

**LE PETIT NORD; OR,
ANNALS OF A
LABRADOR HARBOUR**

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Le Petit Nord; or, Annals of a Labrador harbour by Anne Grenfell & Katie Spalding

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ANNE GRENFELL & KATIE SPALDING

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Annals of a ⌘
Labrador Harbour
By ANNE GRENFELL and
KATIE SPALDING ⌘

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*Off the Narrows, St. John's
June 10*

DEAR JOAN,—

The Far North calls and I am on my way :—
There lies the port ; the vessel puffs her sail.
There gloom the dark broad seas.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks.

Why write as if I had taken a life-long vow of separation from the British Isles and all things civilized, when after all it is only one short year out of my allotted span of life that I have promised to Mission work ? Your steamer letter, with its Machiavellian arguments for returning immediately and

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directly from St. John's, was duly received. Of my unfitness for the work there is no possible doubt, no shadow of doubt whatever, and therein you and I are at one. But you will do me the justice to admit that I put very forcibly before those in charge of the Mission the delusion under which they were labouring; the responsibility now lies with them, and I 'go to prove my soul.' What awaits me I know not, but except when the mighty billows rocked me, not soothingly with gentle motion, but harshly and immoderately, I have never wavered in my decision; and even at such times it was to the bottom of Father Neptune that I aspired to travel rather than to the shores of 'Merrie England.'

The voyage so far has been uneventful, and we are now swaying luxuriously

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at anchor in a dense fog. This I believe is the usual welcome accorded to travellers to the island of Newfoundland. There is no chart for icebergs, and 'growlers' are formidable opponents to encounter at any time. Therefore it behoves us to possess our souls in patience, and only to indulge at intervals in the right to grumble which is by virtue of tradition ours. We have already been here a day and a half, and we know not how much longer it will be before the curtain rises and the first act of the drama can begin.

These boats are far from large and none too comfortable. We have taken ten days to come from Liverpool. Think of that, you who disdain to cross the water in anything but an ocean greyhound! What hardships we poor mis-

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sionaries endure! Incidentally I want to tell you that my fellow-passengers arch their eyebrows and look politely amused when I tell them to what place I am bound. I ventured to ask my room-mate if she had ever been on *Le Petit Nord*. I wish you could have seen her face. I might as well have asked if she had ever been exiled to Siberia! I therefore judge it prudent not to thirst too lustily for information, lest I be supplied with more than I desire or can assimilate at this stage. I shall write you again when I board the coastal steamer, which I am credibly informed makes the journey to St. Antoine once every fortnight during the summer months. Till then, *au revoir*.

I LANDED on the wharf at St. John's to be met with the cheering information that the steamer had left for the north two days before. This necessitated a delay of twelve days at least. Will all the babies at the Orphanage be dead before I arrive on the scene of action? Shall I take the next boat back, and be in England before the coastal steamer comes south to claim me? Conflicting emotions disturb my troubled soul, but 'on and always on!'

The island boasts a railroad of which the rural inhabitants are inordinately

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proud. Just prior to my arrival a daily service had been inaugurated. Formerly the passenger trains ran only three times a week. There are no Sunday trains. As I had so much time to spare, I decided that I could not do better than spend some of it in going across the island and thus see the southern part of the country, catching my boat at Come-by-Chance Junction on the return journey. Truth compels me to add that I find myself a sadder and wiser woman. I left St. John's one evening at six o'clock, being due to arrive at our destination at eight o'clock the following night. There is no unpleasant 'hustle' on this railway, and you may wait leisurely and humbly for a solid hour while your very simple meal is prepared. If you do not happen to be hungry, this is