

THE INDIAN WORK.

Letter from REV. G. F. HOPKINS, dated BELLA BELLA, B.C., March 17th, 1892.

FOR quite a while we had desired to go to Rivers Inlet, but circumstances were such that it seemed impossible to get away. But at length the way seemed open, so on the 28th of January, about eleven o'clock, we started. There were five of us in the canoe, one of our Bella Bella men, his wife and child, another Indian woman, and myself. We were pretty heavily loaded, as the Indians were going to Rivers Inlet to seek work, and consequently, carried quite a quantity of household goods, besides provisions. My own intention was to reach my destination in about three days, and so be able there to catch the steamer leaving Victoria, February 1st. We rowed and paddled on against a head wind for about an hour, when one of the women said in the native language, "Take your gun." Her husband did so, not knowing what he was expected to do with it, till we heard a rustling and saw two medium-sized deer spring up from the beach and disappear in the woods. They were gone before a shot could be fired. All felt sorry at the loss, as fresh meat is generally very acceptable on this coast.

After having a cold lunch in the canoe we pressed on, still with a head wind. Just before dusk we ran in behind some islands, about fifteen miles from home, to find a camp. Here we found an abundance of mussels. We soon had the canoe unloaded, the things carried up above high-tide mark, and a roaring camp fire going. While the potatoes were boiling for supper, the native took his canoe sail and spread it up forming one side of a tent, the open part being towards the fire. We had supper of mussels, potatoes, bread and butter and coffee. The Indians also had dry salmon.

Soon after supper we had prayers, and prepared to retire. I had intended to spread my blankets under an overhanging tree that helped form the tent, but finally I was persuaded by the others to retire under the sail, but near the end of it. It was a lovely night, when we went to bed; the moon was shining, the stars dancing, and no wind, but frosty. There was no snow on the ground, so everything seemed to be settled for a good night's rest. But about 2 a.m. I was awakened by water streaming down my face and head. Jumping up, I discovered it had been snowing and raining. The snow had settled over my head, and then melted with the rain, giving me the full benefit of a shower bath. After arranging the sail to better shed the rain and turning over my wet blankets so as to be a little more comfortable, I again fell asleep; but in about two hours down came the water again. I now arose and sought the shelter of the overhanging tree, but sleep had gone for that night. Before daylight, however, a similar occurrence happened to one of the Indian women, under their part of the sail. She was considerably frightened, and called for a light before she could satisfy herself as to the cause. At daylight we had a light breakfast and were off again.

We rowed on with no wind, but a head tide, which caused us to follow the shore line very closely. By 11 a.m. we reached a deserted hunting camp, and refreshed ourselves with a lunch and a cup of hot coffee. Then we saw there was a wind that would carry us across the channel, so we put up our sail and away we went over to the other hunting camp of our people. We arrived there wet and cold, about 2.30 p.m., and found three families there; one of these had a very sick baby. It was impossible to go further, as the wind was strong and would be against us, if we proceeded. Then, my man had complained of not feeling well ever since we left Bella Bella, but now became quite poorly; so with the best grace possible, we remained.

That night we slept in a house, rather one-half of a house, consisting of one side of a roof and two side walls, the rest open, made of split cedar boards. However, this was a palace to our camp of the previous night.

The next day, Saturday, our man was no better, and the wind was thought not to be favorable, so we remained there. About noon another canoe of our people came in, containing parts of three more families. One of these proved to be a sister of the sick babe's father, as well as sister to the wife of the man who was with me. That afternoon the child died. It seemed so providential that the poor father had his relatives drop in as they did, as he felt very keenly the loss of his only child.

Sunday we had three very good services. The rest of the day was occupied by the Indians eating. I can not tell you how many meals they had, but suffice it to say that all the time between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., except the time of the services, was occupied in cooking and eating. They had dry salmon, coffee and tea, bread, pilot bread, clams, deer, potatoes, soup, berries, flesh and fat of hair seal, rotten salmon, eggs, and other Indian delicacies.

Monday morning, finding my man still further indisposed, and not wishing to proceed or return, and fearing that I was too late to catch the steamer at Rivers Inlet, I returned home with the canoe which bore back the little corpse for burial. We arrived in the evening, after a very pleasant run. On the way back the Indians shot about thirty water snipe. We took the next steamer down to Rivers Inlet, spent a week there, and returned home by the return steamer. Fortunately for me the boat called both ways that time.

Christian Island.—I have just returned from my other appointment, Beausoliel. For some days previous to my visit to this Island the weather was very unfavourable, heavy winds and rain; the day before we started I prayed to the good Lord who has all things at His command, to give us favourable wind and weather; I don't think there was anything wrong in this. No more direct answer to prayer could be realized; no mortal man could desire more favourable winds and weather, both going and returning. The mission boat, *Wasayaubun*, "Morning Light," never sailed better or faster since she was built. We sailed eight to twelve miles per hour on an average. Just as we got back to the dock it commenced to rain, and rained all night and next day, and is cold and stormy still. I found the Indians all home. We had a blessed time during the services, more especially during the love-feast and sacrament. When I intimated that it was quite probable we would never meet again until we would meet in our Father's home in Ishpeming (heaven), they became very sad, and the tears flowed freely. When I asked them all to meet me in heaven, they pledged themselves by rising to their feet. They followed us down to the shore, when we had another sad parting; they waited on the shore until we were nearly out of sight. This appointment at Beausoliel will at no very distant date become obsolete. I am informed that the island is offered for sale for pasture land, the only thing it is fit for, and the few Indians that are there will have to leave for some other reservation. There are only eleven members there belonging to our church, and one family belonging to the Roman Catholic church. Those belonging to our church are chiefly old women, a few grandchildren, and too old men. The land is poor, and the people are very poor, and nearly half naked. Their houses are very old, ready to tumble down. The ladies of the Women's Missionary Society would be doing a good act if they would send those poor people some clothing. Poor as these old people are they gave me, unsolicited, a \$4 subscription for the Missionary Society; truly a rebuke to rich white people.

P. SPARLING.