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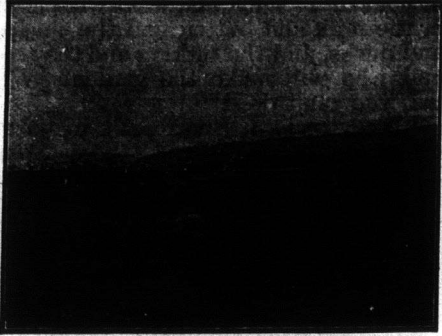
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The Sea, the Sea, the Bounding Sea

By Bonnycastle Dale. Photographs by the author

WE were standing on the outer shores of British Columbia—standing with heads bent and bodies braced against the gale. It was a real sou'wester that was blowing, and the huge waves looked as if



Land's End—Gulls

they had rolled all the way across from Japan. The wreck-strewn shore about us told eloquently of many an ocean tragedy. Behind us lay the sand buried bones of an old full-rigged castaway—beyond the memory of man. We marvelled at her thick timbers; they were oak logs, twelve inches through, three laid side by side, and bolted together by enormous spikes. One would think that this ancient vessel, thus built with solid wooden walls, would be almost unsinkable—yet here she lay cast ashore many a weary year ago—and the vagrant winds had made a tomb for her out of the shifting sands. The outer barrier reefs, the unlighted shores of the outermost islands, islands that are in the full set of the California current, catch and hold these derelicts of the Pacific.

"She rides low," howled Fritz, filling my ears with strident notes and drifting sand at the same moment.

"She does ride low," I assented. We were watching an Alaskan liner pound her way past.

"She's whistling! I can see her steam," Fritz cried, handing me the glass.

"Yes, she's hit something! sure enough! and they are driving her full speed ashore."

"Let us get the paddlers and go after them!" shrieked the lad.

"Dangerous work to-day, but let us try anyhow!" So off we raced for the rancherie, where the Kwakiutl men were resting after yesterday's trip.

"Come T'shan, come Bear, come, come!" I called to the sleeping natives. Running before them and pointing to the plunging steamer, now plainly down by the head, I urged them forward. Once arrived at the shore we all paused breathlessly, the howling wind had left us weak and blown. Ahead the prospect was dismal and wild. Great foaming breakers flung their spume in big globs into our faces. Screeching gulls were ever hidden and revealed by hill and hollow of clean green seas. I remember instinctively watching a big surf duck. It was feeding in the very maw of this boiling sea, plunging through shore breaking surf, as though it fed upon calm water.

Now the cry "Ho-le!—Ho-le!"—part of the "old folks song" of the tribe burst out, and the forty foot cedar log canoe was seized and pushed down the sands. Into the innermost surf the twelve little brown figures sprang. Into the huge canoe, camera laden, Fritz and I leaped. Right at us sped a wall of foam-topped green water bellowing in its might, crashing its way across the shingle. As if they were one centipede-like animal the twenty-four brown arms pushed. Twelve dark bodies vaulted, eleven sharp pointed native paddles flew aloft, one, in the stern, pointed shorewards, steering. The first breaker passed underneath, the second lifted us sky high and spun us in its boiling summit; the third felt the impact of the absurdly

inadequate paddles, and off we bounded over the mighty seas. At times half the crew baled—a very simple operation, they just splashed the sea out again with their paddles as fast as it splashed in. Alas! and alas! we were drenched; soaked; choked with the flying spray, but the cameras in their oilskin coats were as dry as tinder.

Well I suppose one gets used to even the most trying circumstances, and, after we got a bit accustomed to the big log going zigzag down a rushing sea, point blank into a dead wall of rounding, eddying, pulsating following wave—we got hardened anyhow. I carefully swallowed my heart again, released the combing of the canoe that clung to me, unlocked my legs from about the next thwart; I was lying on my back near the bow, not the driest place by any means.

"Well, isn't that nice?" called Fritz from between a tangle of brown legs; the "nice" part of it was that we had just swept in behind an island and were in calm water. I sat right up and enjoyed myself. I know I am a good sailor, but when you take the ocean and mix it all up, and put me right in the middle of the mess, well, my enthusiasm decreases at least.



