like the heroine she was, to her crew's S O S call for help. But the mountains of water were higher than ever, and at times the old carrier fairly buried herself, after jumping off the top of the combers into the chasms that opened beneath her. In those troughs everything was lost sight of, but each time that she climbed the top of some extra lofty sea they caught sight of what might mean safety to them, if only they could attract attention in time. Every man was praying that the stranger might be a tramp, just a "ten-knotter" or so. Then they could surely make her. But just as soon as her four spars topped the horizon they knew that she was a large liner bound for the old country, and that there was no chance for them, for every second she was leaving them farther astern. The thought of the comfortable cabin, the warmth, and the hope of rest and food on board her sent them down realizing almost for the first time that they were shivering and hungry though they had been

soaked from head to foot ever since the first sea came aboard. It was a hard thing to go down below again into that dark and clammy engine-room. Every skylight had gone, and the holes had been blocked up, excluding almost all the light. To make it worse they had to draw the remnants of the fire to save a few shovelfuls of ashes in case they were to get one more chance for life.

Another night went by. Their food had long since given out, and their only drink was some sickly hot water which they had condensed in the engine, and with it the tiniest allowance of wet flour made into a stodgy dough, though they had left the tea leaves in the kettle, as it seemed to make them feel "just a little homelier." That day they burned the hawser and some cables. They chopped them up in chunks, and put a little engine oil and kerosene on to help them burn. The companion ladder, locker and drawers, and the rest of the lining of the deck were also fed to the flames, and this fuel was helped out by the life belts and buoys, of which there were a hundred that had been carried "for the protection of passengers." "With a drop o' kerosene on them, they helped something wonderful."

The fifth morning things looked worse than ever. The ship was now a thousand miles from home, and fifty miles out of the track of transatlantic traffic. There were exactly twelve small potatoes left, and a pint of engine oil, and "not a sup more." And yet though there had been no sleep for any one and all hands were wet through not a soul could be called sick. The morning inspection showed that the water was gaining faster on the pumps and that the ship was nothing now but an empty iron shell, already half filled with water. It seemed certain there was no longer any chance of help from a passing ship and that only death lay looming on the horizon.

"Yes, I'm a praying man," said Bill, "and I reckon us all had done a bit o' praying—to ourselves, o' course," he corrected, for no man had taken a minute to go to his bunk in all those days and nights.

They could only still go on running, or rather drifting now, and every minute drove them farther from any hope of being seen. But suddenly there was a shout from the watch, which was repeated a moment later. Below they could tell by the change in the motion of the ship that something had happened, and they guessed that the skipper was taking a last desperate chance. He had altered their course ever so little, and the ship was no longer directly before the seas. "I knowed to once that he had sighted some vessel," said Bill in telling me the story. "I was up so quick, I forgot that the ladder was burned, but there, running off the wind and coming right up after us was a large barkentine. Where she could be bound for on this course God only knew. Yet she had all the sail she needed aloft and was running with her sheets free, as if she had orders to cruise round the world and keep out of sight o' land, else she

must have been sent to look for we."

What could have led her to run like that when she had the whole Atlantic to cruise in? Why had she chosen in tens of thousands of miles of ocean to take exactly the very identical line along which a poor lone wreck like theirs was hurrying to her doom. They had been so long hopeless, and their strength was so far spent that they took it they must all be "seeing t'ings"—or that the vision must really be a phantom ship.

"I hadn't been on deck for more than a minute at any one time before," explained Bill, "and just then with our head even a bit across the troughs, if I had thought of it I should have known that any second a sea might make a clean sweep of us. The ragged bottom of the spot where our funnel had stood before it was carried away was enough to send any man in his senses down off deck in that weather. But I was seeing a ghost, though it had sails and spars, and was every minute drawing nearer. It held me fair scared to bits with stiffness. It wouldn't have been the first ghost I had seen neither, and I knew that the end had come one way or t' other. I knew I'd never go below again, down into that old rolling horror where I could hear the roaring swish of water even from where us stood on deck. If this thing was real it would mean life; but if not, I reckoned that anyhow now I had a right to be drowned fair and square in t' open."

The tattered remnant of the old flag was still upside down in the main rigging, but signal flags they had none, having burnt them with all the other gear. Closer and closer the stranger came, passing so near that it seemed for a moment as if she intended cutting down the derelict. But she made no sign aloft, only a man's head appeared over the rail. They seemed to be shouting something as they passed. But not a sound of any kind met their ears. On she went and it seemed then for all the world as if she was just sent by the devil to torment dying men. Suddenly down went her helm, up she shot into the wind's eye, over went her yards, and like some gladsome bird she came dancing back over those tremendous seas, evidently trying this time to pass close under the steamer's lee. "Us thought now she wanted to tell us something and because us had hoisted no flags, knew that she could not talk to us in the usual way." But to these desperate seamen, dazed with exposure and privation, it still seemed she must be either a real ghost or a figment of their own imagination. Three times she circled round them, and though now they had gotten up a megaphone on deck, in the roar of the sea there was no distinguishable meaning to their shouts. Suddenly a three flag hoist broke out from her halyards. Surely she must be real now, though "our code book, having gone into the flames, it could not help us to make out their meaning. All us could do was to climb into the rigging and wave to

her. She had also now hoisted her red ensign, and us knew she was an English ship and was going to stand by."

Seeing that he could not make them understand what he wanted, the skipper of the stranger took the only remaining chance, ran under their stern, passing within a few yards and almost clipping it off, and managing to convey to them that they had lost their boat, and that the shipwrecked crew must launch theirs. Then once more he was gone to leeward, and so lay "hove to," evidently ordering us to launch and drift down to him.

It is one thing to say "launch a boat" in a sea like that, from a small steamer, but unless "the good Lord intended that you should do it" it cannot be done. It was with almost spiteful joy that six life belts saved from the insatiable fires below were dragged up on deck. If they must be lost, at least it lent fresh determination to win out, to think that they were cheating the hungry fangs of old Neptune, just when he thought he had them. For the first time the skipper left the bridge, and coming down, "told we to put 'em on, as coolly as if us were alongside the dock at home."

The boat was lashed in gripes on the deck house. It was no use trying to swing her out and lower her with falls. She would have been smashed to atoms against the rail before one man could get in her and fend her off. There was only one chance to get her clear—they must put the ship in the trough, fasten the best line left, and plenty of that, to the boat, and then when the steamer took her first plunge, even if she rolled over, chop away the fastenings and let her fall or be washed clear.

Every man was in his place, the axes were given to three men, one to each gripe, and the others were to stand by on the house-top and just fall into the boat when the time came if they could. "As I thinks on it now I most sees there were no chance," continued my old engineer. "How it all happened anyhow, I don't know. The last thing I saw was the derrick boom which came overboard after us like an old friend. It was the only thing which we hadn't burnt, and that was because she were too tough for us to chunk her up."

As the steamer came broadside to the sea a great mountain of water threw her almost on to her beam ends. The gripes were cut out as she was falling over, and when she staggered up there was the lifeboat, right side up in that sea, at the very end of the hawser they had made fast to her. Suddenly she came taut on the spring. It gave her one great tug, and before they had time to think she was alongside and six of the crew were shooting into her like falling off a house-top. It was easy "because now us knew we was to be saved. The old boom bumped into us on a sea as if to say good-bye while us were getting straightened out." As they drove astern of the wreck they found the stranger close to, waiting for them and a great lake of

water calm under his lee. He was pouring out oil from a bag run out on the end of a spinnaker boom, like the man in "Pilgrim's Progress."

There is not much more to this yarn—because they had not been missing long enough for wives to have married again, before they wired home. But there really was something mysterious about the ship that saved them. The captain proved a recluse like Captain Nemo of Jules Verne's "Nautilus." He was silent and almost invisible. He made no frills nor fuss to celebrate the saving of six human lives. Indeed he seemed almost to resent it. It was late one night when at last the destitute crew were landed—and when daylight broke the next morning all traces of the rescue ship had vanished.

GREEN PASTURES

YES, SIR. 'Tis uphill work tryin' to get ahead when you has a hard family—but, bless the Lord, he have always brought me through.

I were only a slip of a lad when father and brother Tom were lost in the Glad Tidings, and I had to fend for mother and the two girls.

No, there were no insurance on Bay craft in them days, and all us had to look to was t' hook and line. You supposes us saw bad times? Well, no—bless the Lord—He never 'lowed us to want a bit t' eat, though it were hard enough to reach to clothing on times.

Like most fishermen, I married real young, and soon a lot of toe-biters began to come along, and it were hard enough then to keep the bread box full—that is, on times.

I was shareman them days with my Uncle Rube, but it were uncertain work, and if I hadn't done well with my traps furring, it would have gone hard wi' us some winters, I'm 'lowing.

So in b'tween times I hauled out the wood to build a fishin' skiff of my own, and some o' t' neighbors lent me a hand ariggin' of her out. It weren't altogether that us earnt more—but it left me ne'er an idle hour, and you knows, sir, that when a man has women folk a'pending on him, he wants to be at something all the time, if it's only to keep his mind quiet.

Well, sir, t' fish began to fail round home afore our oldest lad could hold a paddle, and all who could used to pack off to Labrador every June month and bring back t' fish they caught in t' fall o' the year. But Mother were that feeble ever since the shock o' Father's death, I couldn't make out to leave her. For you sees, sir, it wasn't as if us knowed what had happened to the Glad Tidings. Her just sailed out t' the grounds, and never comed back.

Mother never would believe she were lost, for ne'er a chip o' the vessel were found to tell us what happened, and she were as staunch as good wood and good work could make her. Ice it were, I 'lows, for in the dark you can't see one of them northern growlers when them's just level wi' the water—not even if so be you'se be looking right at 'em. Father were a driver, too. Bless yer, sir, he never thought no more o' danger than he did o' nothing. Ice it were. Ice sure enough, I 'lows.

Till long after open water Mother used to be up early and late awatchin' and awatchin' for the Glad Tidings. And, poor as us was, t' light never went out o' our

window from dark to daylight all that winter through. "You'se never knows, Johnny," her used to say, "the Lord may be gracious to we yet."

The first season after she were taken us all went down to Labrador in my Uncle Rube's schooner, the Ready and Go.

We was sorry to close our house, for it were all us had, but o' course Mary weren't willing for me to go wi'out her and the children. And, indeed, a man needs a 'ooman to help make his fish and cook his food if he is to do anything what's worth while, alone, that is "crosshanded" us calls it.

We was eager to be down early so's to be ready by when t' fish first set in, and there was still a deal o' floe ice about after us rounded Cape St. John. The Ready and Go was just packed full o' people beneath decks. For there were, first o' all, a load o' salt in her, and then bar'ls o' flour and pork and molasses, and nets and ropes and boxes, all covered over wi' old sails, and then the women and children on the top. For they never comes on deck at sea. There ain't no room for 'em anyhow, even if 'em wants to. Us men just sleep'd anywhere.

It were my first night o' the Labrador, and I has nothing to say ag'in them old rocks. Them's served me good these many a year, though us has had our bad times like t' rest.

There was lots o' tag ends dangling from our planks afore us reached our harbor that year from scudding through the ice. Yes, and there were plenty o' ice candles ahanging from our bows, too, before us left for home again. Well I minds it, for it were the only October fish I ever carried from t' Labrador. But us was eager for every tail, and the fish held on late. Aye, and the Lord prospered us, too, for us never wet an anchor on the journey back, 'cept what us wetted on the vessel's bow. No, not till us was right off our own home again.

Come spring again, us sawed 'round the Ready and Go early in May, and hove her down to caulk her, wi' our trap boats full o' ballast slung from her mastheads. Then us cut a channel through the standing ice wi' our pit-saws, and so was among the very first vessels to start down North. Us fell in wi' the floe in Green Bay, but 'twere only in strings, so Uncle Rube were for standing on and chancing it, and there were none o' us youngsters to say him nay.

Well, sir, we was running free wi' a smart sou'west wind, when about midnight us struck a big pan fair and square, and t' following sea drove us right over it, or I don't know how 't would have gone wi' us. Careful us was sure enough after that, for her timbers was shaken enough to frighten some o' us. But, in spite o' all our care, just before dawning the only passage us could see ahead was between two great growlers. The ice was tightening up before the breeze, and just as us was

passing between them, clip they goes. The women had just time to jump on to one of them pans, as they was—right out o' bed—and us was landing a bit o' grub and an old sail, when down she goes, stern foremost.

Yes, it were cold enough, floating about there, but that wasn't the worst. For just after sunrise our pan split right in two, and went abroad wi'out a moment's warning, so that us parted from the women and lost our only boat, too, and then had to watch 'em all day drifting right away from us. But, praise the Lord, it kep' fine and sunny all day, and the sun off the ice were that hot us was well warmed up afore night. There be scarcely any night down there that time o' year, and in the morning a whole fleet o' vessels hove in sight, reaching along wi' a mild sou'west wind—scarcely a open track but there were a vessel in it—and it weren't long before us was all picked up as hearty as us could wish.

Yes, us lost that summer on the Labrador, but there were fish in somehow close to the old home, and I wouldn't be saying us didn't do nigh as well as if us hadn't lost the old Ready and Go. Indeed, when us came to count up at Christmas, there were plenty and to spare to carry us through t' winter, wi' ne'er a hungry day neither, so you can guess it were a gladsome family what gathered that blessed day.

Well, sir, it weren't till my three lads grew to be stout boys that us began to get ahead and to lay a bit by ag'in bad times. But when them three could handle a line apiece, and us had two boats to the fishery, us began to think about gettin' a schooner for ourselves. O' course it meant a bit o' pinching and o' stinting, but at last us come to terms wi' our merchant i' the bay to get us a schooner, if us could find three hundred dollars and the gear. What a winter that were! Us netted a terrible big trap, besides all t' other work, and it were a proud day wi' us, sir, when at last us sailed out o' the narrows on the Ocean Bride, all our own, sir. A big venture, though, for us owed fifteen hundred dollars on her on t' merchant's books.

We was to make the two trips, sir, like most o' our vessels does, getting a load if us could in the Straits first, and carrying that home—and then going down North to the Labrador itself. We was as early as us dare be. You'se may be sure o' that, and there were still more'n a scattered bit o' ice about. However, the little vessel handled like a fairy, and all went well till us had rounded Cape Bauld and had it all open as it were, wi' the Straits fishery right before us, for the floe ice were all off the last coast line, and the Straits were as clear as us could wish 'em. I was at the tiller myself, and Bob were for'ard on t' lookout for ice, for he had eyes like a lynx, Bob had. There weren't more'n a capful o' wind a-blowin', when plump! We hits a small piece o' ice under our lee bow. It were that small above water that even Bob never seed un, and us took no more notice of un till there comes a great bawling from the women as the

water was rushin' in below, and up they all tumbles on deck. Such a scramble in the dark may I never see again, please God! It seemed a sharp spike o' ice as hard as a bit o' rock had found a soft spot in one of our planks, and we was already going down head foremost.

In a few seconds us had our trap boat and fishing punts in the water and all our women safely stowed. Then it were a downright race to try to save the new big trap net. Not a moment too soon, either, for as us hauled up the last piece o' the twine, the Ocean Bride took a big plunge and disappeared beneath the waves. The sea and ice once more had the best o' us.

It seemed just a bit hard at first, but it were that cold and wet, and us had it that hard to make the land that there weren't much time to think o' it, and we was wonderful glad at last to get by a fire in a cottage on the land.

The very next morning an ice-hunting steamer that had been down to the Labrador with a number o' crews came right in and offered to take us home. It did appear as we was going aboard, with everything gone, as if considerable had comed against us. But would you believe it, that steamer had to call into a harbor only a dozen miles to the south'ard, and there lying off the end of a wharf lay a schooner twice as large as our Ocean Bride, all ready to put to sea. Well, sir, you may b'lieve me or not, as you likes best, but though the kettle was on the stove and the very sails up adryin', there were no crew aboard her, only an ole man awatchin' of her, for the owner hadn't quite settled where he were going to send her for the summer. Well, sir, our skipper were acquainted with her owner, and he just up and says: "I tell you what, Captain, I'se minded just to go ashore on chance and see if I can't get you that vessel for the summer." Now the Lord must have planned it, for the steamer couldn't 'a' stopped half an hour even awaiting, so there were the owner right on the very wharf hisself. When our skipper had told him all about our accident, and, what's more (seeing I was a stranger and had no money), had promised to pay a hire for her hisself if so be I should miss t' fish, the owner he seems a bit puzzled at first. "You see, Captain," he says, "I ought by rights to speak to the boys first, for I've just shipped a crew to send her after a load o' lumber. But, seeing as how it all seems arranged almost wi'out my being so much as asked, I supposes I must let her go," and wi' that he takes me by the hand and says: "You take her, skipper."

Two days later us sailed off again intending to go to the Straits. But as the time were running up, us just went right down on to the Labrador instead o' heading away down west after all the other craft; and that fair saved us, for the Straits fishery proved a failure, and the early craft on t' Labrador all did well. Though the new vessel was so large, and us had only the small crew, us got a full fare, sir, chock-a-

block, and were home and sold it before September month were half runned out. When us came to count up again we was able to clear off the Ocean Bride and lay the keel o' the fine vessel what you sees we in now.

And so, Doctor, many's the day I has thanked God for having taken to hisself the craft what was harder for me to part with than any that ever sailed salt water. I 'lows he know'd all along as how he were really "aleadin' me through green pastures."

TWO NIGHT WATCHES

It was transition time with us. The long winter frost, with but one day's thaw since Christmas, had collapsed like a house of cards with the advent of May.

The splendid ice bridges over the great bays had been shattered by the heavy Atlantic rollers, which were now permitted to heave home to the rocks, as the wind had driven the floe ice far off shore.

The hard, smooth roads of beaten snow over the barrens were made impassable by jagged points of rocks, which everywhere now jutted out through them.

The universal roofing of ice and snow which all winter covered the patches of impenetrable scrub would no longer support the weight of the dogs or sleigh. Even the ice on the numerous lakes had become unsafe, while foaming torrents replaced the level stretches along the river-beds which form our highways in the winter months.

No traveling on the land was any longer possible. Even skis and snow racquets had ceased to be of service, and were hanging neglected on the walls. The komatiks had been shellacked and stowed away on their lofts till next fall's snow should make them useful again. Our faithful dogs were already barred into a large enclosure fenced with wire, so that the hospital cow, cooped up in its stable for nearly six months, might come out and search for a precarious living amidst the fast disappearing patches of the winter's snow.

Traveling by water offered but little better facilities, for the running ice floes from the distant north everywhere covered the sea, and threatened with the least veering of the wind to the eastward to blockade the coast in an incredibly short space of time. It is not well to be nipped between the ice floe and the rocks. There's no good arguing the matter with an ice floe, unless you are prepared to come off second best.

So we were fain to stand by the hospital for the time, and were not sorry, after months of incessant traveling with dogs, to enjoy a "spell" and limit our efforts to the patients whom we had at hospital, and the people within a mile or two radius from it.

