

Springtime Adventures in the Gulf of Georgia

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Bonnycastle Dale.

"I SAY! Look at that for a fish," ejaculated Fritz as we stood in front of the huge sea bass in the Victoria Museum; all about us were cases and jars containing some of the wonders of the Northern Pacific Ocean.

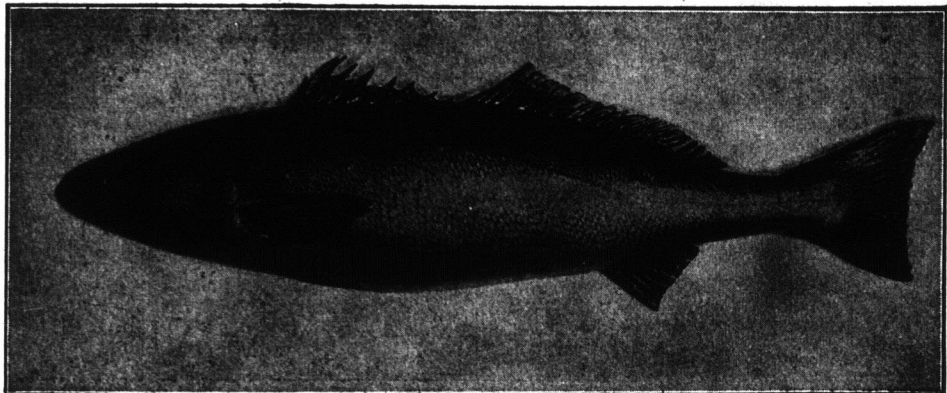
"Why not take another cruise? It is April, the rains are over and we are used to the old Terror" (the lad's favorite name for our little unstable steam puffer the Terra Nova called you will remember by her distractors the "Turn Over.")

"Laddie, I have an unusual respect for my interior department and that old wabblers has none, still the storms are about over, let's get the crew together for a Gulf run." So we left the well regulated Museum and sought Watts the Engineer. He had fully half the engine grime worn off by this time and was almost a white man. He always carries his hat in his hand when speaking to the owner of the unruly craft, and I could hardly keep my face straight when I saw the lad tack around behind him to take bearings of his neck. Fritz swears that neck is a chart and he can tell just what month it is by the smut on it. Our engineer's assistant was a halfbreed, one William Henry. The lad said it kept him



The Strawberry Starfish of the Pacific.

in a dear little bay, shallow enough to let us rest on the bottom when the tide was out and threaten to turn us completely over and fill us when it returned; but we straightened up before dawn—don't tell me there is not a "little angel that sits up aloft and looks after the cares of poor Jack" truly we needed a whole host of these good people. I think the anchor had got fouled in the smokestack or some such thing for Watts was blacker than Eberus when he emerged, but we finally puff, puff, puffed on our uncertain way and came to anchor off Starfish Bay.

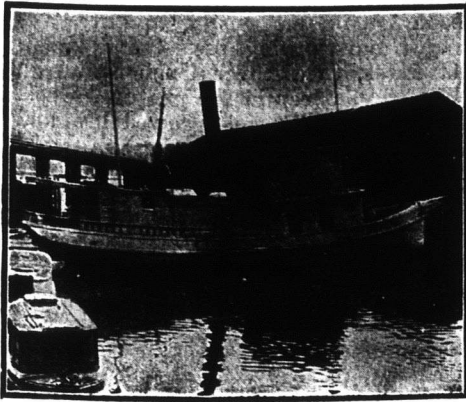


The Sea Bass of the Pacific Runs to 80 lbs. weight.

puffed up by calling him this and not just common fireman. He wore many sweaters and coats and Fritz declared he had "as many skins as an onion."

Next morning was bright and sunny with a bit of the early trade wind blowing. In the harbor of Victoria all was calm and sheltered.

"Didn't I tell you, Sir," laughed Fritz, "they would have a nice big swell all ready for us outside. Oh! golly here comes the Princess now we will get ours." Along came the huge passenger steamer, just slowing down for the entrance and we had to steer pretty close to her to avoid the rocks. Our little thirty footer rushed up her swell like a dog up a hill, took a good shake on the top and plunged down like a runaway whale. I must have a marine doctor examine the way this thing is



The "Terra Nova" otherwise the "Turn Over."

built, she acts every way but the one you would expect. Now we entered the long, big, smooth roll of the Straits of Fuca and the Terror—I beg her pardon the Turn Over—No! I mean the Terra Nova ducked and dipped and rolled in a truly alarming manner.

We bobbed along in our insane manoeuvres until we reached the fishing grounds, just at nightfall. We anchored

We wanted to see this wonderfully colored star fish, so Fritz and I rowed ashore in the eight foot Dingy. Fritz swears this was made for a tribe of liliputians, it is just big enough for a nice little bread trough or a maple syrup log. Anyhow we got to shore and searched the pebbly beach for these exquisite things—there were hundreds of them, more beautifully colored than the strawberries they were called after, about ten inches across, five short points and myriads of sucking feelers that acted like legs and feet. They were found with their prey beneath them, completely smothering it, their stomachs come right out and envelop the shellfish or other small objects they feed upon. The bright blue water, the clear white pebbles and these brilliant red stars made a wonderful combination.

We fitted ourselves gingerly into the dingy and paddled out as carefully to the steamer.

"Take care you don't upset her getting aboard," said Fritz.

"I'll be careful of the little dingy," I answered.

"No! I mean the Terror—say I—'s be a pirate crew—'The Terror of the Seas'—say she's got all the old Black Flags beaten 'cause she could dip under so nicely if we were chased." So I heard the lad mutter to himself as he lifted the very small ferry to the very small deck on which it watched and waited for us.

Now we were passing in behind Denman's Island and the water was nicely sheltered. We went closely by the reef where H.M.S. Flora one foggy morning, when the look-out mistook a gull sitting on the rocks for the buoy, on with a bump! bumpety! bump! A lady friend of mine was seated on her verandah that morning wondering when the fog would lift. She heard these crunching heavy bumps and, when the fog kindly lifted, it showed her a great British



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