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Among the Deep-sea Fishermen.

(Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, in the 'Outlook'.)

(Concluded.)

PART II.

When the steam fishing vessels began to replace the more picturesque yawls, the Mission had either to follow suit or fall astern. It has at sea, at the present moment, besides its sailing ships, three large Hospital steamers. The best testimonial to the social revolution that has been so long taking place has been from the police magistrates and the police themselves.

Encouraged by results in 1892, I was loaned the largest of the sailing vessels, a craft of ninety-seven tons burden, in which we sailed to the Labrador coast to see whether, among English-speaking fishermen of the North-West Atlantic, similar results might not be achieved there.

In three months we had nine hundred patients, to whom we could thus commend our Gospel with pills and plasters, without fear of denomination interference, besides witnessing a condition of poverty to which we had been quite strangers over on the other side. Unable to do on the ship to those men as we would have them do unto us under similar circumstances, we called on the way home at St. John's, Newfoundland, and laid the matter before the merchants, asking for help to build a hospital on the land, and promising to bring out a doctor and nurse to live there, if they built it.

We have now three hospitals on that desolate coast—not palaces for pain such as one sees in these great cities, but humble wood buildings, where a qualified doctor and trained nurse reside, where, besides their own rooms, they have a dozen beds for sick people, a convalescent room, an operating room, and an isolation ward. These places are not hospitals only, but hostels, places to which anyone and everyone is expected to come in sickness or any other kind of trouble whatever. Needless to say, they come often very long distances in their boats in summer, or in dog-sleighs in winter. We do our part in the summer, cruising in the Hospital ships, the largest of which I serve as captain, and in winter by travelling from place to place—moving practically all the time, only making the hospital, which is kept open by the nurse, the headquarters to which we return whenever we think it necessary.

Here other methods of commending our Gospel are also open to us, owing to the extraordinary poverty and isolation of the people. Lack of experience made us satisfied for the first three years to try and cope with the question of hunger and nakedness by collecting and distributing warm clothing, and assisting the people in various ways to get food.

It was not until 1896 that, seeing the futility of giving financial help to men who had to pay from seven dollars to eight dollars for a barrel of flour worth four dollars, and two dollars and a half to three dollars for a hogshead of salt, which could be bought at St. John's for one dollar, we set to work to find a new sermon to preach



A FISHERWIFE.

on this subject. Many of our most piteous cases at hospital were the direct fruit of chronic semi-starvation. Thus our people fell victims to tuberculosis of glands and bones, only owing to the marasmus induced by insufficient food. This was more especially the case among children. A universal system of truck business prevailed: the 'catch' of to-morrow was mortgaged for the food of to-day. The people seldom or never saw cash. The inevitable results were poverty, thriftlessness, and eventually hopelessness. The contention of the trader was always that the men's poverty was because they did not catch enough to support themselves. The answer was that they got enough to support at least thirty traders.

We started a sermon with a co-operative store as a text. The people round it were all heavily in debt; most winters they received so much Government relief to keep them from actual starvation that the place was known as 'The Sink.' The people were almost all illiterate, and knew nothing about business, and

the little store went through varying fortunes. They had very, very little money to put in, and even that they were afraid to put in under their own names, for fear the traders should find out, and punish them. One trader wrote me denying our right to interfere with his people, as if those whom he had tried to lead me to think were only the recipients of his 'charity' existed solely for the benefit of his trade. I need not say that we had now to regret gaps in the prayer meetings once filled so fervently by our friends the enemy.

Looking at the results of the sermon seven years afterwards, I find the people clothed, fed, independent, with a new little church building, and children far-and-away better clad and educated. The movement has spread; there are now five co-operative stores, with a schooner called the 'Co-operator,' which carries their products to and from the markets. The price of flour has uniformly kept under five dollars a barrel; the price of salt has been reduced nearly 50 percent, and other things in pro-