MY LIFE IN LABRADOR

By Dr. W. T. Grenfell, C.M.G.

Of all the many thrilling incidents in my life, the most exciting started one afternoon some eighteen years ago, with an emergency call for medical help from a place sixty miles south of St. Anthony, Northern Newfoundland, where I was staying at the time. I started off immediately with a team of fine dogs, and all went well until I had to break through some pack-ice while crossing an inlet—a common experience.

To cut a long story short, I found myself on a piece of ice which broke loose from the main part. In an instant I cut loose the dogs from the sleigh, otherwise they would have been drawn into the vortex, and I should have been left alone. Then the "pan" broke into two, and I was plunged into further trouble, the only escape from which was to dive into the icy water and, with my invaluable dogs, swim to another.

The "pan" was about the size of a dining-table, and on it I spent a night and a day, clad only in a light sweater and vest, without hat, coat, or gloves. I had been three times in the water, and I should have been frozen to death but for the dogs.

I was forced to kill three of my faithful companions during the night, and used their skins for coverlets, their bodies for windshields, their harness for puttees, and their frozen legs as a flagpole, on which I attached my shirt as daylight came, in the hope of attracting the attention of someone on the shore or some passing craft.

In this way I drifted some twenty miles, when, fortunately, some men engaged in seal-hunting observed the "pan" with its peculiar burden, and reported my plight to the nearest village. The wind was in my favor, and was drifting me in towards the shore, although no boat could be launched, as the ice along the coast was breaking up. Before daybreak, however, a fine volunteer crew had been got together, and they effected a rescue.

Fight to Save a Life.

When at last I stepped ashore, tied up in rags stuffed out with oakum, and wrapped in the bloody skins of my dogs, my night on the inhospitable ice seemed like a ghastly nightmare.

The founding of our orphanage here was the result of a grim incident in my life amongst these sturdy fishermen of Northern Labrador and Newfoundland. I had been summoned to a lonely headland to see a very sick family. Among the spruce trees in a small hut lived a Scottish salmon fisher, his wife and five little children.

When we anchored off the promontory we were surprised to receive no signs of welcome. When we landed and entered the house we found the mother dead on the bed, and the father lying on the floor, dying.

Next morning we improvised two coffins, contributed from the wardrobes of all hands enough black material for a "seemly" funeral, and later, steaming up the bay to a sandy stretch of land, buried the two parents—and found ourselves left with five little mortals in black sitting on the grave mound. There and then we founded our first orphanage.

One day a father of eight children sent in from a neighboring island for immediate help. His gun had gone off while his hand was on the muzzle, and had practically blown it to pieces. To treat him ten miles away on that island was impossible, so we brought him in for operation. To stop the bleeding he had plunged his hand into a flour barrel and then tied it up in a bag, and as a result the wounded arm was poisoned away up above the elbow.

He preferred death to losing his right arm. Day and night for weeks our nurse tended him, as he hovered between life and death; but eventually he pulled through, and at last a secondary operation for repair became possible. We took chances on bone-grafting to form a hand, and he was left with a flipper like a seal's. But there was no skin for it. So a fellow doctor and I shared the honor of supplying some.

Pat—for that was his name—has been a veritable apostle of the hospital ever since. Though he has English Episcopal skin on the palm of his hand and Scottish Presbyterian skin on the back of it, the rest of him still remains a devout Roman Catholic.

The Substitute Bride.

I have found the Eskimos a singularly interesting people. They are extraordinarily free from convention, as the following anecdote will prove.

A travelling minister was called on at a place named Spotted Islands to marry a couple, the bridegroom being a kind of head man in the vicinity. When the minister arrived at the island he found all the islanders awaiting him in the school-room. It was not till he had actually entered the building that he discovered that the bride was the deceased wife's sister.

This being a forbidden relationship at the time, the minister naturally refused to proceed with the ceremony, whereupon the intended bridegroom quite calmly remarked:

"Never mind, mister, one of these others will do."

So, turning to the expectant crowd, he selected a partner. She being willing, the ceremony was performed, and the merrymaking started.

SOVIET AND CHINA

A London Times Editorial Gives the British Analysis of How Far Moscow May Affect the Chinese Situation.

London Times (Ind.): The submission of the Kuomintang to the dictation of Moscow has given them temporary strength in their battle with their rivals. They have learned from Moscow many lessons in the matter of organization and propaganda, and the successes they have won through the application of those lessons encourage them faithfully to follow Soviet advice in the hope of carrying their campaign still further until all China is subdued. Their whole organization has been remodeled on Bolshevist lines; they are entangled in the intricacies of Soviet technique; in their public speech they continually re-echo the accents of Moscow. This is their present advantage and their ultimate danger. For it is by no means a foregone conclusion that Chinese Nationalism must inevitably take this aggressively alien form.