"There's some men in the waiting-room to see you, Doctor," said one of the maids, who had come up the hill to the spot where, with a crowd of young fellows, I was helping to clear some land of alders, and to root out old stumps. It was a preparatory effort to improve matters for our cow.

"Is that so? Where are they from?"

"From the north, I think, Doctor."

"Well, tell them to wait. I'll be down directly. See that they get some tea and a bite to eat."

"Please, sir, they says it is very important, and they wants to hurry back right away."

When I reached the hospital I found that the new arrivals were making good progress with the tea, for work such as they had just been through converts this beverage into ambrosial nectar to our fisherfolk. It is the custom to offer it at all times of the day to any and all who may chance to visit the house.

"What's wrong, Nat?" I asked. "Some craft on the rocks, I suppose."

"'Tis Mark Rawson's Aleck, Doctor. He be terrible bad. We'm come to see if you be so well pleased to come down along with us."

"Is he sick enough to die?"

"Well, now, he h'ain't knowed nobody since Saturday, and that be three days gone."

"How is the ice, Nat, coming up?"

"She be well-off now. T' wind canted off the land about midnight, and you'se can go right down straight."

LOOKING FOR LEADS

"All right, Nat. You can start as soon as you like. I'll come along after you in the motor launch."

The medicine chest that travels with our dog sleigh in winter is marked in large letters, "Lend-a-hand." It stands ready for duty all spring until the sea is open, and forms the movable dispensary during that time on the boats. We were not long making our preparations, therefore, and were soon bowling along "northward ho," a fine breeze following us.

As the wind continued to freshen and the night closed in very thick, we at last determined to heave to, and make a harbor some two miles to the southward of our patient's home. It was already late before we had walked across an intervening neck of land, and as we approached the house it was getting on toward midnight, and so dark that when at last we reached the promontory opposite the island on which the house was stationed, we almost fell over the fisherman father who had been patiently waiting there on the off chance that we might possibly come by the mainland, as we could not reach around by sea.

"I suspicioned you might come this way, Doctor," he remarked. He meant that he had been praying earnestly that we might attempt to push on by the land.

A little wooden cottage was perched on a rocky ledge under the ægis of huge, almost overhanging cliffs. The scanty foreshore fell straight down into deep blue water, so that we stepped almost from the boat into the house. A strong feeling came over one that Nature was anxious to shoulder out all human life from the place.

When we opened the door to enter, the subdued light of a dimly burning kerosene lamp, small enough at the best of times, was just sufficient to show me a crowd of people solemnly huddled together in the tiny room that served as both kitchen and parlor. It was a bad omen, I knew, for when any one is thought to be sick unto death on this Coast, just such a lugubrious, silent crowd gathers to "see the end."

On a low, rude table at one end of the room was a bundle of heterogeneous bedclothes, and on this, visible to all, lay the body of a beautiful little boy of four years—a regular curly-haired, rosy-faced fisher lad.

The weeping mother rose as I entered, and with one hand covering her eyes with her handkerchief, as if she did not wish to see the sight, led me over to the child's side without speaking.

There was a perfect stillness in the room. No one spoke a word. Only the stertorous breathing of the sick boy broke the silence as I bent over him to form some idea of the trouble with which I had to deal.

"How long since he knew you?" I asked, obliged to lay my hand on the mother's

shoulder to call her attention.

Waiting in vain to stem the tears which she sought hard to restrain, she sobbed out at last: "Not since Saturday, Doctor. My own boy didn't know me."

Only a cursory examination was necessary to satisfy me that the only chance for the child's life, and a faint one at that, lay in an immediate operation. It would involve the removal of a portion of the skull, and would be quite impracticable unless I could get him to hospital.

At once the vision of the fifteen miles of angry ocean which lay between us, and the thought of a child in this condition tossed about in our small boat, prevented my saying what I thought. It seemed a pity to suggest that any means might save the boy if one had only to add that that means was not available.

I was roused, however, from my brief reverie by a sudden consciousness that the mother was watching me, and even through her tears was trying to read for herself the truth which she seemed to be conscious already that I was intending to withhold from her.

She spoke first. "What is it, Doctor?" She had looked up, and I seemed to see in her face a courage that I had thought she did not possess. My mind was made up in an instant.

"There's only one hope I can offer you, Myra, and even that is slight. If he were my boy I should at once take him to the hospital."

A still more absolute silence seemed to fall immediately on the room; so silent, you could almost feel it. For all these kindly meaning friends were also hanging on the Doctor's words, and again the loud, measured breathing of the unconscious lad, like the ticking of some great clock, was alone audible.

At length an older woman, rising from her seat, came over to where we were standing, and taking the hand of the poor mother, encouraged her to grasp even this forlorn chance.

A little pause and then, with an energy and directness I had little expected, she looked me bravely in the face and said, "I will, Doctor; anything and anywhere to save my darling."

"No one can certainly promise to give you Aleck's life. All we can say is that so far as we know the hospital offers him his only chance for life."

"Then I'll come," she said eagerly. "When shall we start?"

It was dark as pitch outside, and we had yet to snatch some sleep. So we arranged to return and find shelter in a cottage near our boat, and that a party should be told off to bring the mother and child to us soon after daylight.

Once again we were on the mainland, and the deep, broad arm of the sea

separated us from the house of sorrow. As I stumbled along over the rocky path, recent events kept revolving in my mind. Why cross that separating arm at all? Why seek trouble thus naturally shut off, as it were? Why add to cares by bringing the sorrows of others voluntarily into our lives? What a relief to shake clear of it all in the cool night air that cleared one's head, when at last we topped the brow of the hill—what a relief it would be to leave it all behind!

Yet, no—one's heart was going back over the water in the boat with that solitary father.

There was a tiny light in one of the fishermen's houses. All the rest had gone to bed long ago. But I recognized that the window was that of a room I had twice occupied on my winter travels. As I expected, the door was on the latch, so, going in quietly, I went upstairs to find everything ready, because, as the good fellow explained in the morning, "I mistrusted somehow, Doctor, you'se might like to come back over night."

The little party with the child arrived before we were even stirring—though in truth they needed sleep far more than we did. The wind had come in from the southeast and was dead ahead, and though nothing was said, we all knew that the sea voyage in the small launch would be anything but pleasant. The mother was seated in the small scuddy, well propped up with boards, to keep her from being thrown about by the pitching and rolling of our little craft. The unconscious child, in heavy wraps, lay across her knee. A tarpaulin was fixed in a small frame to keep the flying water and the wind off, as much as possible. Steering myself involved standing close to them, and I could keep an eye on how they were getting on. During the first hour the mother, who was very seasick, often caught my eye, and though she several times assured me she desired no help, I learned without any doubt that her strength and energy were being taxed to the utmost.

"You need some help. Let me take Aleck for a bit. You can lie down on the locker, and perhaps you'll feel better."

"No, thank you," she replied, and bent down, crooning over the child as before.

Another hour had passed away. As yet she had not uttered another word. The sudden and violent jumping of our boat in the head sea must have shaken her all to pieces. Yet all she said was, "Is it very far still?"

"No; that is St. Anthony Head on our bow. We should have been round it by now, but for this seaway. Won't you let me take the boy for a bit now? You shall have him back when we get into the smoother water around the head."

"I can hold on a little longer, thank you," and again she was crooning over her little lad.

At length we were alongside the wharf.

Though strong and willing arms offered to bear the burden, the mother would trust it to no one till she laid it in the hospital, and our good nurse was allowed to put it to bed.

A few hours, and the operation was over, and by nightfall the little child was back in his bed once more. The pressure on his brain had been relieved. He even spoke, and in the mother's eyes, as she came into the ward and bent over the bed, one could see the intensity of longing that he might still know her, and once more speak to her. Hope, indeed, burnt fiercely in all our hearts for a time that even yet this little life might be given us. But He who loves the children knew best, and toward dawn the tiny vital spark flickered out.

When I ventured up to the ward again the violence of the first burst of sorrow had somewhat subsided. The poor woman was sitting, as if exhausted, by the bedside, and yielded more readily than I had anticipated to the suggestion that she should go and take some rest.

When everything had been gotten ready, I asked the broken-hearted mother if she would undertake the journey back in the launch with her sad burden. I was prepared to forgive an hysterical rejoinder, but she spoke calmly, even cheerfully. "No, Doctor, thank you, it is more than I could face now. I'll wait for the first mail steamer next week, if I may."

The stimulus of hope that had buoyed her up on the previous voyage had died out, yet no void had been left in its place. Her heart was filled with a peace that robs death of its victory. Like David, she knew that though the child should not return to her, yet she should surely go to him.

The four days' watch by the little coffin quite alone, as it were, fifteen miles from her home and friends, would have been a trying experience at the best of times. We were afraid that, worn out as she was, it would be torture to her. But she bore it bravely and when at length the great steamer came in and we shook hands, one felt that in spite of her bitter failure it was a song of triumph, and not a wail of despair, that was filling her soul. And it lessened the bitterness for us as she said: "Good-bye, Doctor, may God reward you for your kindness to me and mine."

In a little hospital like this, with a meager staff of one nurse and one doctor, when a serious case makes night watches a necessity, even a roving doctor can know what a quiet hour means. At sea, in the short season of open water, all is life and action on a night watch. The rolling vessel—the swinging compass—the changing courses—the straining of the eyes for ice and hidden dangers—all keep every faculty alert, and

crowd every swiftly passing moment.

Here in the dim light, in the silent house surrounded by the even greater stillness of the intense cold outside, so that one can hear the frost at work under the chilly stars, the domination of the senses by the bustle of things is relieved, and one's imagination goes aroaming.

A bed had been moved temporarily into our smart white-enameled operating theater. A boy was in it. It was nearly four in the morning, and I was sitting by his side. He was a fisherman's only son, ten years old. After a severe operation on the abdomen he was making a brave fight for life.

Hard by, in a neighbor's little cottage, an anxious mother was waiting for the first streak of daylight, to get the news of her child. She had left her home, far away on the shores of the Straits of Belle Isle, to bring her only boy, Willie, hauled by a trusty dog team over these miles of snow—to the knife.

It was a new world to her, for never before had she seen a hospital, nay, scarcely heard of one; even a doctor was a new experience. Hoping against hope, she had lingered long before at length she ventured forth to what, in her mind, might be death to her only son. It was a supreme effort of faith.

The telltale thermometer warned me that the temperature of the boy had risen one degree—and there was a slight flush about the cheek—the pulse rate had reached a hundred. The boy was drowsy from a dose of morphine, given because he must not move at any cost. In spite of it, he was restless between short snatches of sleep. He had to be closely watched.

A patient coughing noisily in the next ward—there was only a wooden partition between us—had awakened him. He asked for a drink. Two teaspoonfuls of cold water was all I dared give him for the next twenty-four hours. He must have no more at one time—Thank God, he was asleep again.

After all, what did it matter? He was only a fisherman's boy from the wilds. Who would care if a hundred such were carried seaward to-morrow, as they go seal-hunting on the ice floes? Who would care in the busy world outside, steeped in its own anxiety and cares—mindful only of its own joys and sorrows? It was cut off from us by wastes of ice and snow from this lone land, so that even the story could only reach their ears after the event was almost forgotten. Who would care?—who should care?

Here in this silent night watch, with no one to speak to, one's thoughts went flying now across the sea—to my home in England. It was peace and quiet there. If I was only there, I need not see these things, need take none of these responsibilities. Then, at least, I should get rest from this gnawing anxiety for a child whom I never

saw till yesterday—and of whom once I could have said, "He is nothing to me."

There was a stir in the bed. It made me drop my pencil, and a queer feeling rushed through me, as I saw that Willie's large brown eyes were open and evidently fixed on me. How closely he seemed to have been watching me! Surely he could not have known my thoughts? No. It was the loneliness of the night that made one foolishly credulous.

Thank God, he only asked for another drop of cold water—and for a pillow to be moved because already he was "so tired of lying."

Why all this restlessness? Could there be something going wrong with the wound? Alas, it was the imperfect work of my own hand! What would I not have given for a consultation then—such as one got so readily in the old hospital at home! What price would I not have paid for the advice of some great physician! Alas, was even this wish born first of all from a desire for relief for myself, rather than to save the boy's life—born of a desire to get rid of responsibility, and put it on the shoulders of any one willing to bear it?

Thoughts of the past now flew hurrying through my brain. Surely one might have been better fitted. How many hours I lost when just the knowledge now needed so much might have been gained! How many—

A dog started howling outside. He was instantly joined in piercing chorus by all my four-footed friends, over twenty in number. Hundreds of miles they had carried me across hill and dale, over sea and land, mid snow and ice. Now, out on the snow in this bitter cold, with only the stars overhead, they were contentedly making their beds this night. Few pleasures, as we know them, ever fell to their lot. Meat, in great frozen blocks, was the best food they knew of, and that was often far too scarce. Yet, with every sign of affectionate joy, they would come leaping up to greet me in the morning. In spite of everything they would be ready—yes, and more than eager to work for me again, and plod on at it till I had seen them drop dead, uncomplaining, in their very traces.

They brought me back to the reality of things. They were an inspiration to lead me to the plain facts again. Here was I, with but poor talents, and here was this little lad. His life must be saved. I must save it. It must be done now, and I must do it. The time and place offered to no one else this opportunity to be the instrument. True, it is no greater, perhaps, than other opportunities, but then in reality all opportunities are great. Was I not even then expecting to hear the footfall of the child's mother over the crisp snow outside? Though scarcely daring to risk an answer, she was coming to ask me "the news." Yes, *the* news—no news in the world was so important to her.

What could I do? Thank God, the boy was quiet again now. For myself, I could almost feel the silence. Only the clock, ticking outside, reminded me that the hand of time alone is never still. Was there anything more I could do? Anything? My worried brain gave me no help. Was it possible that the very friend I had been so keenly wanting was near, after all? Could my professional mind think of The Great Physician as of any real value in that prosaic operating-theater, as the "second opinion" I had been groaning for? Something within me resented the hope as merely a creation of my own desire. Prayer is not to replace action, and faith, without works, could not save this boy, I was certain. It might be that here, on our very beam ends, His words "She hath done what she could" might mean "now is the time for me."

Three days passed. The crisis was over. The mother was sitting for a few moments by her boy's bedside, her heart too full to speak. I saw her kiss him, and a tear fall on his face as she bent over him—so I closed the door and waited outside.

After all, perhaps it was worth while. There is a feeling of wonderful joy in my own heart, I know, which I am certain gold trinkets and such things could never bring.

Would it not be grand when cruising next summer to visit this boy at his home? What a happy meeting it would be! The approach to the harbor is narrow, and ofttimes dreadful, but this time it would be filled with the joy of anticipation.

THE WRECK OF THE MAIL STEAMER

The northwest coast of Newfoundland is no favorite with our seafarers in the fall of the year. The long straight rock-bound shore line for eighty miles in one stretch offers no shelter whatever even to the small vessels that ply to and fro along it in pursuit of their calling. Yet, as each spring great shoals of codfish frequent the cold waters of the north shore of the Gulf, just as soon as the breaking-up of the frozen sea permits it, swarms of fishing craft from all the Newfoundland coasts, and even from as far south as Gloucester, push their way "down North" in pursuit of the finny harvest. On the Newfoundland vessels women and children often come, the women helping to cure the fish and cook for the men, the children because they can't be left behind.

Uncle Joe Halfmast had not been north for some years, for he had never liked the sea, and like many another of our handy fishermen, he had developed great talents as a carpenter. But this year, the people of Wild Bight were building a church, and had induced Uncle Joe to come down and lead them. It was a late season, the fall weather had been so wet and "blustersome," that the men found it impossible to dry their fish for shipment as usual, and were consequently late getting ready for the return south. Moreover the church had to be sheathed in before Christmas, so that when spring came round again, the work would not have to be done over again.

The one little mail steamer which served three hundred miles of coast was unusually crowded with passengers and wrecked crews, and it had twice passed Wild Bight without calling on the southern journey owing to the impossibility of making the cove in the northwest gales. Indeed every inch of space aboard her had been already occupied long before she reached us. Thus for three long weeks we had been waiting for a chance to go south. Winter had set in in real earnest. Ice was making everywhere, and to offset our anxiety the whole cove was secretly rejoicing that we might be compensated by Uncle Joe having to spend the winter with us. He was justified a little by the fact that every one knew his attitude to rough seas, and that if he returned he had promised to take back with him Susie Carless's derelict baby—a tiny piece of flotsam—with no natural guardian to "fare" for it, and near Christmas is no time for sending babies traveling round our northwest coast. Uncle Joe said nothing—he never did; and the church grew steadily under his hands. "I'm not worrying," was always Uncle Joe's motto. "I leave that to Him that watches over us," he would add, if he was in a real talkative mood.

So as a matter of fact no one was surprised when one day after Michaelmas a

familiar fussy whistle broke the absolute silence of the harbor just at the first streak of dawn, and kept restlessly repeating itself as if to say, "Last chance—last chance —last chance for the year. Hustle, hustle, hustle." Sorry as they were to lose him, all hands went to help Uncle Joe off, and give the baby those last touches that only women's hands are allowed "to be able for" on our Coast.

The little vessel was crowded, for her accommodation; badly overcrowded. But she was as fine a little sea vessel as money and human skill could make her and in many a gale of wind she had safely carried our friends. It was bitterly cold, the thermometer being actually away below zero, and our weather-wise people knew that something was brewing to windward that boded no good to a small boat, however staunch, with only our long miles of harborless coast under her lee. Some, at the risk of appearing self-interested, urged the old man to stay right on through the winter, and, with that unbounded hospitality that is so universal a characteristic of our northern people, were offering him a home, "baby and all." But Uncle Joe's philosophy is proof against any fears, indeed his faith is such real simple working material all through his life that the cynic calls it fatalism. So, as from those who saw St. Paul off on his long sea journey from the beach at Ephesus, not a few prayers went up for their loved friend and his helpless charge, as the little column of smoke once more disappeared into the sullen darkness that hung on the horizon under the southern sky, while the ominous soughing of the sea note on the rocks sent all hands back to make everything fast, even about the small homes on the land.

The storm did not actually break till after dark that night but "slow come is long last" with us, and it will be still longer before the memory of that Christmas gale ceases to blow in our memories. The mail steamer was lost in it, violently blown out of the water on that evil coast. But these happenings are not strange in our world and we never got the story till the following year when one fine Sunday morning I happened to drop into young Harry Barney's home, a little wooden cottage on the glorious sandy beach at L'Anse au Loup in Labrador. Harry was enjoying a morning pipe of peace, with his darky embryo vikings playing round the door. This was my reward for a Sunday visit. For it is as easy to catch a weasel asleep as Harry with time to burn from midnight Sunday till the next Day of Rest comes round. A big liner had run ashore close to us only a week before, and was now an abandoned wreck lying well out of water on the north side of Burnt Island, so we fell to talking of wrecks, and the topic of the loss of our mail steamer came up. To my amazement he said, "Yes, I knows about her, Doctor, I was fireman aboard when she was cast away."

