



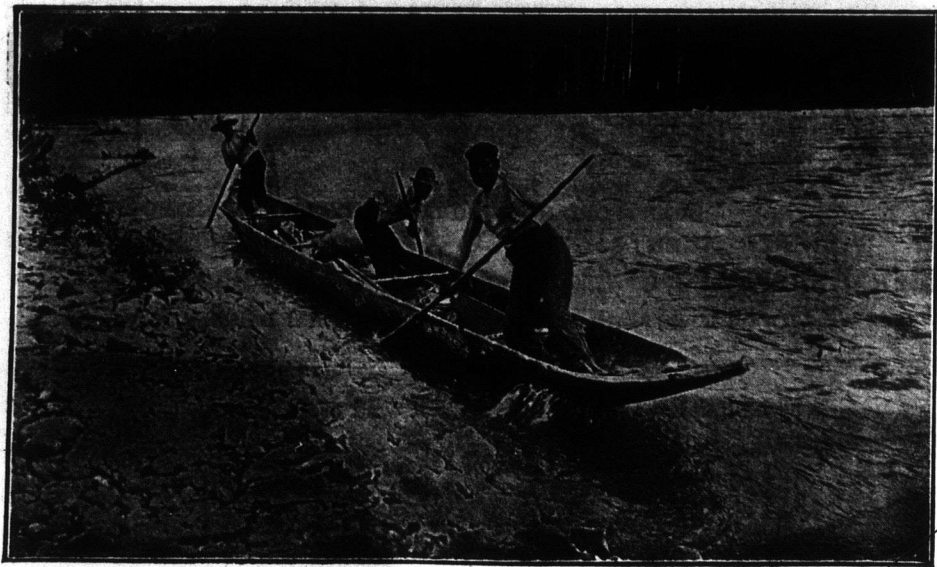
Cloose Indian Village, West Coast, Vancouver Island.

the swell of the surf outside. No sooner had we cleared the Pass than I saw we were in for a wetting, if nothing worse. The great dull roaring surf that beat on the shore was huge crested rollers outside. Ahead of us steamed a big freighter, and big as she was, we lost sight of her every time we dipped down a big green sea. Fritz said it was quite calm in the hollows, but the acid on the tops was no whiter than his face. I was busy fastening the Reflex camera in its waterproof covering. I did not fear anything worse than a wetting yet. So far we had faced the western waves, now we had to turn broadside to coast along the island. These Indian canoes show their poor lines in this position. They roll like bally barrels. I constantly thought we should be pitched out like balls from a lacrosse stick.

With a sudden roll we shipped a clear green sea, and it was bail for life. You ought to have seen those Indians bring her about bow to the waves, and bail with their paddles. If any whales had been about they would surely have taken us for a new species that spouted in four different spots. Between us we got her partially emptied and the paddlers turned her about for shore, hoping to make a landing around a point that jutted out a bit. I noticed the surf was piling higher here than elsewhere, but could not make myself heard in the tumult of wind and wave. Right at that gloomy rock-strewn shore we headed—just as if a pleasant shelving pebbly strand awaited us. It was great sport now, it is always safer to go with the waves but—for one moment's time I saw a creamy wave reaching in foaming lines far up the shore—then there came a tremendous coil of water, it rolled over its hissing lip and formed a cave. On top of this half mile long roller, like a big black chip, swept our canoe. The men were paddling like demons. Crash! The mighty wave had left us and we dropped on to that exposed ocean bed with a crash like the fall of a mighty fir and the great solid war canoe split from bow to stern. The oncoming sea spurted up through the great gashed cedar and only the false bow and

thwarts held the wreck together. Somehow—like a submerged canoe—we sped along with this big surf. I threw the strap of the camera over my shoulder, held out a hand to the lad, grasped the hand of the next Indian, and we all bent over the stranded craft bracing ourselves for the return of the wave. It came and covered us hip deep and we reached the next one to the side line and beat it—all safely ashore, where we sat and watched the surf play with that huge canoe, throwing it up almost to our very feet, then maliciously dragging it back. Soon it had two playthings, for the poor, old craft parted from bow to stern. How unemotional these coast Indians are. I knew the old canoe builder that had laboriously formed the craft, actually worrying it out of a great cedar with a chisel-like axe made of an old rasp and with many a red hot stone. Half of a year he told me it took him. "Klne tahtlum dollars" (thirty dollars) was the price he got for it. It had safely made the inside passage to the far Alutians and now had ignominiously come to grief almost on the very shore it grew and was fashioned on—and the short, squat, flat-faced Indian that owned it was busily engaged in smoothing out a roll of very wet paper money, and carefully securing each corner with big, round pebbles. None seemed to think that we had been actually pushed out of the surf by the slip of the grasp of the giant that would have strangled us, and that we near came being food for the devil fish we had come to hunt.

Now came a weary waiting. Suddenly one of the big-faced natives stood upright and motioned for us to follow, and off we went through the thick woods, right across the island. Luckily it was only about a mile, but such a mile, tangled undergrowth, fallen trees, so great in girth that we had literally to climb over the prostrate boles. Soon we emerged on the inside shore of the island. Swiftly the Indians set to work to gather the loose poles that were floating in the bay below the Pass. These were soon lashed together with some creepers and saplings and off we



Northern Indians poling canoe.

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