



Crew of the Mission Smack

Another object of this Deep Sea Mission was to fight the *Cofey*. Who was he? As might be supposed from his ornithian name, he was a foreigner. He used to sail from Continental ports with large quantities of tobacco on board, which he could sell cheap because it paid no duty to the British Government, and he also sold abominably bad spirits—containing, apparently, much fuel oil—which drove the men to madness. Unutterably bad prints and books also seem to have formed parts of his cargo.

The ruin wrought by the fearfully bad liquor of the *Cofey* was terrible. It offered some excitement to the men, but soon made them demoralized drunk. Many a one, it is said, while returning from the *Cofey* has leaped into the sea and been drowned. Further, the temptations of the *Cofey* led to the stealing of fishing gear to provide funds for the fiery drink.

But the *Cofey* is now nearly vanquished. After some little difficulty the vessels of the Mission have been permitted by the Board of Customs to sell good tobacco at fourteen pence a pound, and the *Cofey's* vices have thus been rendered unnecessary. Drinking has very greatly decreased and better sanitary and social conditions altogether prevail. Dr. Huley, medical officer at the port of Yarmouth, has given an important testimony to the value of these vessels in preventing "sea-borne sickness" from contaminating the shore, and asserts that the vessels "are doing a national sanitary service."

Further, the Mission ships supply books and periodicals in plenty for the fishermen, while the vessels are also used as Sunday churches and evangelistic stations. The skipper, or captain of each is able to act as a missionary, and he is frequently assisted by visiting clergymen, evangelists, or suitable laymen. The men assemble, sometimes to the number of 150, and it is no sectarian doctrine that they hear. The Mission does not seek to make the men members of this or that section of the church, but we are told "the trawler's creed is in the main strictly evangelical, and his spiritual nature is nourished and sustained upon the same doctrines which animated and rendered noteworthy the ardent spirit of Puritan England."

Indications of the methods of work may be gained from the reports of the skippers of the Mission vessels themselves. Here is an extract from a report of the skipper of the hospital ship *Cherry Island*, which was with the Great Northern Fleet. We have held two good meetings during the week and given away numerous bundles of clothing. Our doctor has been very busy most days. For the week he has treated sixty-one out-patients, and taken two in-hospital, one with a very bad poisoned hand and the other with a large swelling under his tongue. I was taking this afternoon to one of the

patients, who is master of a vessel, and he was saying, "What ever should I have done without the Mission? I should have had to go home or to London, and lost my voyage. Praise God for the M. P. S. F. Yesterday it blew very heavy with us, there were four boats captured."

And the skipper of the *Edward Birdbeck* wrote that "in less than three weeks they had treated about 124 cases, and received three on board, who had been kept as in-patients." One, the skipper of the *Tyrant*, who unfortunately got his feet



Winter on the Dogger Bank - Boarding the Fish

on the flywheel of the engine, after some ten days rest and treatment was able to return to his ship. Another case was that of a man who had hurt his back, he was sent home after a few days, for he was sixty-five years of age. Yet a third was a boy who had severely scalded his feet.

The skipper of the *Miss Fuller*, a hospital ship, with the "Short Blue" fleet, reported that "for the week about fifty boats" had come for tobacco, wool, less, etc., and a doctor had treated twenty-five patients and taken twelve

on board. Seven services had also been held during the week, with an attendance of fifty-nine, and one smack had been visited. And a sad light is thrown on the casualties with which the fishermen have to contend, when we learn that a smack had run over a boat with two hands aboard, and that only one was saved.

The woolsens referred to are no doubt the mittens, mufflers, cuffs and stockings knitted by sympathetic ladies ashore and distributed by the Mission ships. These goods are most useful as a protection against the excessive cold and the sores produced by the oilskins rubbing the wrists and aggravated by the sea water. The painful sea-blisters seldom appear, it is said, when woolen mittens or cuffs are worn, and for the long stockings worn within the sea-boots the demand is greater than the supply during a large part of the year.

An extension of operations was witnessed last year—that is, in 1892—when the Mission sent one of its vessels, the *Albert*, to the stormy shores of Labrador. Some twenty thousand fishermen migrate from Newfoundland every year for three or four months to reap at Labrador the harvest of the sea. Many of the men are accompanied by wife and children.

Dr. Grenfell, on his trip north in the *Albert*, visited the chief fishing settlements, treated such patients as applied for assistance, distributed clothing to the most necessitous, and rendered what other aid he could. During his voyage of seventy-eight days the doctor attended no fewer than 900 patients, more than a third of whom proved serious cases, and altogether visited fifty fishing settlements and hamlets.

The fish caught is the cod, and the catching and curing of this valuable food appears to form the chief industry of Newfoundland. The fish is cured somewhere about the 1st of July and closes early in October. Sometimes the men and women sail in schooners, cruising about until they have a good cargo, others dwell in settlements ashore, the men fishing during the day, and the women remaining on shore engaging in household work, and assisting also in curing the catch.

Dr. Grenfell formed a high opinion of the Newfoundland fishermen. He thinks them better in physique on an average than others, and unsurpassed in courage and skill.

The Government—that is, we apprehend, the Newfoundland Government—appreciated his efforts so much that they are prepared to build two hospitals and give a proportionate grant of money while the Newfoundland merchants will fund over a large house at Little Harbour, and also make money grants and provide for a doctor at a place called Smokey Run.

Spring and autumn, summer and winter, the Mission's boats are at their work, while the carriers steam forth amid blinding snow or bright sunshine to bring home the busy harvest from the Tinklers on the Deep.



Bringing a Patient into Hospital on the Mission Stretcher