"You? What have you to do with steamers?"

"Oh, they shipped me and poor Cyril Manstock, as they couldn't get men south. I'd acted runner before, but it was Cyril's first voyage, and he died after of consumption, as you know. They says it was that chill did it."

"Tell us about it, Harry. We heard that a dog saved all hands by carrying a line ashore. I've been crazy to get the facts from an eye-witness."

"I wasn't much of an eye-witness till we were high and dry, but I saw the dog do his bit, Doctor, and he certainly did it all right. It's a long story," he began, "but we knew below decks by six o'clock—that's just at dark—that it would be a fight for life. What was left of our coal was all dust, and we'd had trouble keeping steam with it even in smooth water. We were anchored then, right on the straight shore, landing some freight for the village at Cowhead, and the wind was already rising and the sea beginning to make. My watch was from eight to twelve. But I was a new hand and wanted to give her every chance, so I went on at six to watch that the fires were kept clear and a good head of steam when we made a start. It did seem an awful time delaying, and I wished a hundred times that we would throw that freight overboard. I guess I was a bit excited. But when at last the bell did go, we were all ready below. It was a hard fight, however, from the first. For the boat was small and we knew she couldn't do much in a dead hard sea. Her propeller comes out and she races, and it's no soft job trying to fire at the best of times. She wasn't so bad first out in the spring either. But like everything else, she had run down with hard usage, and at the end of the long season, she couldn't do her best by a long way. However, as I said, we had a full head of steam, when the gong rang at last, and for a time it looked as if we might make it by standing right out to sea.

"The fierce dust in the stokehole from the powdery coal, and the heavy and quick rolling soon made our eyes blind and our throats dry, and before my watch was out at midnight I just had to go up for water. I found the doors were all sealed up with ice, so had to crawl out through a ventilator to get that drink. I hadn't been up two minutes, it seemed, before the chief sent for me to hurry down again, as the steam was going back. I was only second fireman really on my watch, but the first, a Frenchman, who had been at it seven years, was an oldish fellow and was getting all in. At midnight watches were called, but both of us stuck to it, for in spite of all our efforts we were losing steam again. Water was now washing up over the plates of the engine-room, and we were wet and badly knocked about by the ship rolling us off our legs when we tried to shovel in coal. At two o'clock the old man gave in altogether and went up, and I never saw him again until it was all over. Cyril was in as trimmer, and he came in to help me. Every time I opened the fire-box door Cyril would grab me by the waist, and hold on hard, but in spite of it I got thrown almost

into the fire one time by the ship diving as I let go to throw the coal in." Harry here showed me a big scar across his arm and one on his face. "I got these that time," he remarked, "just to remember her by.

"The water was rising then in the engine-room and the pumps had got blocked, so we couldn't pump it out. We didn't think she was leaking, but we heard after some portholes had been stove in, and she took in water every time she rolled. We got the pumps to work again after a while. But the doors being frozen up above we had no way to get rid of our ashes, and they were washing all around in the engine-room, and it was impossible to keep the runways clear.

"The worst of it was that now the water was in the bunkers and mixed up with the coal, making it into a kind of porridge. It was just like black mud to handle, and you couldn't get it off the shovel until you banged the blade against the iron fire bars.

"So steam began to drop again, and went so low that our electrics nearly went out and we got repeated orders from the bridge for more steam and more steam. It appears we were making no headway at all with only eighty pounds pressure, and in fact were slowly being driven sideways into the cliffs. We worked all we could, but things went from bad to worse, the water rose and splashed up against the fire-box making clouds of steam, so though the dust was laid, what with the steam and the darkness, and the long watch, we couldn't keep her going. Moreover, it seemed as if we would be drowned like rats below there, and I tell you we wouldn't have minded being on deck, cold as it was.

"We heard after that one of the stewards had been fishing on this part of the coast. He knew every nick and corner, and said there was a little sandy cove round St. Martin's Cape, where a small head of rock might break the seas enough to let us land, for they knew on deck now that the ship was doomed. For my part I knew nothing but that, work as we would, the steam gauge would not rise one pound. Beyond that, what happened didn't even interest us, we hadn't time to worry about danger. One sea did, however, make us madder than others. Something had been happening on deck. The heavy thumps like butting ice had reached us down below. It turned out to be the lifeboat that had been washed out of davits and went bumping all down the deck, clearing up things as it went. Anyhow something came open and as we were getting coal from the lee bunkers a barrel full of ice water came through the gratings and washed us well down, sweaty and grimy as we were. Somehow that seemed to set my teeth again, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the steam crawl once more to one hundred pounds. The bridge must have got on to it at once and have noticed we were making headway again. The fact was we were now rounding the Cape called Martin's Head. We knew they knew, for they again called us for still

more steam—thinking we had got the top hand. It so happened that a long shoal known as the Whale's Back was now the only barrier we had to weather. But till this spurt all hope of doing it had almost gone. Well, all I know is that suddenly there was a scrape—a bumpety, bumpety, bump, and then a jump that made us think we were playing at being an aeroplane—and then on we went as before. She was making water more rapidly now, but beyond that we knew nothing. It was rising now to our knees nearly, and any moment might flood the fires. We had actually been washed right over the tail end of the whale-back reef, the tremendous ground sea having tipped us right over, almost without touching. They say it was only ten minutes or so more to the end—it seemed hours. The motion had changed and we knew we were before the sea. Then suddenly there was a heavy bump, that made us shiver from deck to keel on, then she seemed to stop, take another big jump, and then do the whole thing once more. We were on the beach, and the water was flooding into the stokehole. Cyril had gone some time before, played out. I could see nothing for steam but waded towards the 'alloway' into the engine-room. There also everything was pitch-dark but I knew by feeling which way to go. It seemed a long while, but at last I found the ladder, and made a jump to hustle out of the rising water. My head butted into something soft as I did so. It was our second engineer—he had been at his post till the end. There was only one chance now for escape. It was the ventilator. I was proud I had learnt that in the night. It did not take me long to shin up through it and drop on the companion clinging to the edge. The icy wind chilled me to the bone and sheets of spray were frozen over everything. A sea striking her at that moment washed right over me, but before the next came I was behind the funnel, hanging on for life to one of the stays. Another dive between seas landed me in the saloon and from there I dropped down, and climbing to the foc'sle got some dry clothes."

THE WRECK OF THE MAIL STEAMER

"That's all you know, I suppose?"

"About all," he answered, "except that I had to go some miles when I landed to get shelter, and got no food till next night."

"Did any one thank you for your work?"

"Not yet," he answered with a smile.

"What steam had she when you struck the last time?" I asked.

"A full hundred pounds," and a gleam of the joy that endures lit his eyes—that joy that assures us of the real significance of life.

I was admiring the church at Wild Bight this fall—having blown in in one of our periodical medical rounds. Nothing was farther from my mind than the wreck of the previous winter when suddenly I noticed the familiar features of dear old Uncle Joe peering at me from behind a pillar. In a moment I saw him again, leaving the harbor with his precious baby, and I wondered how it had all ended.

"Well, you see, Doctor, about daylight the ladies' cabin got flooded out and they were all driven out of that, all the passengers that could crowd into the little saloon on deck. The baby did not seem to mind it at all and as there was no use going on deck, even if we had been able, that's where I took it. After we struck, however, and the seas were washing partly over the ship, I went out to see if there were any chance for us. The Captain, who had never left the bridge, was there. His cheeks were all frost-bitten. He had already launched a boat and was trying to get some

men landed. It was broad daylight, a little after midday, and we were right under a big cliff, so close that you could almost touch it. The projecting head of the cliff sheltered the forepart of the vessel fairly well, but a thundering surf was beating on the beach. The boat was soon glad to be hauled in again. She was smashed and filled, and the men had been nearly lost. So we all fell to it, and tried to get a line ashore. There were men there now from the shore who had seen us. They were watching us from above the breakers, and evidently understood what we were doing. For when at last we flung the line into the water, they rushed down and tried to get it. But the back wash carried it always beyond their reach. One of them ran up to a cottage near by and came back with a jigger, and as the seas washed the rope along, tried to fling it over, and hook the line. But they somehow couldn't do it. Then I suddenly saw there was a big dog with them, rushing up and down, and barking as they tried for the line. All of a sudden, after they seemed to have done their best and failed, the dog rushed down into the sea, held the rope in his teeth till the tide ran out, and then backed with it till the men grabbed it. They took the line up the cliff, and I helped rig a chair on it in which we tied the passengers, and so sent them every one ashore safely. No, I didn't even get my feet wet myself. You see I had my rubbers on. The baby? Oh, I tied the baby up in a mail bag and sent him ashore by himself. They told me when they opened the bag to see what was in it, the baby just smiled at them, as if it had only been having a bit of a rock in the cradle of the deep. We were home for Christmas after all. And somehow, Doctor, I had my mind made up to how it would be about that when I said good-bye to them that morning at Wild Bight. The folk all got together and gave that dog a hundred-dollar collar but the poor owner had to sell the dog, collar and all, a little later, to get food."

THE FIRST FROST OF WINTER

THE hospital steamer Strathcona had just arrived late one autumn off that Post of the Honorable the Hudson's Bay Company which is halfway down the coast of Labrador.

The order to "let go" had just been given to the men at the anchor, and I was preparing to go below after the excitement of bringing the ship to her moorings. Indeed, the chain was still running out through the hawsepipes, when a man, evidently in great anxiety and haste, pulled alongside and jumped aboard over our rail.

"Oh, Doctor! T'ank God you're here at last. Poor Alice has passed away yesterday, and John is lying terrible ill, and there's the five little ones—and maybe you're just in time."

"Come, come, Harry, what's the matter? Is it a cough?"

"It never stops, Doctor. Night nor day, and he spits terrible with it."

Now, we had seen some cases of pneumonia coming up the bay, so "I'll be with you in two minutes, Harry," was all I stopped to say as I hurried below to get my emergency case of drugs. Without further conversation we pulled swiftly to a little wooded cove, and drew up the boat on the shore. Following him along a winding path through the stunted trees, I came soon to a tiny house where only a month before I had seen one of the happiest Scotch families in the world.

My good guide's watchful young wife, a baby in her arms, opened the door as we reached it.

"He's sleeping, Doctor. Maybe he'll take a turn now," she said. "I've put the children to bed lest their bawling should waken him."

I knelt down in the darkened little room beside the sick man, and put my fingers on his pulse. The almost painful stillness was broken at length by the young mother, who was evidently watching my face.

"Don't say it's too late, Doctor! Please God, he'll get well now, won't he?" and then a stifled sob as she could read no hope in my face, for even as the moments ticked by on my watch the forefinger on the telltale pulse kept time, saying plainly, "Too late, too late, too late."

The issue was not long in the balance. Our effort to aid Nature in her last struggle awakened no response in the wearied body, and slowly the life we wanted so much to prolong ebbed away before our eyes.

When I returned in the morning, the door was open, and the house stood silent and deserted. Husband and wife in their rough spruce coffins were lying side by side in the little outer room. The children had gone with the kindly neighbors to their little home across the cove. Stillness reigned alone, except for two jays fluttering about the chopping bench. It seemed as if death's victory were complete. During the day I was engaged with other patients, but at sundown I heard Harry's voice again on deck.

"Doctor," he said hesitatingly, "would you bury the dead? 'Tis ten miles to where we—our graves is—but we thought perhaps—"

"Indeed I will, and you may tell the people that the steamer will be starting at ten in the morning."

"Us'll never forget your kindness, Doctor," he said. Just as he was leaving the ship, however, he came back once more, the painter in his hand.

"Doctor," he apologized, "there isn't a scrap of black for the children in the whole cove. Poor John has fallen behind a bit of late at the Post; and anyhow us never looked for this."

"They shall have all there is aboard, Harry. The women can make some things during the night out of it." With that we dived below, and soon found coats and black stuff enough for the emergency.

It was a sad cortège that next morning steamed up the fjord with the ship's flags at half-mast. It was a poor, ill-clad group which gathered on our decks. The very care that had been so evidently bestowed upon garments which had seen better days and other generations, spoke most eloquently of the continual struggle with a hard environment. The bald, unornamented coffins, sawed from our gnarled and knotted trees, and blackened over with the meanest coat of paint, were evidences of the little that stood to help humanity in its fight for existence in this land, beyond their own stout hearts and good right hands. The real pathos, however, lay in the overwhelming sense of vanquished aspirations. The whole setting seemed to whisper uncannily to our poor friends standing round: "It's only a matter of time. You must succumb soon. You can't keep the fight up long."

The very weather added to the harmony of desolation. A cold bleak wind was chasing clouds burdened with snow from the unknown north across a cheerless leaden sky. The first frost of winter had hardened what little soil there was on those relentless rocks, as if anxious to proclaim that it had no share in lending aid or offering a haven, even when death had done its work. Two ducks, sole occupants of the tiny bay, fled shrieking as we landed on the sandy beach.

At length the grave was dug, the last look taken, the rude coffins lowered, the

sand filled in, and only the few pitiful, half-clad mourners were left shivering in the bitter blasts of wind that swept across the point, and weeping for what could never be undone. But in my mind were still ringing the words of triumph: "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us—us—the victory," while before my eyes were the five little children in black, standing hand in hand by a lonely heap of sand, marking the spot where lay all that they knew as their protection from the cruel world outside.

"Will, take the children aboard and let them go down into the cabin, and see that Peter gets them some tea."

A long letter to friends at home asking them to help me with these, my first orphans, brought only a few answers. One was poorly written, and not altogether well spelled, but it bore a better recommendation than scholarship. It was obviously the loving letter of a good motherly woman, and came from a heart in which dwelt the spirit of the Master. She wrote:

"Dear Doctor: Me and my husband would like to keep a boy and a girl for the Lord's sake," and she gave me references to men whom I knew. So at the coming of the next winter's ice, when we left the Coast and went south to put the ship into winter quarters, Malcolm and Lottie went with us to a new home in far-away New England.

Twelve months later came a long-promised visit to the children. The train dropped me where the platform ought to have been, in the dark about four o'clock on a winter's morning. Everywhere the snow lay deep on the ground. There were no houses to be seen, and the prospect was not encouraging. But soon I heard a cheery voice calling: "Doctor, is it you?" and a moment after I was climbing into a rickety farm sleigh, drawn by a patient old horse. It was driven by the new mother of the children, whose characteristic energy had brought her all these miles in the bitter night to meet me.

A long and wearisome drive it would have been, for the roads were only called so from courtesy, and were not materially improved by the stupendous snowdrifts. Nor were the—well, springs of our carriage as resilient as—but there, never mind, the company of so simple and earnest a friend of the Master's would make any journey short, and at its close the wild reception that the happy children gave me set my mind at rest once for all as to whether or not they were in the right place.

Soon, however, I was to be puzzled again. For when morning dawned and I looked round the house, I found only a small group of new buildings. They were roughly put together, erected by the hands of this young couple themselves. The amount of reclaimed land was only small, and was being hewn out of the backwoods by their own indomitable pluck. Beyond that, at breakfast, I thought I heard a

stranger's voice, and sure enough I was soon introduced to "our own baby."

As I drove back to the station, my cheerful companion chatting away as before, my thoughts would materialize into words, and I asked: "What made you take two great, growing children from far-off Labrador? Surely your struggle is hard enough without adding to it?"

"Well, Doctor, you see, Fred and me has been two years 'way out here, and it seemed we couldn't do anything for the Lord. There is no Sunday school to teach, and the church is so far away we seldom can go. So we just thought the farm would feed two more. No, no. I wouldn't like you to take them back."

ABOVE THE BIG FALLS

IT was getting late and Donald Montague was sitting by the fire in the family's winter home on the banks of the Auksalik River in North Labrador, whittling away at some splits to kindle the morning fire, when his father, who was smoking in silence, suddenly said:

"The old place is good enough for me, lad. It has given three generations of us a good living, but if you aren't satisfied to stay home, what do you say to going away?"

"Going away? Going away where? You know once the bay catches over there's no going away anywhere from here," petulantly replied the younger man.

"I'm not meaning to them high-falutin' places the Doctor carried you off to get learning. I'm meaning away into the new country above the big falls—away beyond the height of land where only t' Indians have ever been."

The eyes of the younger man opened wide, and any one watching him closely would have seen that it was an entirely new thought to him. But with the secretiveness of a good trapper he hid every trace of surprise, and shot a glance at his father to see if he could discover any occult reason for the unusual suggestion. Uncle Johnnie Montague, however, though he had "no learning," was a trapper too, and of many years' experience, and the schooling of the classroom which Donald had been enjoying in the States was just superficial enough to make him undervalue the wisdom of the woods.

He had not even looked up from the rifle which he was cleaning, and the remark seemed so casual that Donald at once thought it was he himself who had really suggested it. Which was exactly what the old man knew to be necessary.

"The country beyond the ranges," he repeated. "That's the very thing I've always wanted to do. Say, you don't mean you'd come too, do you?"

THE GRAND FALLS IN WINTER

"I'm not saying I wouldn't, Donald, lad; but there's things to be settled first. It's been in the minds of Pete White and Malcolm McCook and Charlie Elworth, and we've talked it over once or twice last winter. The fur is getting caught out down below. I'm reckoning Malcolm and Charlie will be up at the Post with salmon Saturday, and you might go down yourself and fetch Pete up for over Sunday."

"Sure thing," broke in Donald, surprised out of his Scotch caution by his combined enthusiasm and American associations. "'Tis a good time, and I'll make a start right away." A few minutes later the old man smiled grimly as he heard the boy whistling a ragtime melody as he started down stream in his birch-bark canoe.

"'Tis the way of youth," he remarked that evening to his wife. "We're all more or less like it, and there's no way to check it. Even the good Lord can't do that, and

maybe 'tis as wise a way as ours."

"But Jock, dear, you won't go yourself beyond the mountains, will you? You always got all we needs near home."

Instead of replying, John rose and stretched himself, kicked his legs, and pinched the muscles of his arm.

"The reason many folks gets old so soon, Jean," he answered, "is just because they thinks they is. Once you crawls on t' shelf, there you'se likely to bide always. I'm not saying I doesn't like my own fireside come nightfall, but I'm not pretending if I does go, it's for any one else's sake but my own. Here's Donald with his learning thinks us old fogies—and maybe we is; but the lad has a heap to learn yet, in more ways than one, as you knows. Maybe it will do him a lot o' good if an old fellow like me can still show him things. That's not all the reason, though. Fact is, the call of that new country still gets me much the same as it gets Donald, and I reckon if I goes, it will be because I shall enjoy it."

"I'm no fearing for you, Jock. It was my own fun home I was thinking about. But you go if you likes it, and if you can't make it worth while, I knows no one who can."

