

**VIKINGS OF TO-DAY: OR
LIFE AND MEDICAL WORK
AMONG THE FISHERMEN
OF LABRADOR**

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Vikings of to-day: or Life and medical work among the fishermen of Labrador by Wilfred T. Grenfell

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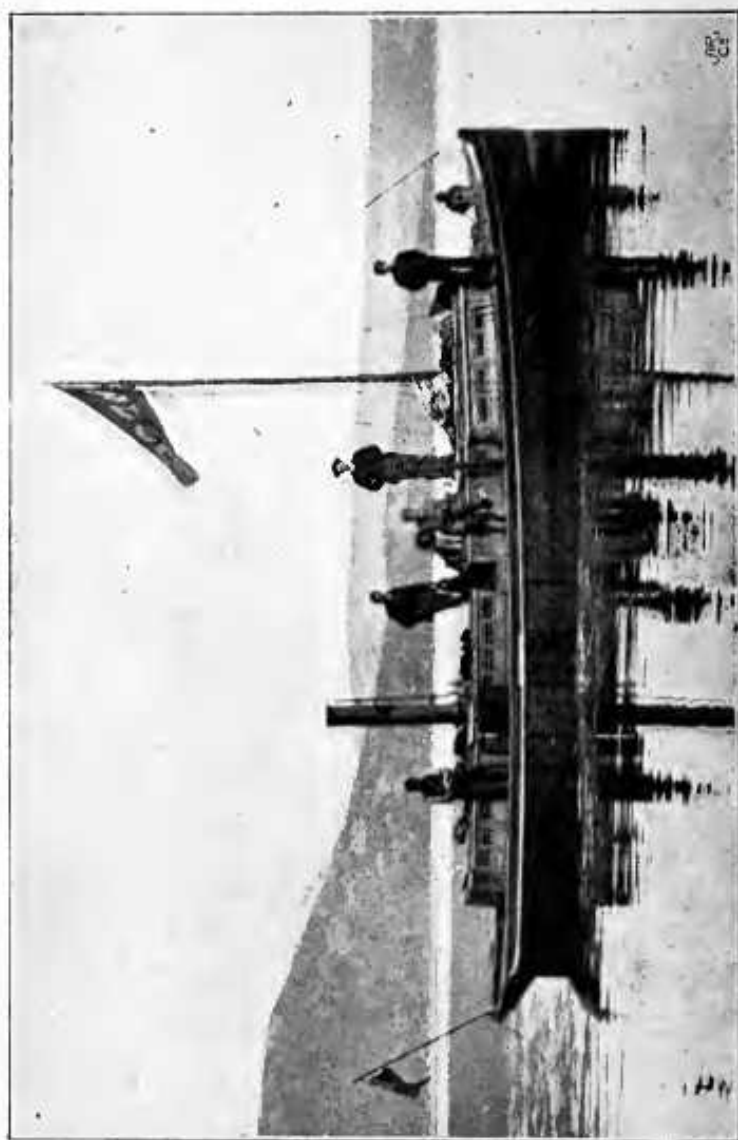
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WILFRED T. GRENFELL

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VIKINGS OF TO-DAY



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VIKINGS OF TO-DAY

OR LIFE AND MEDICAL WORK
AMONG THE
FISHERMEN OF LABRADOR

BY

WILFRED T. GRENFELL, M.R.C.S.E., L.R.C.P.

Holder of the Board of Trade Certificate of Competency as Master Mariner

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ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS



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MDCCCXCV

MEMBER OF THE
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION



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Dedicated

BY KIND PERMISSION TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF YORK,

*whose practical and gracious interest in the welfare of
these far-off "Toilers of the Deep" has served in
no small way to assist this enterprise, and to
fire with loyal affections the hearts of
England's sons across the sea.*

329842

P R E F A C E

By FREDERICK TREVES, F.R.C.S.,

Surgeon to the London Hospital. Examiner in Surgery at the University of Cambridge. Chairman of the Hospital Committee of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen.

AT the present time—near to the close of the nineteenth century—we are being constantly reminded, with somewhat unpleasant persistence, that the human race is degenerating and that the changes of decay are most marked among the most civilised people. It is among the young men especially that these unwelcome signs of the times are assumed to be the more noticeable. It is claimed that the splendid physique and the heroic courage of the British race are both deteriorating, and that those who seek for the time of noble deeds and sturdy hearts must turn back to the days of Elizabeth—to the stirring times of Drake and Raleigh.

There is said to be no longer a field for that pluck and daring, or for that determination and persistency, which at one period made the name of the British famous throughout the world.

It would be idle, in this place, to inquire into the substance of these moanings and regrets, and it would be reasonable perhaps to allow that there may be some real or apparent element of truth in these lamentations over the man of the present.

Be this as it may, it will be agreeable to those who are most concerned in these forebodings to turn to the record contained in this volume, while those who view with some disgust the fashionable youth of the day, with his many effeminacies and affectations, will find in the pages which follow some wholesome relief to their distaste.

Dr. Grenfell's narrative will take the reader away from the heated, unnatural and debilitating atmosphere of the modern city, from the innervated crowd, from the pampered, self-indulgent colonies of men and women who make up fashionable society, and

will carry him to a lonely land where all conventionalities vanish, and where man is brought into contact with the simplest elements of life and with the rudimentary problems of how to avoid starvation and ward off death from cold.

The present volume deals with a land of desolation, with a country hard, relentless, unsympathetic and cruel, where, among fogs and icebergs, a handful of determined men are trying to hold their own against hostile surroundings and to earn a living in defiance of dreary odds.

When the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen resolved to send an expedition to Labrador, it was evident that the man to go with it was Grenfell. He was well known both at Oxford and in London as a hardy athlete; he was a skilled and able surgeon; he was profoundly interested in Mission work; and the sea had for him that magical attraction which a few centuries ago emptied nearly every little cove and fishing hamlet in Cornwall and Devon of its heartiest men, and carried them over the high seas to the ends of the earth.

Grenfell went, and the good work of the Mission was established on the Labrador. It was no little matter to bring into the hard and desperate life of the Labrador fishermen a touch of kindly and practical sympathy from the old country. It was no little matter to travel for many hundreds of miles along a grim, inhospitable coast, where buoys and beacons are unknown and where there is scarcely a bay or island which has not been the scene of some lonely disaster.

It will be seen from this book that the race of Vikings is not yet extinct, on the one hand, and that on the other the spirit of enterprise and daring is not yet lost to the English people, and that the modern rover of the sea differs from his predecessor in little save the motive of his expedition.

Those who know how to value the comforts of an English home, and who can appreciate the quiet content and the beauty of an English village, will be induced by this book to feel no little sympathy for those whose lives are cast among the dreary islands and deserted bays of Labrador.

FREDERICK TREVES.