

A Run in the "Turn Over"

Among the Wrecks and Shoals of the Gulf of Georgia

By BONNYCASTLE DALE

comfortable, so I said to the Swede: "Sink the bally thing and put us out of our misery. I am going to bunk."

Next morning we were all on deck. The swell had gone down and we were also in sheltered water. The air was delightful. Ole told us all the boats that passed him during the starlit night howled with their sirens at him: "Vat for, I guess," he grinned. I found out as soon as I went into the engine room. Even the fireman had been unable to stand the wonderful contortions of my amiable craft, and in his misery he had forgotten to light the side and head lights.

"LOOKS like der vas somedinks downside up," explained Ole as we stared over the bow. Ahead was a wreck. We neared her with much blowing of whistles and marine etiquette. We were all on our pins now. We all agreed it was the pickles. Not one of us had been really sick, you know. As we got closer we saw it was a tug. She was listed terribly, and had evidently been almost submerged by the tide.

"Vell!—anything you vant?" called the big blonde wheelsman in our bow.

"Oh! nothing much, except righting up and pumping and towing to drydock and repairing and a few hundred other things," growled the captain.

On the shoreward side—with her great pumps already installed was the "Doctor of the Seas," the wrecking boat of the great Bullins Victoria Company that salvages these uncertain waters. With a big scow between the wrecking tug and the "Dauntless," as we found the sunken craft was named, it did not take long to raise her and tow her to safety. She had run ashore between Ladysmith and Chemainus, and had listed 54 degs.—Fritz said that was nothing to some of the lists the Turn Over—again I beg her pardon, the Terra Nova—took last night. He humbly begged to be informed what angle was it while he slept on the ceiling.

On up the Gulf we went, away off for a bird island. We were all right as long as we were inside the islands, but no sooner had I steered her out into the open Gulf than I found they had been waiting for us and had prepared a nice long, smooth following swell, the very thing I hate. Along would come a green, oily mountain, and our wobbler would slide backwards into it, wriggle in a ridiculous manner on the crest, and then slide down the steep side of it like a boy coasting down a hill, and poke her foolish old nose into the wave ahead, as if she were a resolute diver. This erratic plunge sent a clean green sea into the wheel house and extinguished yours truly. Oh! those pickles; do you know, the whole three of us, no four, I beg your pardon, the fireman, too, had eaten of them, were again indisposed?

The big blonde Olsen and the grimy engineer Watts alone of all the brave crew anchored the untamable craft in the smooth reach of Mitlenatch Bay, and I was awakened, next morning, by a thatch of black hair and two brown eyes asking me, "Mika-tikeh Smet-oks?" ("would you like some large clams?"). I never in my life wanted clams less than I did that morning, and I drove the Coast Indian fisherman off with much language. "I like does



Raising the Dauntless, which ran ashore between Ladysmith and Chemainus. Especially pumping her out.

clams," from Ole, soothed the barbarian, and the big Swede bought and ate six dozen. Oh, if he had eaten pickles he would not have flaunted his greed in our faces thus.

Soon Fritz and O'poots and I, with trembling limbs and aching heads, were up on the cliffs to see what the island held for our Natural History studies. Thousands of gulls and guillimots and sea parrots and cormorants were circling and screaming along the tops of the serrated weatherbeaten and scarred cliffs.

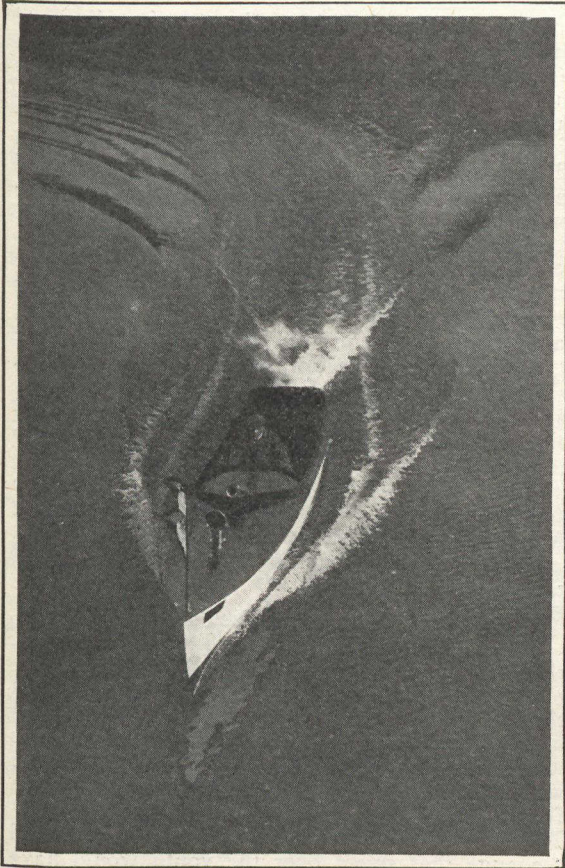
"IT'S a big one; I'd like to find its mother," laughed the lad as he picked up a big iron cannon ball, pretending it was some huge egg, covering it half with moss and trying to fool the inscrutable Indian ahead of us.