"So be it, then, Jean, lass, if the others feels like it, and thank God old Uncle Jimmie's song is true this winter,

> "'There's pork in the cubby galore!
> What is there that one can want more?
> So let's off for old Huntingdon Shore once more;
> We'll off for old Huntingdon Shore!'"

Donald, however, didn't make quite as straight for Pete's salmon post as he might have. On the contrary, as he passed the entrance of Eagle Brook he ran his canoe ashore, and slowly walked up the bank till a long low log house came into view on a clearing above a large pool. Something was wrong with him. He didn't quite know what. Lack of appreciation of his American learning somewhat galled his pride. His felt hat, his carefully brushed-back hair, and even his jacket and collared sweater failed to impress his imperturbable friends. The real cause of Donald's restlessness, however, lay in the log house above Traverspin Pool. Women at least, he had thought, would succumb to style and modernism. But here too he was doomed to disappointment. Mark Stewart's girl, the black-eyed beauty of the Bay, seemed entirely blind to his superiority, and was about to throw herself away on a fellow who could not even read and write, and who, though he did moderately well with fur and seals, had never shown originality or leadership among the other lads.

The new possibility of glory to be won had unconsciously forced Donald to

condescend once more to visit the girl, whom he thought he had persuaded himself was not worth worrying over. She was only a girl after all and he had thought he would soon forget her in the world outside, when as he hoped he would return and find permanent peace in the real civilization of Boston city. Now he found himself halted in the spruce woods, a gunshot from this "'way-back" old homestead, with his heart pit-pattering, sophisticated as he had imagined himself, and not daring to go either forward or back. The matter, however, was settled for him. He suddenly found himself taken in the rear.

"Is it peace or not?" a laughing voice exclaimed, and almost before he could turn around, a light hand pinched him on the arm. "Are you ambushing the Stewarts, or why treat old friends like an Indian scalp-hunter?"

Another fall for school pride. Caught napping by a girl! Yet as he turned and looked into her beautiful eyes he was still trapper enough to know that he deserved it, and was surprised into his old simplicity at once.

"Come to surrender, Nora. The bait's too attractive. I've been a fool. Will you forgive me?" He tried to catch her as he spoke. As well try for a weasel in a thorn bush, or an eel in a grass pool. The Stewart door closed with a snap, and a subdued Donald found himself humbly knocking outside, begging admission.

It was late before his canoe touched the beach that night opposite Peter White's tilt. Nor was it a very companionable Donald who thrust his head in at the door just as Peter's evening pipe was cooling down. The pow-wow, however, actually took place around Uncle John's stove that fateful Saturday, and the five men all registered their promise to meet again "come September first" and leave together as soon as possible thereafter for the Promised Land "beyond the ranges."

It had become a never-ceasing topic of conversation among the trappers of the Big River ever since they first heard of the new venture, and there were some who anticipated a great hunt, and others who pooh-poohed the idea of much fur on the barrens, which they thought the high table-land consisted of. Every one realized it was a try-your-luck venture; and the farewell was an occasion for a convivial meeting and much good comradeship. For they all worship a sporting spirit.

It was decided that two of the party should take in a canoe, with reserve supplies, to the upper end of Lake Wininikapau, a hundred and fifty miles on their way, and return by September 1st, after which the whole party should start in as soon as possible. In his restless state of mind that was exactly what Donald needed. For the physical exercise of hauling up a large canoe, laden with everything from bags of flour to iron traps, along a turbulent river successfully prevented him and his chum Charlie, who accompanied him, from worrying about much else.

Somehow in the long lonely hours of the journey Donald had at first unwillingly, and later less reluctantly, allowed his thoughts to carry him back to Traverspin River, and to the day on which the "chit of a girl" had stung his pride so deeply that he had never really been able to forget it. Lately, however, the one thought that had dominated his mind as he threw himself down at night to sleep under the trees had been how he would win out in that greatest of life's ventures, rather than in the one more immediately at hand. Determined as he had been to forget all about her when he left for the Divide, he was now ten times as determined not to leave again for a long spell of months with the running all in the hands of rivals whom he despised.

It was September 10th before once more the lads pulled their canoe up on the strand opposite John Montague's home, and already the rest of the party had been snapping their fingers a whole week at the trysting place. So naturally none but his father understood why a young trapper like Donald objected so strenuously to starting right off again at once. They had everything ready for all hands, and already the girls were teasing the younger men about being shy of setting out on so spooky an enterprise. Two days' delay was the utmost to which they would agree, argue as he might. At length it came to a showdown, and old John made his only contribution to the argument in the style of his Scotch forebears. "Ye'll start come daybreak Monday, Donald, and mind 'tis Saturday now, or Johnny Wolfrey'll be the man that'll tak' yir place. If us hadn't heard ye was as far out as Goose Bay, us would ha' saved ye the trouble of coming out at all." Donald knew his father well enough to waste no time in argument. He just got up and flung himself out of the house.

Nothing but sheer necessity could ever have held Donald even for the remainder of that Saturday from Eagle Brook. But as he must start Monday at daybreak or lose his winter, indispensable rearrangements and packing made it late before he could possibly start out, and sheer weariness of flesh did the rest. It was Sunday and his last day at home before Donald found himself once more peering out from underneath the same old spruce tree at Mark Stewart's log cabin, though the sun had not been early enough to see him as he swung off down the river in his canoe. His long and successful journey upstream against rushing rapids and around roaring falls, with his precious freight in a frail birch-bark canoe, made almost in record time, had tended once more to lead him to put a higher estimate upon his own personal value than this ex-Highland community of Scotchmen permitted. Yet like a "noggin" of spirits this lent a temporary stimulus to his courage. Alas, a suspicion of that same domineering air, which had so handicapped his chances before, was still sufficiently evident to make his reception by the girl far from what he had hoped and even expected.

"Nora," he said, when after a long expenditure of precious hours he realized he was no further on his quest than when he started, "Nora, what's wrong wi' ye? You knows all I wants to tell ye, and ye won't let me say it."

"And who are you, Donald Montague, to be standing there telling me I'm wrong at all? Is it too big for our world you are, or what's wrong with yourself, I'm wondering?"

"It's off for some months I am into the country, and I just wanted to tell you something before I go."

"Then keep it to yourself till you come back, *Mr.* Montague—and good luck to you while you're in this country for some months," and once more the girl who had been standing on the threshold stepped inside and closed the door, and all he heard was her footsteps as she walked back into the house.

Roughly they estimated that they had three hundred miles to get to the westward, two hundred to be traveled by land, and about one hundred by water. The land gradually rises to two thousand feet or more. The Grand River, and the lakes on the high table-land, afforded most of the water transportation.

It was a splendid morning which greeted the little party as they lined up for their start, but what was even more inspiriting was the fact that quite a number of friends had gathered at that early hour to bid them good-bye. The canoes were loaded to the brim, so much so that it seemed questionable whether the five men could ever squeeze into them, for not only had the freight to be stowed, but also the sledges which each man must have to haul his pack when enough snow fell. The snowshoes, rifles, and other essential paraphernalia of the hunt—everything was ready at last.

"Good-bye, Jean," said a very light-hearted John as he kissed his wife.

"Good-bye and good-bye" was hurled to and fro by a score of friends. But Donald was not yet out to share in the general leave-taking.

"Tell Donald to hurry along, Jean, or he'll be left yet," shouted his father.

The last small parcel had been tucked into the canoe; the last kisses bestowed, and even a handful of rice had been thrown, as if it were a merry marriage venture, when Donald at last came hurrying down to his canoe, which he had finished stowing before the others began, hoping thereby to avoid the crowd. So far away were his thoughts that not till he had actually stooped over to lay his beloved rifle beneath the sledge for better protection, did he notice an addition which had been made to it since he placed it there—a tiny piece of Stewart tartan ribbon was fluttering from one horn. It did not need a trapper to interpret the phenomenon, and when looking quickly up towards the little group of friends he saw in the middle of them, peeping over the shoulders of the staid old Scotchman from Traverspin, a pair of laughing,

lustrous black eyes and the jet tresses of the girl whom now he knew he cared so much about, it was only knowledge which he had learned not in the haunts of the mighty in the States, but in the school of the woods, that alone saved him from making one of those impulsive mistakes which is so often irredeemable. The blood leaped to his head at this utterly unexpected generosity from the girl whom he had not yet had one spark of reason to think cared an iota for his feelings. In the days which followed it stood him in good stead to remember that he had not embarrassed the girl by making a fool of himself. Only he looked right into her beautiful eyes as he included her in the general good-bye which he now shouted as vigorously as the rest, before he pushed his canoe out into the river.

Traveling with sleighs through woods and forests, through dales and valleys, and over mountains and barrens is apt to be much the same everywhere. Hauling two canvas boats, they were able to make use of not a few still unfrozen "steadies" in the big river along whose banks they often kept for miles at a time, and up some of which they could still tow their packs in the boats, although the ponds, as our folks still call lakes, were frozen hard. The long portage round the big falls, whose spray can be seen twenty miles off, and the yawning canyon our Indians call the home of the Manitou, alone took two days, and altogether twenty-six days had come and gone before the party found themselves on the shores of the big lake of which the Indians had often spoken to them, and which they called "Mismickamuk."

It was a great day. Below and behind them lay vast stretches of spruce forest, which ranged far beyond the reach of the eye, with every here and there the silver streak of a river or the gray glint of a moss-covered barren. From a small elevation, which they climbed, they could, like Moses from Mount Pisgah, rest their eyes on the land of hope, if not yet of promise. The great, gray, rocky table-land of the interior of Labrador has been seen by very few white men, and as one looks at it from an elevation it is certainly terror rather than any other emotion which strikes a Southerner's heart. It looks appallingly forbidding. Such trees and vegetation as there are are hidden away under the shelter of mountain sides. The green which lines the rivers and the shores of the lakes makes little showing among the vast and apparently endless miles of barren rocks and naked mountain tops. Every member of the party, however, realized that it was a worth-while challenge to real men, and felt like shouting with excitement as it broke upon their view.

They camped that night way down on the edge of the big lake among the generous spruces with the deep springy growth of blackberry and cranberry bushes furnishing beds fit for kings. They sat like primitive Indians late around the glowing embers and planned out the next move in their campaign. The first thing to do was to

build a rough log tilt for the general rendezvous, which was to be in December just before New Year. It was agreed that Peter should remain and trap the east bank and along the ridge. Malcolm and John should take the south side, and Charlie and Donald the north side. There really was no choice, and anyhow no selfishness was shown as when Lot and Abraham selected their parts of Canaan.

Fortune is said to favor the brave, and at the parting of the roads perfect weather made the second farewell on the beach of the lake just another inspiration and encouragement. Whatever the rest offered, the north shore soon showed sure signs. It was no trouble to Charlie and Donald to read the marks that were abundant on the snow; and there proved also to be many more trees and sheltering undergrowth than they had anticipated. At the mouth of the first river Donald made up his mind to follow the valley, while Charlie was to go on farther to the westward. At this last divide a second camp was built, and the trees around blazed—and it was agreed that on every seventh day they should meet there to see that all was well.

Both men were on time the following week. Caution, almost amounting to fear in an uninhabited wilderness in the depth of our winter, makes even seven days without hearing a human voice or seeing a human face, a long while. But there were other reasons that kept them to the tryst. Both were excited with the good fortune the new country was bringing them, and over the embers as they smoked their pipes they had many tales to swap, even of one week's adventures. Donald had three sables, a dozen mink, and several ermines to his tally. Charlie had besides two good foxes, a fine bear, whose hole he had chanced to discover. At last they had surely found virgin ground, and after resting up Sunday they parted again in hilarious spirits, this time making it a ten-day period. Fortune still favored them. Again they had each added something to their "hunt," and it was two good bags of fur that swung from the topmost rafter of the tilt, where it would be safe from any marauding animal that would be likely to come along.

The boys' dreams were of their triumphant homecoming, and of all the good things their catch would bring to those they loved from the Hudson's Bay Company Post. But Donald traveled farther than that, and he kept seeing himself carrying gifts to the log house at Traverspin for the girl that had tied the token to the horn of his sledge, utterly unconscious that it was his very assumption of superiority that had been the cause of his rebuff when he had been playing for higher game than the pelts of these four-footed denizens of the woods.

The third rendezvous brought them to December, and should have been the last before the general "rendezing" at New Year. But two new things had happened that made it essential to alter their plans. First of all, their food supply was already very

short. It would soon need replenishing if the trapping proved as good as it had begun, for they would want to stay just as long as the season lasted. At Hopedale, a station on the northeast coast of the Moravian Missions, was a good store—one hundred and forty miles north of Eskimo Bay. It should be by compass about one hundred and fifty miles from the end of their present trail, for both boys had been working into the northeast. To go there would prevent their attending the New Year pow-wow at the lake head, with their other partners.

"Don't think we ought to go back on them," argued Charlie, whose ambition was easily satisfied and who was for letting to-morrow take care of itself.

But visions of Traverspin had entirely changed Donald's viewpoint. Already they had over two thousand dollars' worth of fur. As they lay gazing at the embers once more, Donald now saw himself carrying such gifts that no girl in her senses could resist—such as the log cottage had never even dreamed of. Victory in his eyes was always to be purchased by material means—the commonest mistake of humanity.

"Me for Hopedale," he argued, relapsing into one of his American blunt phrases.

"That means you will go without me, eh?"

"Not at all. I'll go down to the big camp and flag the others. I reckon they'll have a merry enough Christmas without me. That is 'lowing them half as good luck as ours."

"Us don't know t' way to Hopedale and I don't allow no white man does neither," was the reply.

"So much the more fun for us," said Donald, who, to tell the truth, was at that moment more anxious for yet another such feather for his cap than for even the extra month it might mean on their new path.

"Fun?" Charlie's wits were busy for an answer.

"Why, you know they always has a big time at Christmas at the station. Them Northern fellows 'lows to go there every year if it takes them a month to do it. None out of our bay ever went there. Let's go now, and we'll have a big time Christmas." And Donald leapt up in his new excitement and took down his rifle and commenced cleaning it all over again with meticulous care, as if he would start at once. His infectious enthusiasm and the novelty of the plan soon persuaded the easy-going Charlie.

"So be it, Donald boy," he said, and without being conscious of his own *volte-face*, he reached for his snowshoes and commenced carefully overhauling the baggage, as he would before a long journey.

Donald had gone already when Charlie awoke next morning. And though it was Sunday, he made such good speed that by midnight he once again was back at the

tilt.

"You never made the tilt and back, Don—'Tis a good day's trip to get one way."

As his answer Donald held up a snow knife they had left at the rendezvous, as not being necessary on the hunting-grounds, but might well be on their journey to the coast, to make a snow house if there were no better shelter obtainable.

"No one there. But I pegged a big notice on the table, saying, 'Gone to Hopedale for the Christmas feasts.' Won't they be mad? I didn't say ne'er a word about t' fur."

Meanwhile as time is time to all Northerners, Charlie had not been idle, and had made every possible preparation for the big journey ahead. Both lads were in the pink of condition, and with good luck they hoped to make as much as forty miles a day, traveling light, and sleeping in snow houses if necessary, which they could run up in half an hour. They could then work east till they struck a fjord, which they would follow to the sea, or until they struck one of the trails of the northern trappers. As for food they relied on the partridge and rabbits they could shoot as they went. The second day out, however, they crossed the fresh trail of a band of Indians, evidently moving to the south and west, and thinking they might get some information, sidetracked, and overtook them. For our Indians move very slowly, hunting and furring as they go, and living off the land meanwhile, carrying far more gunpowder and tobacco than they do flour each time they leave the fur-trading posts, being Montagnais, or Mountaineers, a wandering remnant of the old Cree nation. They had been out at Ukasiksalik, a northern station of the Hudson's Bay Company, to barter pelts for ammunition, and were wandering slowly back to their annual religious gathering at Easter at St. Augustine on the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, where priests from Quebec confessed and shrived them for the following year.

ROASTING A PORCUPINE

The information the Indians gave was valuable, and on the fourth day the boys came out at the hospitable and well-off homes of the Metcalfs, trappers at the head of Pantalak Bay, a perfectly magnificent fjord leading out about forty miles to Hopedale itself. The fact, however, that this band would certainly cross their fur-path before they returned, left their minds very uneasy. For bands of Indians have literally died of starvation during recent years, and their friends, not without reason, have attributed most of their troubles to the white man poaching on their grounds. So they have, on more than one occasion, expressed their resentment by burning as well as robbing the tilts of the white hunters, when they found them on what they considered their reserves.

The big Huskie dogs of the Metcalfs had at first made it a little difficult for the strangers to approach the house, but when Archie and Ernie Metcalf with true Labrador hospitality harnessed their teams up next day and ran the visitors to their

journey's end in five hours, they were very readily forgiven. The boys received the traditional Northern welcome from the crowd gathered for the Christmas festivities, and the games, music, and dancing would have induced the easy-going Charlie to stay over New Year. But Donald was miserable, crazy to get back on to the height of land with his beloved traps. It was the nearest occasion that they ever came to a quarrel.

"It's leaving I am in the morning with Archie at daylight anyhow," he said. "I'll be there overnight getting the slide packed, and shall start again if the weather's good at daylight for the country."

Charlie said nothing. He didn't know his chum's secret. But, truth to say, unconsciously he was himself freshly wounded in that same vital organ, with the dart that actually drew him the following winter to settle his fate at this far-off spot where certainly he had least expected it. So wayward is the fickle goddess of our loves!

Donald had packed the slide which they had decided to haul in turns, and was already bidding good-bye to his hosts when the second Metcalf team loomed in sight. It was Charlie, though a trifle grumpy Charlie, that jumped off, swallowed a hasty meal, and insisted on going on with his friend without waiting for any of the sleep due him. It seemed churlish to let him go that way, but losing one night's sleep is a frequent occurrence in the next-to-nature life. The question was settled by the good nature of Archie, who quietly harnessed up his trusty team and hauled the whole lot far as the first tilt, on his own path.

There is no knowing how far the new friendship might have carried them, but he couldn't afford to disturb his fur trail with a great howling pack of Huskies. So they parted the next morning with promises to repeat the visit if ever it were practical.

A good deal of snow fell during the last part of their return trip, and only their instinctive woodcraft and wonderful fitness enabled them to haul safely so far, and so surely, the heavy weight of supplies they had purchased with a few of their pelts. It was a great relief to find that their tilt was untouched. Their collection of furs still hung from the roof. Their few things were exactly as they had left them. With renewed vigor for the next six weeks the trapping went on as merrily as a song. But the end of February, the time for returning, was drawing near and again provisions were running out.

Charlie was all for starting soon while the going was good.

"There's plenty of grub at the head of Lake Wininikapau, where us left the canoes," he volunteered, "and no one has hunted that ground t' winter. Us can go and trap round there till the river opens. Sure we've got fur enough to last till next year, anyhow."