Fish Have Nicknames.

A sea trout is simply a river trout which has taken to the sea to obtain more food, but it has still to visit fresh water to spawn.

A sea trout has various names in different parts of the country. In Devon and Cornwall it is always a peal; in Ireland it is a white trout. In Scotland, finnock, herling, and whiting are names given to the young sea trout, another name for this fish is salmon trout.

As a rule, sea fish, not river fish, have nicknames. The red mullet, for instance, is often called the sea woodcock because of its taste, and the dab is sometimes known as salter.

Fishermen call the hake the sea pike because its shape is a little like that of the pike, and they term a flounder a flook or fluke.

One of the gurnards has the name of cuckoo-gurnard, by reason of the odd sound it makes when caught. The brill is sometimes called kite, no doubt because of its shape.

Dogfish have many names, none of them complimentary. Pennyhound is the least insulting. The bass is the most sporting of sea fish, but it is not until it reaches the fishmonger's shop that it is called salmon bass.

Deserves Credit.

Stage Hand—"I'm doing a thousand men's jobs for one man's pay."

Manager—"Nonsense!"

"Is it? Every night I gotta stand in the wings and make a noise like a French Revolutionary Mob!"

Misfortune can make a man proud; but suffering makes him humble.

The French Peasant's Meal-Time.

When meal-time came, we all, great and small, gathered about the long table and seated ourselves on pine benches, each bench being supported by four wooden legs. An earthen bowl and a tin spoon lay at each person's place. At one end of the table was the enormous rye loaf, as large around as a cartwheel, wrapped in a linen towel smelling not disagreeably of the lye in which it had recently been washed. From this loaf the grandfather, with one stroke of the carving-knife cut a piece sufficient for the needs of the moment, and then with the same knife, which he alone was entitled to wield, subdivided this piece into as many equal parts as there were hungry mouths to feed. Each person then crumbled his share into his bowl in such fashion as best suited him.

Next came the grandmother's part. A big-bellied pot was hissing and bubbling over the blazing fire on the hearth. It sent forth a savory odor of turnips and bacon. Armed with an iron laddle plated with tin, she dished up, for each in turn, first a portion of the soup to saturate the bread, and then a good helping of turnips with a bit of bacon, half fat and half lean. To the end of the table, opposite the rye loaf stood the pitcher of water for the unrestricted use of the thirsty. Ah, what sharp appetites we had, and how good the food tasted ,especially when a white cheese, home-made, concluded the repast!

At one side of the room blazed the wood fire in the enormous fire-place where, in very cold weather, whole tree trunks were burned. In a corner of this monumental fireplace, which was well coated with soot, there projected a slab of slate at a convenient height for holding the light used in the evening. This consisted of a blazing pine splinter, carefully chosen and well impregnated with pitch. It furnished only a reddish and smoky illumination, but served to eke out the slender supply of walnut oil that fed the wick of the crude lamp.—Jean Henri Fabre, in "Souvenirs."

London Cat, Commuter, Earns Rail Fare as Rat Catcher.

Kipling's cat that walked by itself is left in the shade of its favorite woods by the London cat which has leaped into fame as a commuter.

Every morning the cat boards the Southern Railway's 10:45 train from Victoria Station, London, to Dover, rides down to the Channel port, waits in the refreshment room and catches the next train back to London. Fluffy, however, earns free transportation as well as free meals by acting as a station ratcatcher.

ROYAL GRANDMOTHER AND LITTLE PRINCESS

The Duke and Duchess of York sailed on Jan. 6 from Portsmouth, aboard the British warship Renown, for Australia, where the Duke will officiate at the opening of parliament in the new federal capital, Canberra. Princess Elizabeth, the baby daughter of the young couple, will be left in the custody of her grandmother, the queen. The latter is shown with her grandchild.

A PROPHECY?

The British Radio Leadership Suggest That Article in the Manchester Guardian May be Prophetic of British Invention in the Near Future.

"If the phonofilm wins its cause it is plain that the great gap between the kinema and the theatre has been bridged and the proper distinction between the two arts, though not destroyed, will be importantly diminished. The lovers of the theatre have always argued with justice that the glory of the spoken word and of the thought which it alone can convey is essentially different from any facial play or subtlety of visible effects which the kinema can command. A well-contrived phonofilm will mitigate that difference."

