

Ship wrecked.

The true Story of Stephen R.
of Metlakatla

On Nov 19..... (date not given) I left in my
fishing boat with a load of potatoes for another
Indian village some six hours distant across
the water. I had with me two companions.
We had not gone far when a storm sprang up
& then the engine went out of order so that we
drifted helplessly towards some reefs. Toward
evening we struck a reef, & the boat sank. My
two companions were drowned, but I managed
to clamber on to a big rock. At high water, there
was just room enough for me to remain safely
on the rock without being washed away by
the waves. I could save nothing from the wreck
except two potatoes which were washed on
the rock. These I kept in my pocket as a
resource from hunger, & I would nibble at
them occasionally. November in this part of the
Coast is a very wet month, & stormy. I was
soaked through, & could not light a fire to dry
my clothes, as I had no matches nor fire.
For some days I watched constantly for a boat
coming to look for me; & though I heard later
many boats were searching, none came my
way. I prayed & sang hymns, & so the days
went by.

One day I was feeling so cold, I felt I
could not bear it much longer. So I prayed

felt the warmth gradually creeping over my body & after that I did not feel the cold any more. Another time I felt so weak, I thought I was surely going to die; & then my ears were filled with heavenly music, unlike anything I had ever heard before. So the days wore on, & I grew weaker.

On the eleventh morning two men from the village (Methakatta B.C.) were out in their boat. They were still on the look out, in case we should have been cast on some uninhabited island. They saw the smoke of a fire on the island in a straight line from where they were to my rock, so immediately they made for the smoke. Before they got near my rock, night had fallen, but I heard the sound of an engine & so I collected all my strength, & shouted, but no one seemed to hear. Then I shouted again, & I heard the sound of voices, & a boat being lowered, & then they came & took me off. I had been given up for dead & my wife had burned all my clothes, after the Indian custom. So by the mercy of God, I was saved after eleven days on the rock.

∴ Stephen Ryan lost his sight as a result of the exposure. The following

... what he told me during the ...

A Story from the Queen Charlotte Islands

Long ago, before the white men came to the Queen Charlotte Islands, there was an old chief of whom his people were very fond. He lived in an Indian house; the floor was made of shell, & the roof of cedar bark. One time before the roof was leaking, & not wishing to trouble his people, who would readily have helped him, he set off in his canoe to get cedar bark to mend the leaks. Presently he came to a place where there was a good stand of cedar. Some little distance inland. He left his canoe on the beach, & made his way to the trees, where he cut all the bark he needed, rolled it up into strips, & started back for the canoe.

When he reached the beach, the canoe was now to be seen, & he wandered around searching in vain. He climbed a tree, & looked around the landscape, & decided he could make his way home across country - eventually he reached the sea shore, but he could not recognise the place. So he went out on a rocky point to get a wide view.

While he was looking around, a strange young man came up to him, & told him his chief wished him to come to his house & have something to eat. He went with the young man, & the chief came to welcome him.

& a feather bed on top, & made him sit down
rest.

When he looked around at the people assembled in the house, he recognized one as his sister, who had been lost many years. She greeted him, & told him that these people were called the Land Otters. They had found her when she was the sole survivor from a wrecked canoe, & had taken her in, & given her everything she wanted. She told him to eat, & not fear.

When he had eaten & rested, she took him out to the same rocky point, where he had met the young man, & showed him the way home along the beach. She told him that on the way he would come to a house, & the people who lived there would send a messenger from their chief bidding him to come & eat, but he was not to take any notice, & to continue as if he had not heard. So he bade her farewell, & set off as she had told him.

Presently, as he made his way along the beach, a man came up to him, & told him the chief wished him to come & eat, but remembering his sister's warning, he went on his way, & took no notice. Then another came, but he pretended not to hear him, & the

After a while, he grew very tired, & finding a good Stream, he drank, & felt refreshed. Floating on the water he saw a big tree, with the root & branches still on, & as it was going in his direction, he climbed on it to take advantage of a ride. He found his way among the branches till he reached a comfortable place, & there went to sleep.

By & by the tree came to rest on a sandy bar where two tides meet, just in front of the old Chief's village; but a very heavy fog had fallen, all was hidden from sight. The seagulls gathered around the tree, & the air was filled with their cries; so that the old people in the village decided that there must be something out there in the fog, & sent a canoe out to see - the men in the canoe were afraid of getting lost, & so they only made a rapid survey, & found nothing, but still the cries of the seagulls continued. Eventually the old people prevailed on another canoe to set out, dropping pieces of moss on the water down & then, so that they could retrace their way home.

They found the tree, & one of the men climbed up, & found his way along among the branches till he came on a lifeless form huddled up in kind of nest. He called to his fellows, & they brought a new mat, which they had brought with them; & they lowered the body of their

his house, & laid him by the fire, & called the medicine men in, who danced around him till gradually he began to breathe, & then groaned & finally he sat up & spoke to them.

He told them to call all the people to his house, except the young girls & his wife, who had left him for another man when he was given up for lost. So they all came, & the house was full to the door way, & there were even people on the roof, watching through the great hole by which the smoke escaped. His wife made her way to the roof, although she had been told not to come. The old chief looked up at her, but said no word; but as he gazed at her, her head fell off, & rolled down into the fire below & was burnt to ashes, no one daring to touch it.

Then the chief told them how the next day they would see a white sail on the horizon, & a ship bigger than any they had seen before would come to anchor behind the big rock in front of the village. The ship would be manned by sailors with white skins, & they were not to be afraid of them, for they would give them food in exchange for furs.

Next day the people of the village were on the look out, & as the day wore on, a white sail appeared on the horizon, & very rapidly a big ship drew near & dropped anchor behind

was lowered, & the chief went to meet us, & brought the strangers to his house. He spread sea otter skin, valuable to the present day on account of its rarity, for the Captain to sit on, other skins for the officers. Then he gave them dried halibut & other food, but they could not eat them. So the chief put on his ceremonial dancing dress - a big Cape made of ermine - he danced before them, scattering down for peace as he danced, staying in one place on the floor but his body moving in the dance, one of the ermine skins came loose from his cloak, & ran over the floor, & up to the Captain; & then came back, into position on the cloak again. Then the chief presented the Captain with a sea otter skin, & the other officers with furs, & the Captain told them to bring their furs to the ship next day which they did, & the Captain gave them rice treacle & ship's biscuit in exchange, but they would not eat them. They thought the rice was worms, the treacle blood of dead men, & the ship's biscuit bits of tree trunks. Then the sailors showed them how to use the food, & as well as these, they got blankets, clothing, guns & powder in exchange for their furs.