Donald was, however, for making a bumper winter into a record one. His whole mind was set upon overwhelming the girl he sought to win with the proofs of his prowess. Ever since his sojourn in the States he had lost the appreciation for simplicity, humility, and gentleness that is the priceless possession of the isolated fishermen and trappers of the Northland. To his warped mind "things" were the winning card now to every rational mind, and the idea that love and happiness can best be gained by material things, the fallacy with which the Devil still misleads the ages of so-called civilization, left him almost as blind to real truth as the ordinary selfish human being whose guiding star is "me first." The acceptance that loving yourself last is honestly a man's best personal asset is also still practically as rare as it was in Galilee.

So Donald was for staying yet another fortnight on the height of land.

"There's still a good sign of foxes," he argued, "and they won't be tracing for a long while yet up here" (meaning that when they lay down, their beautiful long King hair would not yet be melted into and be frozen into the surface of the ice), "and white foxes are just coming along too and they're worth catching these days."

"Malcolm and the old man are out by now, I'm reckoning. There's only Pete left in, and you knows he won't leave till us do, though he's due back long ago, and it's a shame to keep him," Charlie ventured.

"Waiting for me, I suppose? Thinks I want a nurse and pram since I went to the States, eh? Well, I'm not going to budge till St. Patrick's Day, and that's two weeks from next Wednesday. He can go home any time he likes. Guess I can take care of myself."

"It isn't much account to me what you'se does, Donald. But you certainly do act contrary these days. Though I do say it, you ain't the same reasonable fellow you was before you got civilization—"

"Cheer up, Charlie—maybe it's my last time, and I want to make the most of it. I know you'll stand by as you always have done," he replied, realizing that there are sometimes at least when emotions are more potent than "things." Even this trifling concession to gentleness had its immediate result.

"If that's how you look on it, old man, you can count on me. I don't suppose it will make much difference fifty years hence."

"St. Patrick's Day then, March 17th. We'll meet at the big lake camp."

"Right you are! Be on time!"

"Sure I will. Good-bye and good luck."

And for the last time the two lads parted for a final round-up of all their traps.

Donald had poor luck that round. The fur seemed to have moved, and so very

few signs were discernible that he thought at last, as he had many traps to haul and a good deal of fur to move, he might as well be early at the tilt and have a time resting around till Charlie came.

March came in very blustering. The snow got deeper and deeper, even on the barrens, and it held so cold that it was like a bunch of feathers with no surface, and even on snowshoes you sank down to your knees walking. With only twenty miles to go, Donald left for the rendezvous as usual at daylight, so as to take no chances of missing it by reaching the tilt in the dark. For there was no moon now and even the reflection from the snow wouldn't help much through the trees after night, as there were no cut paths.

Suddenly about noon as he trudged along, the snow gave way under him—a large undermined crust fell through, and Donald found himself struggling up to his waist in running water. The depth of young snow had concealed the fact that he was crossing a big blow hole. The edges kept giving way as he tried to climb out, so that he was wet to the skin up to his shoulders, before he once more hauled himself on to safety.

Fortunately, the slide with his bag of fur was trailing so far behind as not to have gotten wet. There was nothing for it now but to hurry as hard as he could, and make the tilt before he froze up. It was a man's task, and not every one could have accomplished it, for the temperature was thirty below zero, and his clothing at once froze. Yet the powdery snow carried his weight worse than before, and as he toiled on and on, he had more than good reason to doubt even this ability to get in before dark. His northern vitality, however, stood him in good stead, and as dark fell he made out the direction of the drogue of woods in which the hut was sheltered, and at last utterly wearied and played out, he tumbled, rather than walked, through its friendly door. To get a fire going was the work of a few minutes, and then to tear off the wet clothes, beat out the ice, hang them up, and crawl into his sleeping-bag on the floor. His outside things would be dry by morning in that close-heated atmosphere. He would but slip on some loose skin moccasins and his dry underpants, just in case he might have to get out of the bag before morning. He was too weary to eat and the heat, after the cold, made him deadly sleepy. Fortunately, the usual large pile of dry wood had been stored in the tilt—plenty to last till morning. He piled it up close to the stove so that he could reach out of the bag and heave in more fuel when necessary.

In an hour or so he woke up feeling very chilly. The tilt was cold. The fire was nearly burnt out. Hurriedly he piled in wood—all the little stove would hold. It should last longer this time, he vowed. The last thing he remembered before he fell once

more into the deep sleep of utter exhaustion was heaping up the dry wood near the stove to be all ready when he should wake next time.

Dreams troubled him. Something was wrong. He was down at Traverspin. Hot flashes were passing over him, as he got nearer the cottage that had scarcely been out of his mind an hour all these long weeks in the wilderness.

But now he had so rich a gift to offer, he could calmly force his way into the house. But something wouldn't let him. Something was wrong. He was burning with heat. He couldn't go into the house like that . . .

In his sleep he turned over, and a sharp pain made him wake with a start. Yes, he had burnt his finger, and a blaze of light was filling the tilt. My God! it was all on fire! The door was shut and the blaze mostly between him and it. Not a moment was to be lost. Bang!! Bang!! Bang!!! His magazine rifle was exploding at his feet. Seizing a large log he hurled it at the door, jumped through the blaze, and fell sprawling on the snow outside.

It was a pitch-dark night—colder than ever. The opening of the tilt door had made a huge draft rush into it. The whole thing built of dry studding, with birch-bark roofing, was one mass of flames. He could save nothing—not even his stockings, trousers, coat, cap, mittens—nothing!

What could he do? A few minutes where he was and he would certainly freeze to death. The next tilt was nine miles away. It was his only chance. Already he was beginning to freeze standing there. Without a moment's further hesitation he dashed off through the woods. Luckily there was less soft snow among the trees. He could move fairly quickly. But without question the fact that his snowshoes were as usual hung up outside on the "mark" tree, gave him his one chance for life. Through the thin doeskin slippers with no socks or vamps, the thongs galled his feet horribly. But there was no time to think of details. Run—Run—Run—Run! Not a second to stop for either breath or rest.

Fortunately, the woods kept the wind off him somewhat. He was getting warmer with the exertion as he crashed through the woods like a frightened bull moose. He had covered over four miles. He was going right, for he remembered the way well. But he just had to slow down to get breath. The woods he knew came abruptly to an end a little after halfway, and there was a full two miles of absolute barrens to cross. The wind cut him like a knife as he broke out from the shelter, and while he literally fought his way up over that bitter hillside.

He realized he was getting colder. Hurry as he would, beat himself as he would, the cold was relentlessly freezing his feet, and hands, and chest. On and on he struggled. His limbs were bruised and torn as he had charged into brambles and

shrubs. The miles seemed endless, and he was getting terribly sleepy again. It was just as when he had felt the warmth of the tilt a few hours before. He could keep awake no longer. It was exactly as if he simply had to sleep without even stopping to have supper. Surely he might lie down just for a minute—if only for a minute. How often just a few minutes of sleep had enabled him to take an extra four-hour watch at the wheel without winking! Surely if he lay down, just for one minute, it would be all right. The cold would wake him, and he would then be strong enough to struggle on to the end. He had made up his mind to it, when—what was that? Something pitch-black ahead? or was he going blind, or to sleep as he ran?

No, it was surely the edge of the last belt of woods. He must wait to sleep till he got their shelter from the wind. Then surely he would get strength to struggle on. The woods at last! What a wonderful thing! He felt better at once. This horrible wind no longer pierced through his skin. He was warm by contrast, and already he felt better. Of course he remembered now if he had once slept out there he would never have wakened. Then his thoughts instantly carried him to Traverspin. He was making for the cottage. He had left his bag of fur with the canoe which he had hauled up again at the mouth of Eagle Brook. Wouldn't she be overjoyed? It was no distance now to the cottage. On and on, he went, all the while, so he says, thinking the Stewart house was just ahead.

Strange he had forgotten all about his weariness. All he was thinking about was Nora Stewart. She was close to him. She was surely calling him—nothing could keep him back. Somewhere he had realized that he could go right into the house this time. No need to dally about among the trees. Of course he was right after all. Goddess though she was, he always knew she could not turn him down with all those wonderful furs that he would lay at her feet. How beautiful the sheen on those sables was, and there was the silver fox stowed in a special pocket of his gunny sack. He hadn't even told Charlie of that. Now he seemed to see them all laid out at Nora's feet.

The house at last! But the door was open. No one inside. There was no light either. He shouted, but no one answered. Only the sound of his own voice came back, and then suddenly once more he was back in the woods again. He had reached the tilt. A fire, or he must die. Fortunately, day had dawned and he could see everything. His frozen fingers fumbled with the matches, always in the same place. But with a trapper's skill he got a light. The tilt was empty! Through the open door snow had drifted in and covered the floor. Ugh! How repellent it looked! Some one had been there. They had cleaned out the firewood, and had left the door off. It couldn't have been Malcolm, or the old man. They never in their lives left a tilt

without wood, or open to the weather. Peter and Charlie were still in the woods. Indians? Yes, the Indians. They had passed. He could now make out signs of them everywhere. But they had spared the tilt, and yes, there in the rafters was the blanket sleeping-bag left for emergencies. They hadn't robbed it. There was still a chance for life. The hatchet hidden in the mark tree was there also—still in its place. He *must* get wood. He says now he forgets getting it. But he made a fire, and with supreme effort thawed out some snow in the tin kettle, and sat with his feet in the cold water with snow in it, in a basin, rubbing and working them with his frozen hands till he could feel, as he kicked a piece of wood.

He was all himself again now, except that he felt horribly sick, and his feet hurt terribly. However, he managed to swallow some hot tea with molasses. The sleep in the burning tilt had been all he needed for the while. Fortunately, he could keep awake. It was far too dangerous to go to sleep in the bag. He would wrap up in the blankets and rest sitting by the fire.

His feet hurt him more and more, and he had to go outside and get wood before night. He crawled to his snowshoes and put them on. It was no use. Already his feet were all blistered up and terribly blue. There was no alternative. He could no longer stand. So he must put the snowshoes on his hands and drag his legs wrapped up in blankets till he could get at a tree.

By night he actually had a good deal of wood stacked. It was St. Patrick's Day. Charlie should reach the other tilt that day. Would he come on? Between times of feeding the fire, crouched up on the floor, he got snatches of sleep. How interminable that night seemed! He had no way to measure time. But day came again at last, and still no sign of Charlie. More wood must be had. His stock was exhausted. Fortunately, no fresh snow had fallen, but he was so weak he didn't expect to last the day out. Unable to cook, he couldn't feed himself. But when he crawled out he actually tailed a slip for a rabbit, in the hope he might make some kind of a meal. His life depended on Charlie's coming. But midday came and went and still no signs. As no one came along by nightfall he got a piece of old paper, and with the bullet of a cartridge he scrawled good-bye to Charlie, and a message to be given to the girl at Traverspin. It must have been past midnight. It was still as a grave outside and bitterly cold, when suddenly a sound like a breaking twig aroused him to keen attention. He could hear nothing. Then again another cracking twig. Some one or something was certainly moving around the house in the tangle and darkness outside. There was an old .22 rifle in the tilt. Donald reached for it, opened the door and fired twice into the darkness. Almost instantly he heard footsteps approaching. Some one was really pushing through the undergrowth. A moment later, and the welcome

features of Charlie became visible as he beat the long icicles from his mustache and muffler.

"Donald boy, what *has* happened? I sure thought you were dead, and was just afraid to come into the tilt till you fired. The storm made me late getting to the lake head. It was after dark when I got there on St. Patrick's Day, and I couldn't find the tilt anywhere. I felt sure I was in the right drogue, but in the dark could see nothing, and I just had to wander around until daylight. The wind had drifted the snow everywhere, and not a trace could I find of the tilt, till at last I made out the mark tree and kept walking around for signs of the hut. Then I saw it had been burnt. But how? There wasn't a thing left to tell the tale. Of course I thought it was 'Indians' and went back to the lake to see if I could find any sign of you. Then I thought you might have gone on after dark, and that accounted for no blazes or marks to tell me what you'd done. So I followed on here. But what's the matter with your feet? My sakes, what's the matter with your feet?"

And then the good fellow sat down and heard the whole story, and, "Charlie," Donald ended, "'t's all gone. All your fur you left there, and all the work of the winter has gone up in smoke," and as Donald realized for the first time what it all meant, he broke down and wept. For now that there was hope for life, his thoughts had suddenly jumped once more to the cottage at Traverspin. Sick, crippled, penniless—nothing to offer. His pride vanished and his hands empty. Why hadn't he gone to sleep on that open hillside?

His foolish mind still thought that with the loss of "things" his chance of winning love and the worth-while things of earth were out of the question for him!

Charlie laughed. "Skins is it, Donald? Sure it's laughing you ought to be, and thanking St. Patrick into the bargain I'm thinking, that you saved your own skin, or at least the part of it that you did save. These ears and cheeks look a little as if Jack Frost had been practising on you, like I hears that Frenchman does in the prize fights, and your nose will look as if you needed to mind the new prohibition rules a bit better, though they do say that St. Patrick's folk count the mark of the bottle no disrespect to the memory of the saint. However, I'm talking when I should be doing," and tired as he was himself, he at once set to work to get some food ready, so that he might add "doing" to the longest effort in "talking" he had ever been known to make.

All that he could do he did that night, ministering as tenderly as a nurse could to the needs and troubles of his friend. He realized, however, the need for haste. They must try and get to skilled help just as soon as possible. So having left everything ready that he could, without even lying down for a nap he started back up the lake

to find Peter, and prepare for the big effort of hauling a sick man two hundred and fifty miles to the Hospital of the Mission at North West River, where Donald had met the Doctor who had helped him to the States.

The laconic Peter, when he heard the news, said but little.

"All in the day's work, Charlie. 'Tis no good crying over spilt milk. Perhaps 'tis a lesson worth the price. For I feared for Donald when I saw he was so changed by his visit away. A year or two and he'll no remember the few pelts, and maybe he'll have found there's something bigger than just having things. For I'm fearing he's forgotten it."

The big grasp of Peter's hand did more for Donald than a cupboard full of medicine. The whole bay knew Peter. For no one could have better embodied those splendid characteristics which earned that name for his Galilean prototype. Donald was a child again in his hands, and that was exactly the mental attitude he needed, for the rest that also could save his life.

That night he slept like a child, while the two men took watches in turn. For four days the scales seemed to hang in the balance. Sometimes Donald knew them. Sometimes he didn't. He was horribly hot, and coughed a little. Then thanks to the North and a clean life, he got suddenly better. He knew them again and rested. He wasn't so hot. But horribly weak. It wasn't safe to start, but the shortness of food made it urgent they shouldn't delay an hour longer than necessary. Out of deerskin and rabbit furs the men had made warm wraps for their charge, and the 9th being a good day they left for the long journey, hauling their chum on a big improvised sledge.

For the first three or four days the path was level. If anything, really it was down grade and they made good headway, about fifteen miles on an average per day. But after that the trail crossed the rocky ridges between the height of land and the first big lake, and Charlie's ability to haul began to peter out. Two years before he had badly broken several ribs, and to that he attributed his failure. Really, however, he himself had suffered from the overwork and exposure, for by night and day he had never spared himself for a moment.

As for Donald, the rough going and the enforced effort to help all he could also set back the little he had gained during the four days' careful nursing in the tilt, and he could eat but the tiniest bit of food and could not keep even that down long.

At last they reached the bank of the large Pouilik Lake. With the shortness of food and all the hauling depending on Peter, the only chance was to send Charlie on alone, for he could walk much faster than they could haul the heavy sledge, sick as he was himself.

Leaving them with four cups of flour, a little salt and some tea, but with nothing else, except about fifty cartridges for their .22 rifle, he left them one hundred and forty miles from the nearest house, with a temperature twenty below zero. They pushed on a little every day, however, always putting out a few snares for rabbits where they camped, once getting some fine trout through a hole that Peter succeeded in making through several feet of ice, and with these, a few partridges he killed with the .22. Charlie fell in with some of the lumbermen on their wood paths on the seventh day, and, with the help of a couple of fine dog teams, on the tenth, he met Peter still cheerfully tramping along and hauling the sledge, as he certainly would have done till he dropped in his tracks, had help not arrived. Their food was gone and their ammunition spent before they heard the cries of the dogs and men, as they tore along over the snow on their rescue mission, and without aid they could never have reached home.

The story of Donald's misfortunes spread by grapevine telegraph all along the Coast. For a long while as he lay in the little hospital, it was an open question which way the turn of tide would go. For a bad relapse resulted from the exposure of the journey. But in his wanderings his secret leaked out, and both nurse and doctor at length agreed that there was one chance that would help more than any other, if only it could be obtained, and which the crisis demanded they should try to procure for him. That which now Donald couldn't ask for himself, they felt they might be forgiven for asking for him.

That's why a nurse visited the cottage on Eagle Brook late one morning. Would Nora leave to visit their patient? She alone could bring the one thing that is more strong than death itself to help them in what they still feared was going to be a losing fight.

That is why one day the puzzled eyes of a man recovering from a long period of unconsciousness fell on a piece of Stewart tartan hanging from the post at the foot of his bed.

To-day Donald shares with all our folk the simplest of faiths in the over-ruling by higher power of men's affairs.

He will tell you to-day, so far as he is concerned, it all happened just as he would have arranged it himself if he had only known what he knows now. "For," he says, "Nora Stewart is the kind that could only have been won by a man who knows what is better in life than mere 'things.'"

ST. ANTHONY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS

A UNIVERSAL robe of white had long covered our countryside, hiding the last vestige of the rocky soil, and every trace of the great summer fishery. The mail steamer had paid its final visit for six months to come. The last link with civilization was broken. Even the loitering sea ducks and lesser auks had left us. The iron grip of winter lay on sea and shore.

At its best, the land here scarcely suggests the word "country" to a Southerner. The rock is everywhere close to the surface, and mosses and lichens are its chief coverings. The larger part of the country we call "barrens."

Few of the houses deserve even the name of cottages, for all are of light, rough wood. Most consist of only one story, and contain but two rooms. To the exacting taste of civilization, the word "huts" would convey a more accurate idea of these humble abodes. The settlements themselves are small and scattered and at this season of the year the empty, tilts of the summer fishermen give a still more desolate aspect to these lonely habitations.

Early in December we had been dumped from the little mail steamer on the ice of St. Anthony Harbor about half a mile from shore, and hauled "on dogs" to the little hospital, where we were to make our headquarters for the winter. Christmas was close upon us. Not unnaturally, our thoughts went over the sea to the family gathering at home, at which our places would be vacant. We should miss the holly and mistletoe, the roast beef and plum pudding, the inevitable crackers, and the giving and receiving of presents, which had always seemed essential to a full enjoyment of the Christmas season.

Few of the children of our harbor had ever possessed a toy; there was scarcely a "little maid" who owned a doll. Now and again one would see, nailed high up on the wall, well out of reach of the children, a flimsy, cheaply painted doll; and the mother would explain that her "Pa got un from a trader, sir, for thirty cents. No, us don't 'low Nellie to have it, 'feared lest she might spoil un"—a fear I found to be only too well grounded when I came to examine its anatomy more closely.

