

At North West River, on Canada's rugged Labrador coast, an urgent radio message crackled in from a remote northern outpost: a pregnant Eskimo girl was bleeding internally, her life ebbing away. Within minutes, a red float-plane took off on a race against death.

For two hours, while the pilot bucked heavy arctic head winds, the young English nurse beside him stared down at the bleak, brooding wilderness that early explorers damned as "the land God gave to Cain." Then the plane banked between jagged peaks, still snowcapped in summer, and settled onto Kaipokok Bay. A fishing boat brought the girl out from a huddle of huts. Pale and writhing with pain, she was lifted into the aircraft, which quickly took off again. After giving her a sedative, the nurse radioed North West River and described her plight to a Canadian doctor.

"We'll be ready," he replied. An hour and a half later just in time—the patient was wheeled into the operating room of a Grenfell Mission hospital, where blood transfusions and major surgery saved her life.

For thousands of others in Labrador and northern Newfoundland, the world-famous Grenfell Mission has been the difference between life and death—and a lasting monument to the legendary Labrador doctor, Wilfred Thomason Grenfell.

Grenfell was 27 when he sailed from England to Labrador as medical missionary to the Newfoundlanders who fished there in summer. He didn't plan to stay long. But because he found

such sickness on "Starvation Coast"—a 1000-mile stretch of subarctic tundra, where 5000 Eskimos, Indians and whites lived in grinding poverty—he devoted the rest of his life to its forgotten people. Slight and shaggy, with sparkling eyes and a face that grew lined and leathery from exposure, he spent 42 years making rounds by dog-sled, ship and snowshoe. Grenfell went wherever he was needed, treating the sick in sod-covered hovels, skin tents and igloos, operating in lantern-lit cabins.

Grenfell earned renown as "the Good Samaritan of Labrador" and founded the Mission—which grew to have four hospitals, 14 nursing stations and a staff of 400 to carry on his tradition of service. To millions, much to his own amusement, he was a glamorous figure—the hardy little doctor who wore Eskimo furs and slept on the trail at 30 below with his dogs. When he got lost one night in the wilds of New York City, newspapers relished the way he found his bearings—from the North Star.

Few people anywhere have done more to illuminate the meaning of brotherly love. The son of an Anglican clergyman, educated at Marlborough and Oxford, Wilfred Grenfell entered medical school at 18. Two years later, in 1885, he wandered into a revival meeting held by Moody and Sankey, the famous U.S. evangelists. "When I left," he wrote later, "it was with a determination either to make religion a real effort to do what I thought Christ would do in my place as a doctor, or frankly abandon it."

After his graduation, Dr. Grenfell joined the church sponsored Royal National Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen, whose motto was "Heal the Sick and Preach the Word." For five years he ministered to fishing fleets from Iceland to the Bay of Biscay.

Then, in 1892, he crossed the Atlantic in the small hospital ship **Albert** to look into conditions among some 25,000 men, women and children who sailed to Labrador each spring in a thousand Newfoundland fishing schooners. On his first day there, the **Albert** eased through a maze of icebergs into Domino Run. As ships ran up welcome flags, salty skippers rowed over to greet Grenfell, whose Oxford accent and candy-stripe blazer seemed grandly out of place.

Left, is a view of St. Anthony, a tiny village 320 miles north of St. John's Newfoundland, where the Grenfell Association has its main outpost. From here, each summer, the mission sends out the 70-foot hospital schooner, "Maraval", to bring doctors and medicines to outports on the Labrador coast. At St. Anthony's there is a 75-bed hospital, children's home, industrial workshop and clothing store, all belonging to the Grenfell Mission.

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