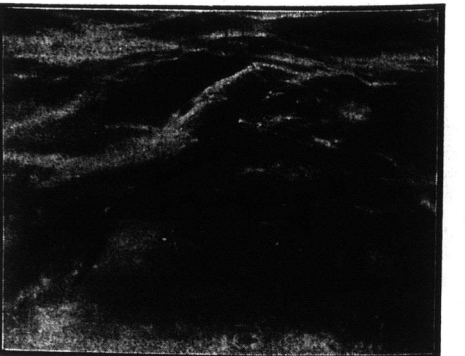
Native Kwakiutl with whalebone or mouth strainers

About us on either side rose tall wooded hills. The place was very silent in this sheltered fiord. Hardly a ripple told of the confusion of the gale that raged outside. Thin impalpable masses of vapour hung about the narrows. Suddenly as we rounded a point there came into view ahead a fleet of white boats grouped about a large white mass that rose, angling, from the water. Unscrewing my glasses I made out the bows of the unfortunate steamer we had followed protruding just a few feet above the calm surface of the bay, where they had run her ashore. Later we found out it was called Carter's Bay. Now our crew whooped and shouted, and a very fountain of spray sprung from our sides. I was in the lead of many a small whirlpool and miniature rainbow. With fine effect the steersman wheeled us about the wreck. We saw the unfortunate passengers crowded on the little shore, busily examining and drying what small luggage they had been able to snatch up. We were assured all had been taken off safely, so all we could do was to salvage floatables and take them ashore. Once a handbag we fished up came unhasped, and a gold ring rolled out against a big bare, flat, brown foot. The owner of the foot, and not the ring, reached down and picked

it up, and handed it to me, although no one had seen it fall. I reaffirm that the older members of these Coast Indian tribes are strictly honest.

We never know what we will get when we set forth with our men out on to the great ocean each morning. It was a calm day, the very contrast to the day we sped across the seas to view the Ohio resting on the bottom in Carter's Bay. That old sea doctor, the "Salvor," of the B.C. Wrecking Co., soon patched her up and pumped her out, and hauled her off to dry dock—and here we were again in our long craft, with its many paddles seeking the wonders of the deep below the lowest low-tide line. Many a strange anemone, many a rare starfish, many a chiton we had taken. Many were the rare things we found attached to the rocks, but, when we rounded San Juan Island, and sped along the south side we saw the biggest thing—the huge Twickenham—firmly attached to the reef on the shore of the island. How intensely out of place in that calm, kelp-strewn scene she looked. All about her bobbed the air balls of this huge sea weed. Within toss of a ship's biscuit of her side rose the sharp rocks of the inhospitable shore; by the way, this is the island the United States and Canada nearly came to blows about in the early days, before the international line was awarded. Yes, we two countries maintained a nice little armed camp within sight, aye, and sound, of one another on this very island, and eye witnesses say it was only by the utmost diplomacy of the officers that a fight was not started—it never got further than potatoes or bottles, no bullets flew, luckily, and here on this historic shore the Twickenham must needs blunder. The tide kept running out as we watched, leaving her higher and drier on the shore. Her plates were crumpling up, and her arches and frames bending by the great superimposed weight. Bad wreck though she was the old "sea doctor" came puffing along, mighty pumps were installed, great bandages swathed about her wounds, tons of salve, made of cement, were poured in, and later, off she too went to Esquimalt, that hospital for injured ships on Vancouver Island.

Now, to give you some idea of how hard and fast some of these wrecks are lodged look at the s.s. Humbolt—cargo shifted to the barge alongside; Northern Pacific. See her perched up on Monate Point with her attendant naval nurse and doctor—the "Wm. Jolliffe" and the "Salvor." See her cargo shifted to the barge alongside; yet, as far as I know she is running to-day. Oh! it does not matter how often a steamer goes ashore, if she is of fairly good hull and machinery she can get plugged up and ported and repaired, and off she goes again with a new coat of paint, and, well let us hope, a clear conscience. Personally we have been afloat on vessels that have been reef ridden, collided with, sunken, waterlogged, derelict. I know of one, on the U.S. side, that they clappedboarded over her ancient planks to give her a nice appearance, and off she went, too, or, should I say towards, Alaska. Did she ever get there? Nay! Nay! She got as far as where the first Pacific swells enter the Straits of Juan de Fuca, and she pounded her seams open and it was



A very close picture—sounding whales

a close shave for her big crew that they got back to Port Townsend. Oh, yes, I know about it, thank you. I have been afloat on that bally ocean on everything from a shingle up.

Do not run away with the idea that I abuse the bottoms generally. The big companies have excellent boats, but there are a lot of flotsam and jetsam