Christmas-trees in plenty grew near the hospital. "Father Christmas" could easily be persuaded to attend a "Tree." The only question was whether our stock of toys would justify us in inviting so many children as would want to come. It is easy to satisfy children like these, however, and so we announced that we expected Santa Claus on a certain day. Forthwith, whispers reached us that Aunt Mary thought her

Joe weren't too big to come; sure, "he'd be only sixteen." May White was "going eighteen," but she would so love to come. Old Daddy Gilliam would like to sit in a corner. He'd never seen a Christmas-tree, and he was "nigh on eighty." We were obliged to yield, and with guilty consciences consented to twice as many as the room would hold. All through the day before the event, the Sister was busy making buns; and it was even noised abroad that a barrel of apples had been carried over to the "Room."

In the evening of the day previous, a sick-call carried me north to a tiny place on the Straits of Belle Isle, where a woman lay in great pain, and by all accounts dying. The dogs were in their best form and traveling was fair enough till we came to a huge arm of the sea, which lay right in our path and was only recently "caught over" with young ice. To reach the other shore we had to make a wide detour, bumping our way along the rough ballicaters of the old standing ice. Even here the salt water came up through the snow, and the dogs sank to their shoulders in a cold mush that turned each mile into half a dozen. We began to think that our chance of getting back in time on the morrow was small indeed.

One thing went a long way toward reconciling us to the disappointment. The case we had come to see proved to be one in which skilled help was of real service. So we were a contented company round the log fire in the little cottage, as we sat listening to stories from one and another of the neighbors, who, according to custom, had dropped in to see "t' Doctor." Before long my sleeping-bag was loudly calling to me after the exercise of the day. "We must be off by dawn, Uncle Phil, for there's no counting on these short days, and we have promised to see that Santa Claus is in time for the Christmas-tree to-morrow night at St. Anthony," I told my driver.

ACCOMMODATION FOR TOURISTS

Only a few minutes seemed to have passed when, "'Twill be dawning shortly, Doctor," the familiar tones of my driver's voice came filtering into my sleeping-bag. "Right you are, Phil; put the kettle on and call the dogs; I will be ready in a couple of shakes."

Oh, what a glorious morning! An absolute stillness, and the air as sweet as sugar! Everywhere there was a mantle of perfect white below, a fathomless depth of cloudless blue overhead—and the first radiances of the coming day blending one into the other with rich, transparent reds. We found it a hard job to tackle up the dogs, they were so mad to be off. As we topped the first hill and the great bay that had caused us so much trouble lay below us, my driver gave a joyous shout. "Hurrah, Doctor! there's a lead for us." Far out on the ice he had spied a black speck moving toward the opposite shore. A komatik had ventured over the young ice, and to follow it would mean a saving of five miles to us.

We made a good landing and scaled the opposite hill, and were galloping over the high barrens, when the dogs began to give tongue, loudly announcing that a team was coming from the opposite direction. As we drew near a muffled figure jumped off, and, hauling his dogs to one side, shouted the customary "What cheer?"

Then a surprised "The Doctor, as I live! Why, there's komatiks gone all over the country after you. A lad has shot hisself down at St. Ronald's, and he's bleeding

shocking."

"All right, Jake. The turn for the path is off the big pond, is it not?"

"That's it, Doctor, but I'm coming along anyhow, 'feared I *might* be wanted."

My little leader must have overheard this conversation, for she simply flew over the hills. Yet the early winter dusk was already falling when at length we shot down the semi-precipice on the side of which my patient's house clung like a barnacle. The anxious crowd, gathered to await our arrival, disappeared like morning mist at sunrise. The tiny, naked room was already choked with well-meaning visitors, though they were able to do nothing but look on and defile what little air made its way in through the fixed windows. Fortunately, for want of putty, a little air leaked in around the panes.

Stretched on the floor behind the stove lay a pale-faced boy of about ten years. His clothes had been taken off, and an old patchwork quilt covered his shivering body. His right thigh was bound with a heterogeneous mass of bloody rags. Sitting by him was his mother, her forehead resting on her clenched hands. She rose as I entered, and without waiting for questions, broke out: "'Tis Clem, Doctor. He got Dick here to give him the gun to try and shoot a gull, and there were a high ballicater of ice in the way, and he were trying to climb up over it, and he pushed the gun before him with the bar'l turned t'wards hisself, and she went off and shot him, and us doesn't know what to do next—next, and—"

While she ran on with her lament, I cleared the room of visitors, and kneeling down by the boy, removed the dirty mass of rags that had been used to staunch the blood. The charge had entered the thigh at close quarters above the knee, and passed downwards, blowing the kneecap to pieces. Most of it had passed out again. The loose fragments of bone still adhering to the ragged flesh, the bits of clothing blown into it, and the foul smell and discoloration added by the gunpowder made the outlook a very ugly one. Moreover, there rose to my mind the memory of a similar case in which we had come too late, as blood poisoning had set in, and the child died after much suffering.

The mother had by this time quieted down, and simply kept on repeating, "What shall us do?"

"There's only one thing to be done. We must pack Clem up and carry him to the hospital right away."

"Iss, Doctor. 'Tis the only way, I'm thinking," she replied. "An' I suppose you'll cut off his leg, and he'll never walk no more, and oh, dear! what—"

"Come, tear up this calico into strips and bring me some boiling water—mind, it must be well boiled; and get me that board over there—it will serve to make a splint;

and then go and tell Dick to get the dogs ready at once; for we've a Christmas-tree at St. Anthony to-night, and I must be back at all costs."

In this way we kept her too busy to worry or hesitate about letting the child go; for we well knew it was his only chance, and as she had never seen a hospital, the idea of one was as terrifying as a morgue.

"Home, home, home!" to the dogs—and once again our steel runners were humming over the crisp snow. Now in the darkness we were clinging to our hand-ropes as we shot over the hills. Soon the hospital lights were coming up, and then the lights in the windows of the "Room." As we drew near they looked so numerous and so cheerful that we could almost imagine we were approaching a town. Then we could hear the merry ring of the children's voices, and make out a crowd of figures gathered around the half-open doorway. They were anxiously awaiting the tardy arrival of "Sandy Claws." Of course, we were at once recognized, and there was a general hush of disappointment. They had thought that at last "Sandy" himself was come.

"He is only a bit behind us," we shouted. "He is coming like a whirlwind. Look out, everybody, when he gets here. Don't get too close to his dogs."

Only a little while later, and the barking of our team announced the approach of the other komatik. Some one was calling from the darkness, and a long sleigh with a double-banked team of dogs had drawn up opposite the doorway. Two fur-clad figures standing by it steadied a huge box which was lashed upon it. The light shining on the men revealed only sparkling eyes and large icicles hanging from their heavy mustaches and whiskers, over their mufflers, like the ivory tusks of some old bull walrus. Both men were panting with exertion, and blowing out great clouds of steam like galloping horses on a frosty morning. There could be no doubt about it this time. Here was the real "Sandy Claws" at last, come mysteriously over the snows from the polar sea with his dogs and komatik and big box and all!

The excitement of the crowd, already tense from anxiety over our own delay, now knew no bounds. Where had they come from? What could be in that huge box? How large it loomed in the darkness! Could it have really been dragged all the way from the North Pole? Luckily, no one had the courage left to go near enough to discover the truth.

The hospital door was swung open, and a loud voice cried out: "Welcome, welcome, Sandy Claws! We're all so glad you've come; we thought you'd forgotten us. Come right in. Oh, no! don't think of undoing the box outside; why, you'd freeze all those toys! Just unlash it and bring it right in as it is. There's a cup of tea waiting for you before you go over to start your tree."

There had been rumors all the week that "Sandy Claws" would bring his wife this year. So we could explain the second man; for the Eskimo men and women all dress alike in North Labrador, which would account for Mrs. Claws' strange taste in clothes. A discreet silence was observed about her frozen whiskers.

A few minutes later another large box was carried over to the "Room." It was full of emptiness, for the toys were on the tree long before. However, two strange masked and bewigged figures stumbled over the snow with it, to carry out the little drama to its close. So complete was the faith in the unearthly origin of these our guests, that when the curtain went up more than one voice was heard to be calling out fearfully for "Ma" and "Dad," while a lad of several summers was found hidden under the seat, when it came his turn to go up and get his "prize."

Christmas has gone long ago. Already we have heard the ominous groaning of the heavy ice along the land-wash, warning us that the season of open water is getting nearer, and that soon our icy fetters will be broken. "Clem" has gone to his home again. He is able to run and walk like the merry lad he is, for not only his life, but his limb also, has been saved to him. Thus Santa Claus came to St. Anthony and brought a gift for us as well as presents for the children. Indeed, he kept the best for us, for our Christmas gift was the chance to save Clem's life and we would not have exchanged it for any we had ever heard of.

SOU'WEST BY WEST

I

The winter in Peacehaven had long since reached the turning. A week ago the sun had crossed the line, and the straggling rays of the late March sunshine at midday had moistened and weakened the snow surface, while the frost at evening welded it into one universal speedway.

Abel and Shem Lovejoy were racing, with their respective teams of dogs, after their second load of firewood for the day, along the wood path to Sleepy Hollow, where most of the Peacehaven men had been "cutting" that particular winter. As they swung round a bend in the trail that brought them to the foot of the steep bluff of the Grebe's Nest Hill known as the "Silver Falls" because it is really the bed of a waterfall in summer, a yell warned them, but alas, too late, that a loaded sledge was shooting down almost on to their heads.

Another instant and the usual sylvan silence had given place to pandemonium. The two men, with the quick reaction bred of a life next to the hard things of nature, just saved themselves by diving head foremost into the woods at the sides of the path, before a komatik bearing two heavy logs dropped as if from the sky on to the very top of the sledge they had occupied a second before. Meanwhile a shower of dogs had come down like a magnified hailstorm right amidst their own two teams, and were already engaged with them in mortal combat. Their mode of arrival had broken through the ice crust and the various fighting units were rapidly disappearing in the deep snow beneath, making it dangerous work for the lads to save their only method of traction from extinction.

Characteristically they had wasted no time worrying over the cause of the catastrophe. Abe, who had got a hasty nip in the hand while saving his leader from the maw of two powerful dogs with wolfish hides that prevented their adversaries from getting anything but a mouthful of fur, was ruefully rubbing a handful of snow into the bleeding member, when his brother suggested there must have been some one responsible for the avalanche. A search revealed the body of a friend pinned down in the snow under one of the logs that had been flung from his sledge.

"Ky Transome, by all the powers!" exclaimed Shem, as he turned the limp body over. "Haven't seen him the winter hardly. Looks sick though."

"There's no fear o' him," chimed in Abe with a sigh of relief. "You can't kill Ky with anything less than a sledge-hammer."

"This isn't exactly an old man's stunt," added Shem with a grunt, as with one hand he rubbed snow over the face of the half-stunned man, and with the other gently shook him to and fro, as if to readjust some displaced parts inside him. For some unknown reason Ky responded to their efforts, and they soon had the satisfaction of seeing his eyes open, and a grin stealing over his face showed he recognized his self-appointed attendants.

"Ease her up a bit, Shem, old boy," he growled, "or you'll start a plank somewhere. I'll be all right in a few minutes."

Having found he could stand upright, they started to excavate and restow the logs on the heavily built "catamaran" which he was using. Ky, having repeated on his own initiative the shaking process that had seemed so effective in his friend's hands, assured them he was once more "feeling fine." So the brothers proceeded on their journey promising to pick him up on the way out "if anything gave out."

"He's been away in the country cutting saw logs in the 'tant' (tall) woods, I reckon," said Abel, as they proceeded to load up their own sledges with firewood; "must be going to take a schooner in tow."

"'Tis Donald Macleod's girl, Nora, in Hinchinbrook, I 'lows," answered Abe, "Ky's a high flyer and no one can deny it. But he's mighty close about it."

"He's afeared of her," said Shem, "afeared of a bit of a girl. He knows us'd laugh at him, who never feared anything else on earth in his life."

Ky was more shaken than he admitted and the Lovejoy boys were over to see him a few times in a neighborly way, before he was able to do any such work as log hauling again. Yet they noticed he played the part of a frightened mouse, rather than that of the dare-devil of the harbor that he had always been.

Never letting either of the brothers get a hint of what was passing through his mind, it was only when a week or two of time had been lost and there were signs that the hauling might shortly break up that he came round to their house one evening and asked if they would help him bring home the bunch of logs he had cut in the winter.

The master motive showed itself all that summer in a new fact. Ky's splendid energies were focused for the first time on "business" (getting ahead). The earliest fishermen to start for the "grounds" each day found Ky's boat already gone from her collar; the last light in the stages at night, when any fish was "running," was always sure to be Hezekiah's. His trader, as he made the rounds of his planters' stages, marked with approving eye the bulk of Ky's "water horse," or wet salted codfish, mounting so much more rapidly than heretofore, and felt justified in advancing him a far more generous and effective outfit than he would otherwise have dreamt of.

When fall came that year to Peacehaven, for the first time Hezekiah Transome boarded the trader's vessel with the sensation of a capitalist. True, there were still a few things he needed for the job he had laid out for himself, after he had "taken up" the value of all his fish notes. But Joseph Marshland, a really fine-hearted man, had marked Ky's conversion, and as he often did under similar circumstances though with less prospect of seeing his money back, supplied all he needed on credit.

Hinchinbrook was fifty miles "up the bay," near the entrance to which Peacehaven was situated. The Macleods were among the old settlers of the Coast, their grandfather having been one of the earliest coopers to come out from Scotland, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, in their vessel, that visits Labrador every year to collect valuable furs taken by their trappers, and to bring supplies for the coming year.

The Macleod fur-path was one of the longest and most remunerative in the country, and with Scotch foresight each generation had nursed it carefully, safeguarding it from any exploitation or overtrapping. Indeed, though the family always insisted that it followed the river for three hundred miles, even the roving band of Nascopee Indians seldom interfered with it. For Sandy Macleod had served them well many times, but especially one winter when they had missed the caribou herd and were starving in their wigwams. He and his boys had hauled in their own food to the rescue, and the tradition had never been forgotten by the mountaineers.

But beside their fur-path, the Macleods owned also the best salmon post in the bay, and in good years would collect as much as two hundred tierce of salmon. They were "solid folk" moreover, and somewhere in a stocking or box, there lay buried a good store of gold coins with the "galloping horse" on one side, that relieved them entirely of the anxiety for daily bread, which is the one real penalty of a life-occupation so full of chances as that of the fishermen's and trappers'. The general run of the Coast people never know the meaning of what it is "to be safe for the winter" before the traders have settled with them for the "summer's voyage."

There are practically no social distinctions in the country, but the very gambling nature of the calling makes the thoughtful and more "solid" folk shy of entrusting their girl to the care of any man whose reputation is rather for "wild oats" than thrifty virtues. Ky had just discovered this and was determined to acquire a reputation that would secure him from rebuff, when he dared to ask Uncle Sandy for the hand of his only daughter, Nora.

With a dog team like Ky's, fifty miles was only a morning's jaunt, when the "going" was good in winter. But this particular winter he only made one trip to the river. All his energies were bent on the "grand" new house he was building. The

generous advance of supplies given him enabled him to take in a less fortunate friend for the winter, and to "feed and find" him in return for his labor. Jack Frost also was generous; the snow was deeper than usual and though the house was not finished when the fish set in in June, Ky had a new boat built and Joe Marshland brought him a motor on credit which should enable him at least to double his catch (of fish).

Unfortunately, the summer turned out to be very late. Easterly winds kept the Arctic floe ice hugging the shore till the middle of August. Further north the fleet was very "well fished" and cod was on the Coast in great abundance. But the ice-jam held obstinately on the Peacehaven fishing grounds, and when the reckoning day came, Ky was only able to make a moderate settling, while his advance of the previous winter and the cost of the motor engine left him in debt, without any supplies for the oncoming winter except what he could get on credit.

II

During the summer a company from the South which had obtained timber concessions in the Hinchinbrook River valley had sent down a schooner, the Rose of Kircaldy, to survey their area and to erect stores and stages for next year's operations. She had been anchored all the season off the Macleod's house, and the strangers had been visiting between the ship and the house. The advent of a foreign schooner was an entirely new experience to the settlers, and almost everything, that elsewhere was insignificant and commonplace, was wonderful and big to the Macleod family. Still their native simplicity, hospitality, and unsophisticated trustfulness broke down any possible social differences, and intimacies had grown up that were never suspected by the old Scotchman.

Before the fishing was over the ship had gone and the impetuous Ky had been far too eager to make a good voyage to lose any days running up to Hinchinbrook, even if he had for one moment thought that there might be any reason to do so. His spirit was of the kind that feared no rival among his peers, and the coming of the strange vessel hadn't even interested him. Yet though the Rose of Kircaldy, when she left the bay, carried no cargo of lumber or other like produce of the Coast, she took with her, alas, that which to one man meant more than aught else in our lonely shore, for she had on board the heart of Nora Macleod.

After the fall "settling" Ky Transome returned to his house. Night found him anxious and worried, a new experience to a nature that had always taken every experience that came along with a heart as light as a skylark's in springtime. He wasn't accustomed to introspection, but he realized now there were two Ky's tugging at one another in him. The new house, it was true, was not quite finished, but

a week or two would make it ready for habitation. He longed to stay home for the winter. It was only a few hours' run to Hinchinbrook, and this winter he felt he could easily spare time to run over occasionally, and cultivate the good graces of the old Scotchman. He had never for a moment had any reason to suppose that Nora herself could possibly be anything but glad to share his life and home. Indeed the simplicity that had been part of her greatest attraction to the mate of the Rose of Kircaldy, had really justified Ky in supposing so. Hadn't Nora always walked out with him alone whenever he had visited the Brook, a custom which our Coast accepts as the outward and visible sign of acceptance before the definite promise is asked for?

On the other hand, there was no money to be earned if he stayed home. He had all the logs and wood he needed, and Joe Marshland in the kindness of his heart had offered him a berth on the Kitty Clover, his schooner that was to carry a load of dried fish to Greece. Fifty dollars a month and all found meant a mint of money to Ky. It practically meant the furnishing of the new house, and the girl he loved at the head of his own table.

The Kitty would not be loaded for a week even if the weather held dry every day. With his new motor boat he could run up, explain matters to Nora and be back in time. He would be a traveled man when he returned, a man who had been in foreign parts aboard. He could bring back fine things, such as from time to time he had seen the crews of foreigners have. It was a mighty hard wrench to a lad who had never been off the Coast. Now that there was a question of his leaving, every stick and stone seemed to cry out to him to stay. He had no notion before that he, Ky Transome, was "soft inside" like a girl. But now he found that his very soul cleaved to the dust of Peacehaven, and it was a disheveled and wearied Ky that left before sunrise next morning to carry the news of his decision to Hinchinbrook.