Stage Letters.

On the stage, letters are usually written at such a furious speed that all actors would seem to be expert stenographers. The reason for this haste, of course, is that the attention of the audience would flag if a letter were written at the normal slow rate.

Stage inkpots never contain ink; the danger of a "spill must not be risked. Anl until lately quill pens were used, because they showed up better than steel nibs, but the practice has been dropped except in a few theatres.

Letters that have to be read out are nearly always indited word for word, to save the actor the labor of studying the contents. But the prudent actor takes good care to have a working knowledge of the words; otherwise, if the letter goes astray, he may find himself in a fix.

For instance, a dressing-room "wag" once purloined the letter of a colleague, a lazy actor who had not troubled to study the words, and substituted a blank piece of paper for it.

In the play the letter was highly important, for it announced in long-winded phrases the heroine's rejection of the recipient's suit. And so when the wretched actor came to the point where he had to read the letter, and found that he had nothing but a blank sheet, he suffered agonies for a moment. But he saved the situation. Gasping out, "She jilted me. . . . There's a mist before my eyes . . . I can't see to read it," he departed hotfoot to take vengeance on the practical joker.

Britain's Old Oak Trees Suffer From Epidemic

Britain's oak trees, whose praises have been sung by bards for hundreds of years, are being attacked by a mysterious epidemic which is being investigated by research workers on the Forestry Commission.

An assistant of the commission says mildew and rover moth are responsible for the disease which has spread over the southern countries and killed many of the oldest oaks. Fears are expressed that the finest oaks planted in the seventeenth century will be wiped out in another twenty years.

An English Founder.

The founder of Worth's, the famous Paris dressmaker's business, was Charles Worth, a Lincolnshire solicitor, who went to the French capital to design frocks in the days of the Empress Eugenie.

Poppy Legends.

The poppy has been the symbol of death since the time the son of Tarquinius Superbus asked his father what should be done with the people of a conquered city.

Tarquin did not reply, but going into the garden he slashed off the heads of the largest poppies, thereby commending the massacre of the most influential citizens.

The color of the poppy, resembling blood, also symbolizes death. When Persephone was stolen by Pluto, her mother, Ceres, searched for her day and night. The gods, pitying her and unable to restore Persephone, caused poppies to spring about her feet. She inhaled their heavy, bitter scent, and put the seeds into her mouth, and presently sleep closed her eyelids and she gained that rest which her weary body needed.

The State flower of California is a brilliant yellow poppy, which shines on the mountain slopes under which gold lies hidden. The Saxon name for poppy is "popig."

It used to be a custom in olden days to strike a poppy petal in the hands to ascertain whether a lover was faithful or not. If it broke, it signified that he was unfaithful, but if it held together and made a noise it showed he was true.

What They Are Saying.

Henry Van Dyke: "Christianity is a religion that will not keep; the only thing to do with it is to use it, spend it, give it away."

Edgar P. Hill: "The great life, the successful life, has to do with the ordinary things in the ordinary way."

Amelia Sears: "To suggestible ple without a proper critical sense, there is serious menace in the daily publication of criminal matter."

Mrs. John M. Hanna: "My slogan in dealing with girls is 'Inform instead of reform.' "

Bruce Bliven: "Good newspapers are growing better and bad ones worse."

Premier Mussolini: "Nothing can happen to me before my task is done."

Count Bethlen: "True democracy consists in the education of masses and giving them opportunities of education, for democracy does not fall like a ripe plum into the lap of the people."

Stranger-Friend.

Day had laid a carpet
Bordered with rills
In her wide house of sunlight
Whose walls were the hills.

And through the flooding noontide
We feasted, we men
Who first had met that morning
And would not meet again.

Beside the speaking river
With the friendly trees
We laughed a while, and parted,
Our hearts at ease.

There was no room for sadness
Under the sun,
The morrow was God's sending
And the world one.

"There is no cause for sighing,"
Said I, alone,
"For any man I meet now
Is not unknown."

And as I took the long road
I seemed to see
How day had caught the shining
Of eternity.

—T. Morris Longstretch.

London Puts Up Signs to Guide Pedestrians

The latest addition to the ever-increasing number of visible traffic regulations in London is a conspicuous sign reading, "Please cross here," stuck up at certain points on the sidewalk for the direction of pedestrians. The first of these signs has just made its appearance on Parliament Square, where the maze of traffic makes crossing an exciting adventure.

This points in the direction of adopting the American system of right-angle crossings at street corners, but London streets, not being laid out at right angles, require a mathematical genius to discover the logical points of crossing. Such a genius appears now to be at work at police heeadquarters.

