

**SNAPSHOTS FROM THE NORTH  
PACIFIC. LETTERS WRITTEN  
BY THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP  
RIDLEY (LATE OF CALEDONIA)**

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Snapshots from the North Pacific. Letters written by the Right Rev. Bishop Ridley (late of Caledonia) by Alice J. Janvrin

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**ALICE J. JANVRIN**

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Edw. & Fry

The Right Rev. W. Ridley, D.D.

# SNAPSHOTS

FROM . . .

## THE NORTH PACIFIC.

*LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE RIGHT REV.  
BISHOP RIDLEY (LATE OF CALEDONIA).*

Edited by ALICE J. JANVRIN.

SECOND EDITION.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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The lines at the head of each chapter are taken from poems by Bishop Ridley.

A. J. J.

## CONTENTS.

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	1
II. A SUMMER'S JOURNEY AND A WINTER'S CAMPAIGN . . . . .	8
III. STORMS FULFILLING HIS WORD . . . . .	24
IV. A CRY AND A RESPONSE . . . . .	39
V. IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN . . . . .	51
VI. A TRIUMPH SONG . . . . .	64
VII. NEW WORK AND OLD . . . . .	74
VIII. PERILS BY WATER . . . . .	87
IX. VISITATION WORK . . . . .	99
X. REGIONS BEYOND . . . . .	118
XI. AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE . . . . .	133
XII. A MEMORIAL MISSION . . . . .	140
XIII. ENLARGED OPPORTUNITIES . . . . .	151
XIV. FIRST-FRUITS FROM THE SPIKING RIVER . . . . .	163
XV. MORE PERILS IN THE SEA . . . . .	179



# SNAPSHOTS FROM THE NORTH PACIFIC.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

“Roll back the curtain of our night, and shine  
Till all the world shall see Thy light divine.”

THE following letters are not in any sense a continuous history of the British Columbia (formerly known as the North Pacific) Mission. Rather, they are snapshots taken at varying intervals, and developed by a skilful hand, so bringing out details of scenery and work with a vividness that is sometimes almost startling. The prevailing thought in the mind of the reader will probably be, that beautiful as are the rushing streams, the gloomy forests, the snow-clad mountains of British Columbia, far more beautiful to the Indians are the feet of those who have taken good tidings and published peace to them. The wilderness and the solitary place have indeed been glad for them, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.

Fifty years ago no attempt had yet been made to reach the Zimshian Indians and other tribes on the north-west coast of the great continent of North America—now Christianity is the rule and Paganism the exception. Neat villages, with their churches, schools, and well-ordered homes, testify to the power of the grace of God to civilize as well as to Christianize. Medicine men have laid down their charms and submitted to the Cross of Christ, and hymns of praise resound where once were heard the fearful sounds of the heathen *potlach*.

The story of the starting of the Mission in consequence of Captain Prevost's appeal on behalf of the Indians in 1856

has been already told in *Metlakatla and the North Pacific Mission*, by Mr. Eugene Stock. Begun by Mr. Duncan, a young layman, in 1857, and continued by him until his secession from the C.M.S. in 1881, it grew with startling rapidity. The first baptism of Indians took place in 1861, and in 1863 the Bishop of Columbia admitted fifty-seven adults into the visible Church. The settlement of Metlakatla was established in 1862, and the first stone of the church was laid in 1873. In 1879 the Diocese of British Columbia was subdivided, and the northern portion became the new Diocese of Caledonia, the Rev. W. Ridley, formerly a missionary in the Punjab, but who had been obliged to resign his work there on account of health, being consecrated as its first Bishop on July 25th, 1879.

This slight sketch of the Mission will prepare the way for the statement written by the Bishop for the *Church Missionary Gleaner* before sailing for his new diocese:—

“The Diocese of Caledonia stretches from Cape St. James and Dean Channel 52 deg. north latitude to the 60th parallel; from the Rocky Mountains to the North Pacific Ocean, and also includes the numerous adjacent islands.

“The best known place in it is Metlakatla. Our lay missionary, Mr. Duncan, laid the foundation of that Indian settlement in simple faith, and it has become the most prosperous of its kind. To the 60,000 aborigines of the province the Metlakatla community of Christians is as a star of hope. Before it arose we feared that as a race they were doomed to extinction. The twenty millions of Indians our forefathers found in North America have dwindled down to two millions. Civilization threatens to blot out inferior races, but on it their disappearance leaves a blot and a crime. Its pioneers—drink, violence, and debauchery—destroy their few virtues, leaving them more wicked than before, and only less dangerous because less vigorous. I thank God that most of the Indians of my diocese, especially the Hydahs, have been so savage as to make the trader's risk greater than his hope of gain.

This section of the people now draws upon our sympathy. A great opportunity is ours. The material prosperity of Metlakatla has aroused in them a spirit of emulation, and shed upon them a gleam of hope. The Christian's heart cries, 'Is there a future for them among the nations?' and from Metlakatla comes the answer, 'Yes, only do as you have lovingly done here.' The trial is being made at four other mission stations in my diocese, and success is already visible. The greater the breadth of sea between the islanders and the mainland the better for their future. Their ignorance of the benefits of civilization is a greater good than a knowledge of them, until they are fortified morally and spiritually by the Gospel against its evils. The enterprise of commerce, which we shall be glad of then, is beforehand with us now in bridging over the broadest channels, so that the plague is begun. We must enable the missionary at once to emulate the merchant. The very noblest Indians must be enriched with the pearl of great price, or they will sell themselves to perdition while we tarry."

The Bishop made an appeal for a steamer, and it was not very long before he had the joy of knowing that friends in England had come to his help. Before the vessel arrived the Bishop was overtaken by a gale in a small canoe in which ten men were crowded, and wrote afterwards, "How I longed for my steamer; unless I get one a new Bishop will soon be wanted, for the risk in these frail crafts is tremendous, and a short career the probable consequence."

On August 12th, 1880, the little vessel was launched, and was well named the *Evangeline*, for its errand was to carry the Gospel to the Indians up and down that indented coast and among the many islands. It was not available for river navigation, and even on the sea expense was sometimes saved by the use of a sailing boat. The Bishop was captain and often chief engineer also. Some years later he wrote to the S.P.G., "What would your Committee think could I have stepped out of my engine-room into their board-room,