

P R E F A C E

BY THE

GOVERNOR OF NEWFOUNDLAND

No thought of publication was in the mind of the Rev. Henry Gordon when he wrote his Journal, the simple, straightforward record of an experience unparalleled and almost intolerable; but those of us who read it felt at once that such a record of unselfish work should be made available to as many as possible of English-speaking people, and give them the opportunity of sympathy and help.

It is impossible to read these pages without a sense of the deepest admiration for the self-reliance and courage with which one clergyman, a man of fine education and culture, can devote himself to the care of a wild district, almost as large as Newfoundland itself, or as a good slice of the Old Country, inhabited by a few fisherfolk and trappers settled along the shore of remote inlets at great distances from one another, almost cut off from each other through a great portion of the year.

At any time there is enough to excite marvel in the winter life of the Labrador. Huge cliffs jutting out into an icebound sea, behind them frozen inlets edged by snow-laden firs and sparsely dotted with cottages buried in snow, farther inland a wild waste of snow-covered barrens separating forests primeval; one parson or one doctor at the most, making himself responsible for areas aggregating many English counties.

A hard life at any time, but in the autumn of 1918 the settlements on this coast were suddenly smitten by the scourge which had swept the civilised world. By a cruel irony, the last steamer which visited that coast for the year left behind the infection of Spanish influenza. Without a warning, Mr. Gordon found himself face to face, at one time almost single handed, with sickness and death in its most distressing and paralysing form. How he fought and faced it is the tale of the Journal.