"Hy-as ship mam-ook-poo" (big ship shoot). We were on the trying grounds of olden days for the British fleet. We found many a place where the great projectiles had smashed the face of the tall granite cliffs. What a shiver it must have sent through the breeding colony to have these great iron messengers hurtling over and amidst them! We decided we were too early for good photography, so

taking a few pictures of the bird inhabitants we went aboard just as the sun was setting. It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene. To the westward the tall backbone of Vancouver Island's mountain ranges reared their green forested heads. To the eastward the silvery new moon hung over the snowy tops of the Cascades. An upper current of air was whirling the dry snow so that the peaks seemed smoking in some icy manner. Before us, all the calm waters of the gulf were cut up and twirled and twisted by the "meeting of the tides," for here is the line where they come into contact. All about us the daytired birds resting beside their nested mates—all dreamily cooing and calling; no longer the frantic cry and wild alarm of the sunshine hours; now all was peace and rest and drowsy murmuring and a thousand good-nights, for the island colony were sinking into sleep.

Night

The sinking sun is setting out of sight,
Over yon dim horizon and is gone.
The far-off hills into oblivion fade,
And God's green meadowland has
turned to grey.
All outward signs of life grow indistinct,
And, save the twittering fledgling in
the eaves,
There is no sound to break the solemn
silence.



The speed motor boat missed us by the margin of a hair. Note the pacific character of the Pacific waters.

NOW I maintain it was a base libel to call our little puffer the "turn over." Her real name was the Terra Nova. Truly, in her erratic career, she had felt many bottoms and poked her nose ashore a few times, and tried to smooth down certain reefs and rocks. But all this was before I hired her to carry me about on my Natural History work. It is darkly hinted that she had been known to grow "Chinks" in her cabins—for it is said they were more often seen to emerge from there than enter. True, there is a semi-prohibitive duty on Chinamen of five hundred dollars, also true that her then owner retired with a comfortable nest egg. By her very, very worst enemies it is whispered that she smuggled a wee bit—and the things Fritz and I found hidden away in her when we had her thoroughly overhauled—cigars, cigarettes and tobacco and—whisper! a little bit of dope—showed that she was no missionary boat at least.

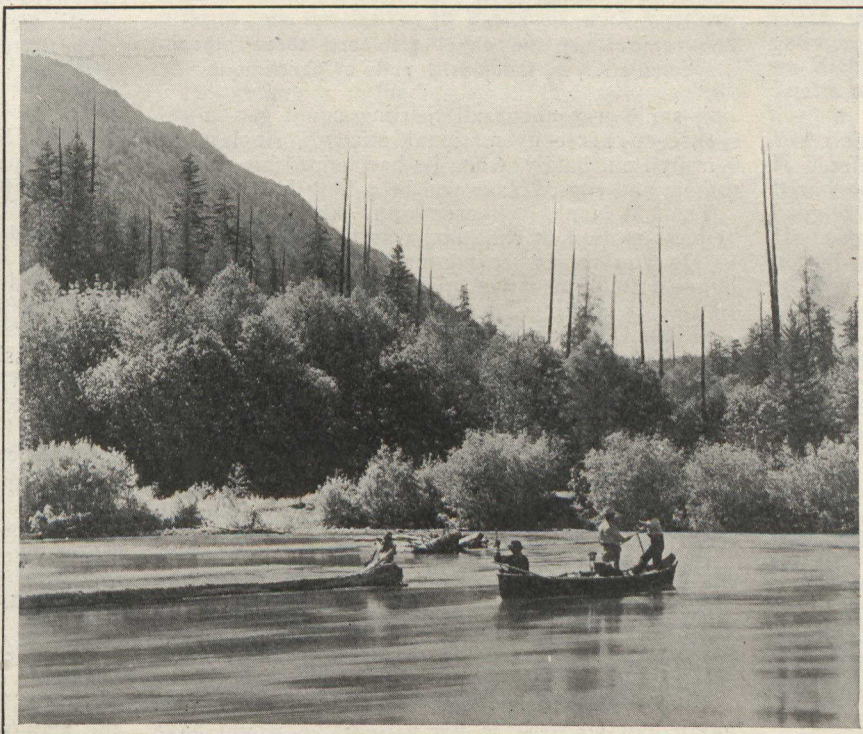
But the Terra Nova was now all caulked and puttied and painted up. Except for the weather twists and cracks and rotten timbers and groaning planks she looked at a distance—well! say of two miles—almost shipshape.

We had a bit of trouble getting her out of the harbour. Ole Olsen was at the wheel, and he used to direct action, and this one had reverse steering gear, so, except bumping a big Indian war canoe—with the whole blamed tribe in, or so it seemed, we turned her so completely around that Fritz said:

"I'll bet a dollar they don't know whether they are coming in or going out."

"I tink he vill swipe us," said the Swede, as he turned the wheel frantically the wrong way, and then spun it—as if it was some new puzzle he was trying—back as hard as his two hairy, red hands could send it. The speed motor craft missed us by the margin of a hair, and the man lifted one hand off the spokes and solemnly cursed our big grinning, nervous wheelsman.

Well, our little tug-like craft got out of the harbour all right and we found, of course, they had taken all the wind and put it right against us and stirred the sea all up into great rude waves—and the things that "rip" and tide and wind did to us! Why, the Turn Over—I beg your pardon, the Terra Nova—could roll and plunge at one and the same time and add in a neat little wriggle all her own. O'poots, our Kwakiutl guide, was aboard, and he was born on the swells of this misnamed Pacific—but she put him safely into his bunk. Fritz stood it for a couple of hours and fell by the wayside. I am never seasick, but somehow my dinner felt un-



A pacific spot at the mouth of one of the Vancouver Island rivers that flow into the Gulf of Georgia.