

NORMAN DUNCAN

An Appreciation by

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AS our thoughts fly back to the days when the writer of these stories was a guest aboard our little hospital vessel, we remember realizing how vast was the gulf which seemed to lie between him and the circumstances of our sea life in the Northland. Nowhere else in the world, perhaps, do the cold facts of life call for a more unrelieved material response. It is said of our people that they are born with a netting needle in their hand and an ax by the side of their cradle. Existence is a daily struggle with adamantine facts and conditions; and quick, practical response, which leaves little encouragement or opportunity for dreamers, is, often enough, the only dividing line between life and death. As I write these lines the greatest physical battle the world has ever seen is being fought. Yet here, as my eyes wander over the great ocean around me, nothing but absolute peace meets my view. But it too has its stormy times and its days when its strength and its mighty depths of possibilities are the most insistent points about it. And this spirit