It seemed ages before he passed the Narrows, and the house among the trees at the wide mouth came to view. On landing he could scarcely stay to cover up the precious engine and moor the boat, so that she would take no harm from bumping. It was an impatient, excited youth that burst into the Macleod house calling out "Nora!" somewhat to the dismay of the old man who was busy cleaning fox traps.

"Are ye no well, Ky? Or what's wrong with ye? Ye look like a wolverine that's got one leg in a trap."

"Where's Nora, Uncle Sandy? I'm going overseas in the Kitty Clover for Joe Marshland, and I reckon I'll be away all spring."

"What's crazy in ye, Ky? Is home no good enough for ye that ye must be taking to your roving ways again?"

"No, Uncle, that's not fair. I only made half a voyage this summer and I'm to get fifty dollars and found on the vessel."

"Well, maybe you'd better be telling Nora that. For I'm no so sure but it wasn't herself that nearly went too. They were more than friendly, they visitors from the Rose of Kircaldy when they bade good-bye." And the old man's eyelids trembled as he looked away.

The words brought Ky up "all standing." A sensation such as he had never felt before seemed instantly to stab him in the breast. Nora go overseas, and she not tell him! He seemed so really knocked out, that Uncle Sandy's soft heart smote him, and he dropped his work and insisted on Ky having a "wee drap o' medicine" from his private chest.

"You're looking better the noo, laddie," he said heartily as Ky sat with the empty glass in his hand looking straight into space before him, "Nora will be down in a minute. It's tidying up she is, I'm thinking."

"Tidying up?" It was a new process strange to Ky's experience. Quick as lightning he guessed it was some newfangled fashion the strangers had taught her, and he could scarcely keep from crying out with the pain of it.

The Nora that came down to greet him he recognized at once was no longer the Nora he had left last. She was gentle and kind and seemed sorry for him, but he was sensitive as a wounded animal and he knew the dreadful thing that was looming up ahead of him.

"I'm thinking of going overseas for the winter, Nora," he stammered, marveling at his own voice, as if it belonged to some one else, and not to himself, Ky, the devil-may-care leader of every adventure on a coast that abounded in them.

"We'll miss you, Ky," replied the girl, "though it's not often you visited us of late," she added, as if to atone for the "we." "Have you got to go, or why do you choose this winter before the new folk for the lumber will be coming here?"

Ky's was the kind of mind that is used to the solitudes. It isn't accustomed to ask for verbal explanations; like the animals in their virgin forest, it doesn't have to be told things in words, it just knows things and acts instantly by intuition.

"Yes, Nora, I have got to go," and again he was amazed at the tone of his own voice. It was like a man gasping for air. "I want a change," he added. "Maybe I'll be back in the spring; maybe I'll stay by the ship and learn a little of the things that the foreigners know." For Ky's heart was comparing himself now with the marvels that the Coast people are so apt to consider those from "foreign parts aboard." Meanwhile this same way of the Coast stood the girl in good stead. Fully realizing that words were useless, she was already laying a white cloth on the table and

putting extra polish on the already shining glazed earthenware teapot.

"Sit right in, Ky, you'll be needing a mug up after the journey even if you didn't have to row. My! but I'm crazy to see the motor boat go."

The old man had left them and only the sound of the jingling traps in the next room answered her. Ky, far more stunned than when the loaded komatik had overrun him on the Grebe's Nest Hill, mechanically drew the chair to the table and sat down. He was like an animal, struck on the head by a spring trap but not in any way held by it, which will often lie down dazed by the snare, and allow the trapper to catch him in the open.

The whole way up the bay he had been fancying the glory of Nora's face as she for the first time held the helm of a real motor boat, tearing along in the smooth water of the estuary, fairly annihilating space; and the flush of victory in her blue eyes as they just laughed at the long weary miles of rowing that had become the physical penalty of the day's routine work of her father's fishery. Ky had seen himself sitting by her, the master of the new mysterious force, while he read in the depths of those eyes a new realization of dependence and of confidence which the strong so instinctively love from the weak. Vaguely and for the second time he was realizing there were two Ky's within him, the dual personality, one almost compelling him to fight at all costs for his own hand, the other, with the strength of still waters that run deep, urging him to think first and only of the girl he loved.

The simple meal, as automatically partaken of on entering a strange house on our Coast as one would take off one's hat at home, carried, however, the usual stimulating reaction. The inevitable pipe, that he found himself smoking when he had once more returned to the settle, or window seat, seemed to steady him like the snow Shem Lovejoy had rubbed on his head at Silver Falls. Like Feather Top with the old witch's tobacco, each draw at the pipe seemed to bring him nearer to earth. As he sat there watching the girl quietly clearing away the things off the table, all that was real love for her in him surged up and bade the shallow, selfish Ky "begone." Still he said nothing, wondering what armistice the victor might safely dare, and yet reserve some concession for the vanquished.

"Nora," he ventured at last, "will you let me run you to Separation Point? The new boat can go there and back in half an hour. She's named for you, the Nora, and you must be the first girl to hold her helm for me. Then I must be going. Joe Marshland's offer only holds till to-night. He'll be filling the berth unless I sign on before to-morrow."

"Oh, Ky, may I tell Dad?" and she fairly danced out, relieving for the moment the tense situation.

Ky rose and paced the room, every detail of its familiar setting speaking to him just as each twig and mark on the trail grips the trapper on his rounds. His only half-conquered soul hungered for something to carry with him. Something more personal than any mere photograph could be. His eyes surveyed the familiar room, and then suddenly he realized there was a new picture on the wall. Under ordinary circumstances his alert eyes would have noticed it long ago. He stepped up to it now and examined it. A young man—a man not bred on the Coast—a sailor though dressed in mufti, a strong handsome face. He liked it. Honesty looked through the dark eyes. He needed no explanation. And he knew he could never forget it.

Nora had returned without his hearing her while he still stood looking at it. Too late to back out, she turned and rattled some plates in the dresser, pretending to rearrange them.

"All right, Ky, Dad's willing. Let's go right away. I can't wait a minute. I won't want a hat," and she fled precipitately, leaving him doubtful, as he watched her through the window tripping through the trees to the stage where the boat was berthed, whether she knew he had guessed her secret or not.

"Good-bye, Uncle Sandy, I'll think of you a lot the winter. See Nora doesn't fret. Time is short, if I'm to reach Peacehaven to-night, for it may be rough on the outside after dark. I'll land Nora on the stage when we get back. Good-bye," and Ky, turning his head to hide the unaccustomed dampness of his eyes, fairly bolted from the house and down the pathway—glad he had arranged not to face that photograph again.

It was all over so soon. Ky had never before felt a boat could go too quickly. Only a little while ago, he would have dropped the wrench cheerfully into the delicate mechanism to prolong the tempting pleasure. It was just such pranks that had made him the idol of the young men that he had so long been. Indeed he would once gladly have headed to sea and like young Lochinvar gayly borne off his bride willy-nilly from under the very eyes of the enemy. Anyhow he kept his tryst so jealously that if there had been land folk watching, folk with instincts dulled by the incessant justle and jostle of civilization until words are necessary to express ideas, they might have thought the two young people were parting under a misunderstanding.

In due time the Kitty Clover sailed, Hezekiah Transome rating as A.B. and master of the starboard watch, for he could box a compass and splice a rattling with the best of any "foreigners." The season proved late, and wet weather prevented the people of other harbors storing their fish aboard. December had set in before Captain Ireland got his final clearance papers and with a light leading wind fared

forth on his trans-Atlantic trip.

Things went well the first day, the weather being fair. The second day out their fears of fog and strong winds were, however, justified. Sails were shortened, and hatches reclewed down, for the steep seas that drop straight on to low-waisted vessels, however well they may be handled, have to be looked for north of the "roaring forties." The skipper was giving extra attention to the courses, and keeping now and again an eye himself on the helmsman of the crew whom he was trying out for the first time. Ky was at the wheel. It was broad daylight, and the ship was running free when suddenly without warning the skipper challenged the course.

"What's her head?"

"Southwest by west," was the cheery answer.

"Southwest by west? That's not her course," and the skipper dived below to make sure he was not mistaken.

"West by north, four points in the wind's eye," he roared at the astonished Ky. "Over with her. What in God's name made you steer there?"

"It's the course the watch gave me," answered Ky, "when I took her, Skipper. That's all I know."

And Ky, unfamiliar with the correct discipline of the deep-sea, almost added a remark that might legally have been logged as mutinous.

"Fetch the last watch," shouted the skipper to the mate, who, it being the dog watch, was busy overhauling every knot, sheet, lanyard, and line for the hundredth time.

"What course did you give Transome when you went below?" demanded the skipper.

"Southwest by west, sir," answered the man who happened to be summoned by the mate.

"Who gave it you?"

"The man you sent up, sir."

"I sent up, sir? I sent no one up. How long did you steer it?"

"After the man told me, sir, about the last half of the watch."

"Put her a point more to windward, then west by north," growled the skipper, who, though he had no recollection of having sent any one, accepted the mate's statement at its face value, there being no possible reason to doubt his motives, the wind being fair enough on either course.

Several hours later, it was again Ky's "trick at the wheel." The Kitty Clover was close-hauled and making very poor weather of it. Her heavy deadweight of salt codfish left little life in the ordinarily fine little sea boat. Ky was heartily praying that

some veer of the wind might allow him to ease her up a little, or he felt he would have to call the skipper, who was asleep below, and ask whether it would not be safer to heave to until morning, when he heard steps coming along the deck toward the wheelhouse.

"Ease the wheel. Put her southwest."

Gladly enough he followed the new order. He was silently congratulating himself over the relief to the movement of the vessel when he heard the skipper stumbling up the companion, wakened almost immediately by the change of motion in the vessel.

"Fining away a bit?" he queried, stepping hastily into the wheelhouse to avoid the water still swashing about on deck. "Wind's veered, I see. She is reaching along fine." And then suddenly his eye fell on the course Ky was steering.

"Southwest?" queried the skipper, "wasn't it west by north I gave the last watch?"

"Yes, sir," said the master of the starboard watch; "there it is up on the slate," and he pointed to the new institution in the chart room since he had been caught steering four points out.

"Then who in the devil's name gave you leave to change it? You've eased her to have a quiet watch, damn you! I'll log you for it as sure as my name's Ireland. Haul her up or I'll call the mate and have you put in irons."

So torrential had been the skipper's outburst that the seaman hadn't had one chance to say anything. He honestly thought the skipper must be drunk. It wasn't half an hour ago he had himself sent up to have the course changed.

"You—you—you—" he stammered at last, but the skipper would not hear him.

"Don't stand there answering me back, you gibbering idiot!" he shouted. "Put the wheel over or I'll crack your skull in with the hand-spike!" and in a storm of fury he actually reached over and got one that was stowed behind the locker. The ship was once more nosing the seas, and the skipper swearing that he'd keep her at it if it knocked her ugly head off and sent the helmsman straight to Davy Jones's locker.

If any one dared to alter the course again without he did so himself, he'd send the whole lot to a region whose atmosphere would be some contrast to the Great Banks in winter-time.

Though Hezekiah's mind worked slowly, he was chewing the cud of injustice while the angry master stood over him. He had about come to the point where he felt there was no good making any explanation. Why not let the skipper think as he liked? He wouldn't gratify him by showing he cared enough to explain. The more he pondered over it, the more strange it seemed to him, and then he remembered he hadn't actually seen the face of the man who called him to change the course. He

had noticed the voice too was somewhat changed from the ordinary tones of his watch-mate, and that the man had come from the direction of the skipper's cabin, and not from forward, where he had himself told him to stay, and keep an eye out for possible ice.

Moreover the skipper had calmed down a little now, seeing no inclination on the man's part to ease the vessel, in spite of several heavy and really ugly seas that she had taken over the bow, and fairly drowned the decks before the scuppers could free them. Curiosity in him at last got the master over sulkiness.

"Why did you send up to alter the course if you didn't want it done? I'm no chicken. I'd steer her to hell for all I care, if you just say so," he growled.

"Send, you fool? I never sent any one. You've been drinking again, and that's no excuse either. I'll have your kit searched before you're an hour older, and it's a prohibition ship she'll be till I see you all in irons in Gibraltar for endangering her and her cargo."

This proved too much for Transome.

"Drunk yourself," he replied to the astonished captain. "I tell you, you sent up to alter the course. I'll swear to it to my dying day, and then too if I'm damned for it."

The directness of the reply succeeded somewhat in getting the skipper's attention, and he listened while Ky finished his tale. The other deckhand, summoned to the wheelhouse, swore he had never left his post; that he had neither been drinking nor asleep, and had neither seen nor heard any one on deck but himself since he had come up at midnight. The crew were all called and examined in the skipper's cabin in the morning. None of them had been on deck, having no reason or desire to do so in a dirty night during their watch below.

Captain Ireland was puzzled. He was a Christian, and of course didn't believe in or fear ghosts, but all the same he knew people who did and he couldn't find any solution to the perplexing statements of his men.

"No courses are to be altered in future," he ordered at last, "unless I come myself and order them; and mind you the first man who hears orders to do otherwise will be put in irons till we make the land, unless he calls me right away and says so."

And there the matter was allowed to drop and all hoped sincerely they had heard the last of it. But that night it was Ky's turn again to get counter orders. The midnight watch this time was his. It was not a really dark night. All hands except his chum forward were asleep below. The wind was fairer, and he was leaning over the wheel humming to himself as the Kitty Clover bounded cheerily along, when suddenly he saw a man in sailor's dress standing looking into the chart room, gazing right at him, and then he heard him distinctly say, "Give her two points to leeward,

sir, make it southwest again." He seemed to be pleading rather than giving an order, however.

Oddly enough, Ky remembered somewhere having seen that face before, but where it was at first he couldn't recall. Then suddenly a vision of the room at Hinchinbrook flashed across his memory, and he saw once more Nora going out to ask her father if she might go with him to Separation Point, and himself walking up and down the room till a picture caught his eye, a photograph of a stranger, that had burnt itself into his memory. Now he recognized it. The man who had asked him to alter the course, and had stood looking right into his eyes, was the same man, the man who had stolen Nora from him. Hailing his chum at once, he gave him the new course and then went hurriedly down and roused the skipper, and told him what he had done and why. The skipper was silent a moment while he put together in his mind the odd experiences of the voyage. "You're right, sonny," he said at last; "head her into the southwest. Keep a sharp lookout and call me instantly if you see anything."

The hours of Ky's watch passed like lightning. He had done most of the watching himself while his chum steered the course. His eyes were so tired of peering into the darkness when he went below at last, that he could scarcely close them, and no sleep came to him when he turned into his hammock. As the hours went by, he just lay kicking, expecting every moment to be called again. He had fairly chewed clean through the mouthpiece of his faithful pipe when "All hands on deck," rang down the companion.

"Sail close on the weather bow!"

Ky's toilet took him only long enough to leap into his huge sea-boots, the sole item of his clothing besides his oily frock that he had removed, and he was already lying out in the cathead, peering into the darkness that precedes day, before the skipper himself hurrying on deck shouted his order to "heave her to and stand by." Twice while hauling the sheets home Ky jammed his hands in the sheaves by not watching what he was doing, and while aloft housing the fore-topgallant sail, he almost fell from the yard, being unable to keep his eyes on anything but the dim outline of the stranger.

"She's in trouble. There's a flag in the rigging," he made out at last, when the Kitty Clover, with her helm hard down and her fore-staysail aweather, worked her way close up under the lee of the stranger. They could make out that the mainmast was gone, and that her sails were all torn to ribbons, and that her decks were practically awash; every wave of any size making a clear breach over the victim.

Slowly the Kitty Clover forged ahead while the water-logged craft drove ever

steadily to leeward.

"There are six men in the rigging," shouted the mate in Ky's ear, "it'll be touch and go if we get 'em. I'm doubting if she'll float till daylight."

"No fear, Andy, they're not fixed to die this time. You can put that in your pipe."

For to Ky they were already safely in the Kitty Clover's cabin.

The rescue was no ordinary one—to launch a boat was almost impossible. The bilge got smashed against the ship's side before the boat had time to reach the water. It was patched with felt and tar and tinned over in an incredibly short time. On the second attempt, Ky, lowering it, was able to keep it off. To venture alongside the wreck in the darkness and heavy sea, was itself a deed worthy of heroes. But it was effected and the perishing men were somehow safely transferred. For the captain, knowing Ky's story, had permitted him to carry out the rescue. After safely throwing out their boat, they had as a matter of fact let it drop astern with a long, light line attached to help hold her to windward, while the three men in her worked her across the bow of the sinking ship. The plan saved the day, for the shipwrecked men catching the line with a boat-hook were able to haul the painter aboard and one after another to drop from the rigging into the boat. While the Kitty Clover, cutting the line adrift as soon as they made out the men were aboard, paid off, ran to leeward, picked up the men as they drifted before the sea, the line acting as a sea anchor, which once more was hauled up with a grapple, as the boat drifted by. As his boat had passed close under her cutwater, Ky had caught the letters of the ship's name on the rail. They read the Rose of Kircaldy. A minute later as she was falling in toward her quarter, Ky got a moment to look up overhead, and there once more looking right down into his face were the eyes of the picture in Hinchinbrook, and of the sailor who had told him to steer southwest.

John Saunders recovered under Ky's tender care. Indeed it was in Ky's dry clothes and Ky's own bunk and largely through Ky's constant care that John was weaned back to life after the terrible three days' exposure and hunger in the Rose's rigging. While slowly fighting his way back to life, he discovered Ky's secret. Silent as the grave, Ky never mentioned a word of his own part in the drama, but Saunders, who was constantly wanting to hear more of the girl he loved, did not fail to notice the other's reticence. He could not have been a true Highlander had he failed to do so. As a matter of fact, like many another of that ilk, he had a strange power of second sight.

He declared to Ky that he never had any consciousness of the strange projection of himself on to the Kitty Clover; and we have had no chance to ask him, for John Saunders never came back to the Labrador.

DEEDS OF DERRING DO

The schooner Silver Queen, Skipper Ambrose Loveday, was in serious trouble. Leading the van as usual of a great Labrador fleet of nearly a hundred vessels bound north for the summer fishery, she had been the first in thick fog to run up against the heavy arctic ice field, which a sudden change to a strong northeasterly wind was driving rapidly in upon the coast. Real heavy ice it was, too; the huge pans, some nearly half a mile long, had sides like precipices, and were of that steely blue ice that cuts the soft planking of our northern vessels like a knife.

The man at the masthead who was conning the schooner reported, "Ice everywhere; ne'er a drop of water to be seen." The floe was running in before the wind at a good knot an hour, which, when once its inner edge brings up against the cliffs that flank our eastern shore, meant pressure that would crush a vessel's ribs as a hydraulic press would those of a mosquito.

Nor was there the faintest chance to put about and run back, for the big fleet lay too far inside the bay, and the skipper could make out that the feet of the mighty cliffs of Cape St. Peter, away on the horizon, were battling already with the southern edge of the great ice field. Their only safety lay in getting anchorage, before it was too late, under the lee of a group of islands. The Silver Queen came about incontinently, and the fleet, warned by her movements, tacked also, heading right in for the land. Having a better offing from the ice than the Silver Queen, all the others safely reached the open water in the wake of the islands.

