



The Cruise of the Janet Nichol Among the South Sea Islands: A Diary

Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson

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In April 1890 the steamer Janet Nichol set off from Sydney for a three month trading voyage through the central and western Pacific. Aboard were seven European men, a crew of forty islanders, and one woman: a short-haired, barefoot, cigarette-smoking American, Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, wife of Robert Louis Stevenson. The Cruise of the Janet Nichol is Fanny's account of her journey with her husband and grown son through what are today the Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands.

Fanny Stevenson's spirited personality led her into scenes and situations few Europeans, and even fewer European women, had experienced. Her diary and its photographs offer unique glimpses of life in some of the last independent Pacific kingdoms and those just coming under colonial rule at the end of the nineteenth century. This extraordinary travel book is the story of an unconventional woman, her unusual marriage, and her adventurous journey through a rapidly changing Pacific world.

"I can see her now—a small woman in a blue dress, sitting barefoot on the roof of the after-cabin of a trading schooner in the South Seas. Her Panama hat, set at a rakish angle, shades a face of breath-taking beauty. She is holding a large silvered revolver in each hand, shooting sharks with deadly accuracy as they are caught and hauled to the taffrail by excited sailors."—Austin Strong on Fanny Stevenson, "The Most Unforgettable Character I've Met"

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