Lit by Fishes.

At a depth of a mile the ocean bed is well illuminated by the luminous organs of the fish living there, according to one scientist.

Premier Bruce's home in Australia, where the Duke and Duchess of York, who are on their way thither, will stay when they open the new federal capital of the commonwealth, a town specially built for that purpose, like Ottawa and Washington, called Canberra. Like most of the Canberra buildings it is scarcely complete, but everything is being hastened in the new city to completion for the gala event.

A BRITISH VIEW

The Indep. Liberal paper, The London Truth, says "That there is obviously a subconscious fear in the minds, not only of American professors, but of the Government at Washington, that in the next half-century there may be a hostile combination in Europe against the United States. It would certainly be wise, therefore, on the part of the American Treasury to make the 'beau geste' while there is still time, and to earn some gratitude for the remission of debts which they certainly will not be able to collect."

And Again—

In the London Observer: "In 1926 the world has been passing out of the abnormal phase of post-war transition with all its discords and distractions. When even China and Russia, like currencies nearly everywhere, are tending towards stabilization in spite of all shocks and temporary set-backs, it is fairly safe to anticipate that America will be found not hindering that broad process, but promoting it. We must not prophesy, nor even force the note of encouragement. But the general world looks definitely as though it were beginning to enter on a prolonged period of more normal conditions and improved relationships.

Making Crusoe Live.

A film version of Defoe's master piece is now being "shot" on Tobago, which is known locally as "Robinson Crusoe's Island."

Juan Fernandez is, of course, more frequently associated with the great children's classic than Tobago, the former being the scene of Alexander Selkirk's adventures, on which Defoe's story is supposed to be based. But the first British novelist did not keep to the Selkirk story, and the description of the island given in the book is a description of Tobago.

Mr. M. A. Wetherwell, who played David Livingstone in another film, is taking the part of Crusoe in the new production. In every sense Tobago is an ideal background for the film. Mount Dillon, which has been chosen for Crusoe's look-out post, commands views of haunting beauty over both land and sea. Then there are great stretches of sand for the mysterious footprint and the cannibal feast, and caves to satisfy a film producer's highest aspirations.

Tobago has been a British possession since its capture by Sir Samuel Hood in 1803. Prior to this it is believed to have changed hands more frequently than any other West Indian island. Columbus claimed it for Spain when he discovered it, and afterwards it was held by British, French, and Dutch.

In more peaceful days it has become one of the show places of the Caribbean Sea. It is only a few hours' journey by steamer from Trinidad, and visitors to the latter colony usually make a point of seeing Tobago.

Round Tobago, with its 21,000 inhabitants, cluster many small islets. One of these, Little Tobago, has been converted into a sanctuary and breeding-ground for the bird of paradise. So great was the demand for the beautiful plumage of these birds that they were threatened with extinction a few years ago.

The Voice of the Pacific.

The one common note of all this country is the haunting presence of the ocean. A great faint sound of breakers follows you high up into the island canons; the roar of water dwells in the clean, empty rooms of Monterey as in a shell upon the chimney; go where wou will, you have to pause and listen to hear the voice of the Pacific. You pass out of the town to the southwest, and mount the hill among pine woods. Glade, thicket, and grove surround you. You follow winding sand tracks that lead nowhither. You see a deer; a multitude of quail arises. Bqut the sound of the sea still follows you as you advance, like that of wind among the trees, only harsher and stranger to the ear; and when at length you gain the summit, out breaks on every hand and with freshened vigor, that same unending, distant, whispering rumble of the ocean; for now you are on the top of Monterey peninsula, and the noise no longer only mounts to you from behind along the beach towards Santa Cruz, but from your right also, round by Chinatown and Pinos lighthouse, and from down before you to the mouth of the Carmello River. The whole woodland is begirt with thundering surges. The silence that immediately surrounds you where you stand is not so much broken as it is haunted by this distant circling rumor. . . . you strain your attention; you are clearly and unusually conscious of small sounds near at hand; you walk listening like an Indian hunter; and that voice of the Pacific is a sort of disquieting company to you in your walk. — From "Across the Plains," by R. L. Stevenson.

American Wears More Shoes Than European

Americans wear four times as many shoes as Europeans, according to Charles W. Kinney, American shoe expert, in Paris studying conditions. The average European wears the same shoes about a year, whereas the ordinary American casts off footgear when it begins to show wear and buys new every three or four months. The European product, Mr. Kinney says, is more costly than the American, but of better leather.