The poor Silver Queen was caught in the treacherous embrace of two large pans of ice, a big spur pierced her side below the water line, and then as quickly slacking off again, left her in a sinking condition. Working at the pumps as only men in such dire need can work, the crew succeeded in keeping her afloat until she rounded the point of the land, where, with her decks already awash, they ran her on the rocks to prevent her sinking.

A host of comrades in a swarm of motor boats were soon around the crippled ship, like bees round honey. Quickly and efficiently, a big sail was sunk alongside and hauled under her keel, and wrapped around her to cover the hole. Extra pumps, brought aboard, worked so fast that the water, attempting to rush in, drove the sail into the breach, and gain was slowly made. After some patching and lightening of the hull, the schooner was freed enough of water to be towed up into a shallow arm of the roadstead where, on the top of high water, she was safely beached.

Alas, the salt, eight hundred dollars' worth and absolutely essential for the voyage, had melted out, and much of her provisions were ruined. Only a spontaneous collection of salt, taken up by all the other vessels, enabled the skipper to proceed with the voyage at all, and even then prospects for a Christmas dinner when he returned from the long cruise were anything but rosy.

"Jeannie," he wrote to his wife, "it's you that will have to come to St. John's to do t' spending vfall, even if us do use our new salt. Else there'll be nothing but dru diet for us t' winter, I'm vlowing."

Skipper Ambrose thought a great deal of his home "up South," where three children now detained the young wife, who at first had always shared his voyages, cheering and inspiring him in his troubles.

As good luck would have it, after an anxious three weeks, in which the plucky little schooner cruised many hundreds of miles in the vain search for "a voyage," she ran right into the great body of codfish that every year comes browsing along out of the Gulf into the Atlantic, through the Straits of Belle Isle, as soon as those waters get too warm to suit the bait fish on which they feed. Skipper Ambrose managed to send news of his better fortune home by a vessel that got her load early, and which he had been lucky enough to intercept on her voyage south.

"There'll be enough yet, Jeannie, please God, if you does the laying out of it; and maybe old Santa won't have to pass St. Rode's after all," was his message.

The masts of the Silver Queen had hardly topped the horizon of St. Rode's Harbor on her return early in October, before the whole Loveday household were somehow aware of the fact; and so quickly did Jeannie have the three "all spruced up," that she was alongside with them in the boat before the anchor chain had stopped running through the schooner's hawsepipe.

"Yes, us have used our salt, lass," said the skipper proudly. "And us would have used twice as much if us had had it. But the old ship got a nasty squeeze in t' ice, and in spite of the patch us put on her, she wasted a power of it again whiles us was beating about after t' fish. Guess you'se'll have to come along, Jeannie, if t' money's to reach to Christmas t'ings—Can't leave the kiddies? Oh, the neighbors will keep an eye on they. Us won't be long anyhow. Johnny needs tending? Well, you'se can bring Johnny along if you'se feared to leave him home."

Jeannie's protests were all in vain, and in spite of her better judgment she yielded at last to her husband's importunity. Thus it happened that when the fish had been dried, and marketed in St. John's, and all the money spent, the Silver Queen left one fine morning, again northward bound, with more than the usual modest quantity of bunting at her masthead, to signify that the skipper's wife and lad were aboard with

him, and that with a well-stocked vessel and happy hearts they were off to spend a merry Christmas in their little home on the northern coast.

Everything was stowed away snugly, every hatch was closely battened down, and by dark the Silver Queen was speeding along north in smooth water under the land, before a spanking westerly wind. With the advent of night the wind freshened, veering slightly against them, so that sail was shortened, sheets hauled down, and the passengers early tucked away securely in their bunks. Toward midnight the breeze freshened to a northwesterly gale and, double-reefed both fore and aft, the little schooner was clinging on to the land to hold the shelter of the cliffs as long as possible.

The powerful light of Bonavista Cape was now abeam and, flashing down from its lofty perch on the hilltops, warned the skipper that soon he would pass the protecting shelter of the land, and be facing the full force of the gale in the open.

St. Rode's Harbor lay right ahead. It was only thirty miles across to the land that spelled home and safety. The ship was stout. Close-hauled, she could lay across on the wind. The skipper had made this journey so often before that to hesitate at crossing never entered his mind. Some men would have put about and hugged the land, at least until daylight, but not so Skipper Ambrose. A few minutes later, he and his little ship were facing the full fury of the gale as serenely as most of us would face our breakfast at home.

Real typhoons, tornadoes, and cyclones are not known in the North. Whether now a rare specimen had escaped from its path, or whether this was merely the accumulation of force from the pent-up fury of the wind buffeting around the mighty cliffs of the headland, it is impossible to say. But suddenly the good ship began to turn over. At first she just lay down as every good boat will do in heavy wind. But alas, this time she was failing to recover herself. It seemed for all the world as if some great invisible hand were pressing her slowly down. She shivered and struggled like some small wild animal under the paw of a mighty lion—all to no purpose. Steadily, inch by inch, down she went. She had already gone altogether too far for recovery when a sea, sweeping over her, broke right into her mainsail, snapped off her mainmast at the gammon, and slowly the half-drowned little craft righted herself once more.

One moment's hesitation, while, half full of water, she lay rolling in the trough of the sea, her broadside exposed to the great combers that came sweeping by, must have sealed her fate forever then and there. But the helm was up, the fore-sheet out to the knot, and the battened hull running straight before the seas out into the open Atlantic while a landsman would have been recovering his feet—or before he could

have guessed what had happened.

Down below decks, everything seemed quiet and secure again now, and the skipper's shout down the companion to his wife to keep right on sleeping was, he thought, all that was needed to restore her confidence.

Though the winter boxes and barrels had been so well stowed, and were so tightly jammed from the ballast deck to the beams that very little of the ballast itself had stirred when the vessel "hove down," things were far from cheerful, the pumps scarcely gaining on the water in the well.

The wreckage was successfully cut away without piercing her hull, and the following seas so far made no breach over her. But she was only a small schooner; she had been badly crushed in the ice in the spring; she had only one mast left; and it was already winter "north of the roaring forties." The only possible way to keep her afloat was to run her right on before the wind into the open ocean, and even then there was no hope unless they were seen and taken off by some passing steamer.

Daylight brought little comfort to the stricken ship. Gallantly she ran on before mountains of water which towered away above stern, and which every now and again broke fiercely just under her counter. The skipper had lashed himself firmly to the helm, where he was soaked to the skin by the tail ends of many of the seas that lurched over the taffrail in the darkness. Not for one second had he allowed even the mate to relieve him, knowing that at any moment the lives of all on board might hang on a single turn of the wheel.

The second mate and deckhand, almost played out, were still working at the pumps when at last, after daylight, the captain went forward for a moment. "Go below, lads," he said, "and get some dry clothes. She's riding all right, but I want you both forward again as soon as you're ready. Her decks are badly strained, and she's making a lot of water forward."

"All right, Skipper." And the two weary men, glad of an excuse to forget their troubles for a moment, fell over one another in their haste to get first to the fo'castle.

The tough old mainmast, before breaking off, had so strained the deck that great gaps were left through which the water was pouring, and accounted for the constantly rising water in the well. Temporary relief was secured by clamping heavy canvas over the seams, and every one's heart rose when once more the eternal swash in the bilges was silenced for the time being—for it is a dirge which is enough to discourage the stoutest of hearts in time.

Though there was no abating of the storm as the day wore on, there was no time for anxiety. Not only had the pumps to be worked incessantly, and the decks to be caulked, but the foremast, on which even their temporary safety depended, had been

so badly strained when the mainmast went by the board, that its rigging had to be reinforced, and its preventer stays rigged to hold even the bare pole standing. Tangled rags of the sails, flapping dismally against the shrouds, were the sole remnants of the ship's canvas. Every ounce of help being necessary to save the ship, no one even thought of food. Meanwhile, rough as it was, they were able to keep her running directly before the seas, and so smother the movement of the vessel sufficiently to make the skipper, who found only a rare moment to shout a word of cheer down the hatchway, fully believe that he was keeping his wife in ignorance of the real state of things on deck. With that end in view he had even spared the cook for a few minutes to carry her food as usual.

That through the second awful night his wife should still be staying quietly below was an infinite comfort to the brave heart on deck. Little was he aware "what every woman knows." Yet the realization that his vessel was sailing to certain destruction in mid-Atlantic, and that he was himself responsible for carrying her to seemingly sure death, was almost more than he could bear. The loss of the salt, the outfit, anything and everything that had gone in the spring misadventure, and which had meant terrible losses to him, he had taken like every true seaman takes adversity—only as a stimulus to more effective action. But as with most sailors, under a rough exterior lay a sensitive heart, and every moment that his whole mind was not absorbed in the fight with the seas the thought that it was partly his own selfishness that was responsible for his wife and child being aboard the doomed schooner tortured him like a fresh knife stab.

So the second night wore interminably away. Years of experience had made it second nature to Skipper Ambrose to handle the Silver Queen. Since the time when, with his father and brothers, he had built and launched her at the head of Birch Inlet, he had sailed her himself every season. It was she that had enabled him to obtain a home, to find his partner in life, and to support his children as they came along. She would obey no one as she would him, and in these terrible hours he would let no one try. The sullenly smooth sea was, he knew, only waiting relief from the wind pressure to surge once more into mountains that would dangerously menace the ship. So again at night he lashed himself to the helm—a very vigil of prayer that it is the lot of few men to know.

The craft was now far out in the Atlantic, and the terror of the steep seas on the shallow waters of the Great Banks to a vessel in her condition was every moment looming up like some dread specter that would suddenly overpower them all. Yet he dared not alter the ship's course one iota to avoid them. Hour after hour the insensate hurricane swept everything before it. By morning there was no longer any

possible hope of clearing the Banks, so they must incur the terrible extra risk of opening the hatches in order to jettison cargo, and so lighten the ship.

The first streak of dawn was just lighting up the face of the watery waste, and the skipper, after repeated warnings and instructions, had just handed the helm to his second hand, and was forward with the mate, helping to open and close the main hatch as each barrel and box was hauled on deck and flung over the side. For the hundredth time he had turned round to keep his eye on the helmsman, when suddenly he became aware of a woman's figure emerging from the after companion, and approaching the man at the wheel. She was carrying something in her hand. It was a cup with a steaming liquid in it. Surely that woman could not be Jeannie! She must be sleeping at that hour! His mind must be going. He dropped the hatch and stood staring before him into the semi-darkness as if turned into a pillar of stone. A moment passed and he had not moved a finger.

"What's the matter, Skipper?" broke in the frightened mate. "Whatever are you seeing?"

All the skipper's reply was a mechanical walk aft as a man might do in a dream. "Jeannie," he found words at last, when he had actually touched her arm, "Jeannie, is it you? What are you doing on deck this weather? It's no place for you, darling—bad enough for us men," and he put out his hand as if to lead her below again.

Yet he felt somehow as though there were no need for it now. She seemed in some way different to the gentle little woman of his home. He could not tell quite what it was that was strange, but there was a light in her eyes, and even a joy, that he felt he had never noticed there before. Instead of trying to direct her, therefore, he was satisfied just to touch her arm again, as if to be quite sure it was herself.

Then his eye fell on the steaming mug of coffee, and he remembered that they had eaten nothing for two days, had not even thought of it, and instantly there came to his mind the picture of a man standing on a wreck he had read of, and reminding the crew, "it is now fourteen days, and you have eaten nothing." Jeannie had not spoken yet, but somehow he felt that he knew exactly what she would say, and that he ought to wait for her to speak. He could almost hear that man on the wreck, now nearly two thousand years ago, going on with almost the words in which she was now beginning to say:

"Last night as I lay in my bunk, though I thought I was awake, I seemed to be going into the door of our own house in St. Rode's. There was no one round so I went upstairs. It was early morning, but the children were awake, and cried out with joy at seeing me. Then they dressed and came downstairs, and there was a big rattling at the door, and you came stumbling in, carrying a huge pack on your back.

At first I couldn't make out what you were doings but when you put down the pack and looked up, the children began to shout. For your face had become round and red and your whiskers long and white, and you were growing fatter and fatter. Suddenly I knew that we were at home on Christmas Day; and somehow we had a power of things for Christmas. Then just as I said 'Thank God' it all vanished away. But it was so real I'm certain it'll be exactly as I've said. We must all take courage. None of us'll be drowned."

A minute or two passed, the skipper standing with bowed head and making a fine picture in his shining oilskins. It seemed like the close of a simple religious service. As his wife stopped speaking the two went silently below. "I pray you to take some meat, for this is for your health," he could hear the brave old man of his memory saying. Jeannie made no further comment—and without at all realizing what he was doing he found himself stirring the fire in the cabin stove.

The uneasy motion of the vessel warned him that the water was shoaling and the Banks getting near. But he had forgotten to worry and soon had the kettle refilled and boiling, and a fresh pot of steaming coffee brewed. Calling all hands except the helmsman, the skipper said grace in his simple way and, as in the vision of his memory, "then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat."

How deliverance was to come no one could possibly guess. Already the scudding ship had passed far to the south of the track of steamers. All day and yet another night went by—the worst night of all in many ways. For the steep seas of the Banks curled over more than once on to the schooner's taffrail and the strained hull, working more and more under the stress and drag of the seas, had allowed the ever-increasing quantity of water in the hold to gain dangerously on the pumps. It had become obvious to all that if help was to come, it must be soon.

When the evening of that third night settled down it was only Jeannie's optimism that saved the ship. Beset with their never-ending tasks the worn-out crew had not even noticed that the skipper's wife had assumed the rôle of cook. Nor had the exuberance of good things that were constantly being passed up to them struck them as strange. Never in all her life had the Silver Queen seen such days. Sugar and milk accompanied the mugs of tea that were on draught at all hours of the day and night. Alcohol there was none—but the frills of Christmas were "flowing" all day on the deck of that sinking vessel. For the new cook had access to the stock that St. Nicholas had destined for St. Rode's Harbor, and she was cheating Father Neptune of them in the only way possible.

Just before daylight on the fourth morning, the watch, dashing aft, yelled to the skipper: "Steamer's light on the port bow! Not more than a mile away!" There

wasn't a moment to lose, or they would be just as "ships passing in the night," for all hands realized that the chances of the steamer's watch seeing, in the half darkness, the water-logged fishing boat with only one bare stick standing were very small indeed.

But a Newfoundland fisherman, like the native weasel, is not to be caught napping. In less time than it takes to tell, flares were alight from end to end of the doomed vessel, and the old sealing gun of Skipper Ambrose was barking out its hoarse appeal as fast as it could be reloaded. Realizing that it was the last cast of the die, with the skill of his craft he also began edging the old hull to windward, which had the double advantage of slowing down her pace and bringing her more across the steamer's path. An answering flare from the stranger's deck soon set their minds at rest that they had been seen. The problem of doing anything to help them, however, seemed utterly insoluble; only the God-given genius of the sea, and the indomitable pluck of British sailors in the face of danger could even now possibly save them.

Dawn found the small and buffeted ocean tramp bravely standing by—and the impossible was actually being attempted. Six men in a small boat were preparing to be lowered over the great rolling iron wall into the cauldron of that storm-driven sea. No one who has not seen it tried can begin to appreciate the difficulty. To get the boat safely into the water and away from the ship's side is almost an impossibility. It is the one great problem in shipwreck. Untold lives have been lost through failure in the attempt to launch the boats. Who would have blamed these men, who themselves had loved ones dependent on them at home, had they decided that the risk was unjustifiable? There was neither glory nor money if they succeeded, and a terrible death "for nothing" if they failed. Why do men of the sea do these deeds? Shall such be judged hereafter by their creeds?

This time the launching was successful in spite of an awful crash as the boat, hanging at full length of the falls, was driven before an irresistible mountain of water into the ship's side; but the straining eyes from the wreck saw her sheer off and start drifting down toward them. On she came, now visible high in the air, topping the crest of a huge comber, and then again there was a horrible dread that she would never reappear, as the moments went by and she was lost from sight amidst the steep watery valleys. Suddenly there she was again, towering now right above the water-logged wreck that lay deep in a great chasm below her. Surely she must crack like a nutshell if they touched. Yet if she was swept by, with her would go the last chance for life. Again these "common seamen" snatched victory from the impossible. Two of the steamer's crew had actually leaped aboard, and making fast, were

literally carrying in their arms across that raging gulf a woman and a helpless child. The schooner, left without a helmsman, had immediately broached to, and the seas were already making clean sweeps over her.

The skipper, who held on till the last, was, however, not kept long waiting. The men, leaping into space one after the other, and being dragged aboard by the rough, deft hands of the boat's crew, even when safely in the boat, knew that the difficulty of scaling the lofty side of the steamer as she lay rolling to and fro in the troughs and crests of the great sea was almost insurmountable. The child was lashed up in one of the men's coats, and somehow hauled on deck by a rope. The woman, like the men, actually climbed over the rocking side of that towering craft by a long dangling rope ladder.

A few days later they were all landed in Sydney Harbor, but long before they arrived there their story had become common property aboard their rescuer, and the sympathies of these men of rough exterior had been deeply touched. Skipper Ambrose, with his wife, child, and crew were soon shipped home as wrecked sailors. All their hard-won outfit had been lost; even their scanty stock of personal clothing had gone. Needless to say, there was nothing left for Christmas Day, and the little stockings, that were hung up as usual in St. Rode's, were all empty that morning.

But it so happened that about two o'clock Christmas afternoon, the last mail boat for the season butted into the standing ice at the harbor mouth. To his intense surprise Skipper Ambrose, who had gone off to land the mails with his team of dogs, found a large crate plainly labeled with his own name. He hauled the mysterious package home, and it was promptly pried open in the presence of all the family. There were packages for all the family—not one had been forgotten. A wonderful jacket and warm gloves were labeled "Mrs. Jean Loveday." A spanking new woollen sweater bore the brief legend "Skipper Ambrose"; while on no less than four parcels they discovered the name of "Johnnie Loveday." Somehow, even little Phyllis and Mary found boxes containing wonderful dolls and a real Teddy bear with their names penciled on them. There were boxes of candies, bags of fruit, a tin of cocoa, some sugar, and heaven knows what—and the strange thing was that every package bore somebody's name.

It was perfectly marvelous, for in that Christmas box was just exactly what every single one in the family wanted most on earth. The minister himself could not have persuaded the little Lovedays that it wasn't St. Nicholas who had come in by sea instead of on his reindeer—and I'm not sure they weren't right.

All the same Jeannie has her suspicions that some rough sailor men from the

crew of a certain ocean tramp could have thrown some light on the subject had they wished.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Some illustrations were moved to facilitate page layout.

[The end of *Northern Neighbours* by Wilfred T. Grenfell]