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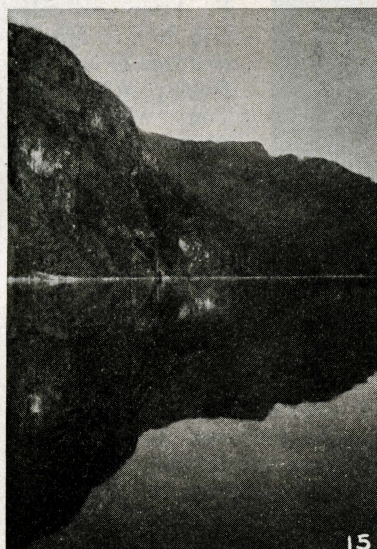
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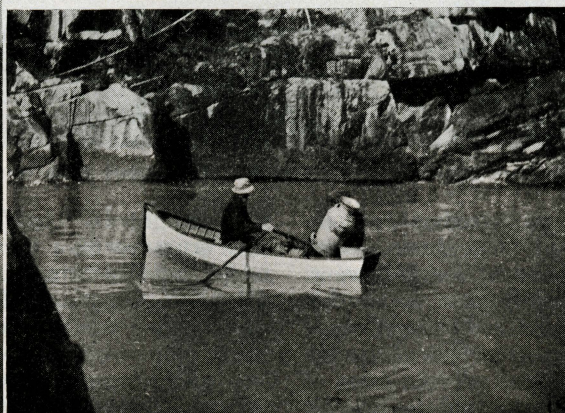
PROSPECTING FOR GOLD ON THE INSIDE PASSAGE

The Interesting Adventures of Four Men in a Boat
Among the Inlets of British
Columbia

By BRUCE J. McKELVIE



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Scenic Glimpses of Beautiful Jervis Inlet, Narrows Arm, Agamemnon Channel and Vicinity

GOLD! Gold! Yellow gold in nuggets, in flakes and in dust!

That is what we dreamed of—The Big Fellow, The Professor, Tony and I, who at the outset of the expedition was dubbed "Foggy," the reason for which appears later. We dreamed of gold, we talked of gold and our very thoughts were golden—which was why we chartered the good craft *Bachelor* to take us to the Eldorado which "Tony" had discovered in a glacier lined creek, far up on the precipitous hillsides of Jervis Inlet. Now we know we dreamed in vain, for all the gold that we discovered was the clinking coins which we dug from our pockets to pay to the "Skipper" for the trip.

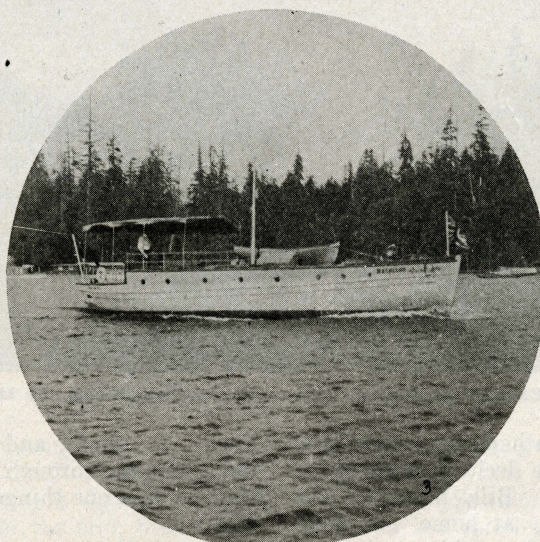
It was "Tony," as I have indicated, who made the discovery, and we believed in him. In the every-day, business life of the city of Vancouver, we are considered—at least I have hoped so—to be safe, sane evenly balanced citizens of the community, and hence the ap-

pellation of this veracious account of our wealth-seeking search for the elusive yellow metal.

"Tony" was the name given to our leader by common consent, when he doffed his nice white collar and garb of respectability and wound a red bandana handkerchief around his neck, which gave him a Neapolitan caste.

"The Big Fellow" received his name the moment that he lowered himself down the companionway and filled the comfortable little cabin with his tremendous bulk.

"The Professor" was the man learned in the art of mining and in the extraction of priceless metals from their native haunts, and "Foggy"—that's me. Well, I did not attain the honor of the cognomen until by weight of numbers I was forced to perch myself in a precarious position on the bows of the stout little boat and blow my lungs out into the night air through a tin horn to warn all and sundry vessels that we were on our way. I felt like one of those men of



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"Bachelor" in Which the Cruise Was Made

old who surrounded the city of Jericho and blew the walls down, but try as I would—and I did try—I failed to blow away that impenetrable wall of fog—but all this should come later in the chronological order of the story.

To commence at the beginning: Tony spent some time cruising along the coast line of British Columbia several months ago. He stopped for several days in the upper reaches of Jervis Inlet, lingering about the bays and clambering far up the steep mountain sides to the haunts of the nimble mountain goats. In one of these rambles he discovered a little stream which tumbled over a high precipice into a darkened valley below. His curiosity was aroused and he descended or ascended (I'm not sure which) to the foot of the waterfall and discovered that the valley was filled by a glacier. He had heard tales of the manner in which glaciers carry gold along with them in their slow-

moving wake, and accordingly he paid particular attention to the color of the sand in the little stream which flowed from beneath the great mass of ice and snow. The sand was black. He climbed higher to another basin and found more black sand, and he "panned" some of it, and discovered colors. He was wild with excitement, and with open ears listened to all the tales of fabulous wealth of just such streams told to him by every prospector and logger he happened to meet in the next few days. Then he came home.

I met Tony, and he told me. I too am a dreamer—and I dreamt. I was convinced. I told the Big Fellow, and he also became enthusiastic. Then Tony and I notified the Professor of the find. By this time we were sure that it would go at least a dollar to the pan—maybe two or three dollars to the ordinary pan, with maybe a few nuggets thrown in for luck. The Professor discounted the nuggets and reduced our estimate

by three-quarters, but then his mathematical mind saw possibilities in the remainder. He decided to throw in his lot with us. So did "Bill." Bill, however, was more practical; he decided to stay at home, but delegated me, in all due and proper form, to stake out a large-sized choice mine for him.

Having transported ourselves, in our separate and combined imaginations, to the place where nuggets were more numerous than cobble stones, we started to hunt for a boat in which to make the trip. There were several—in fact their name was "Legion" when we commenced to search the waterfront. Every person we met had a friend who had a friend who knew of a man who had just the proper kind of a boat, which he would be pleased to let us have free gratis and for nothing and pay the gasoline bill besides—but we never met that fellow of the generous impulses.

We looked at many boats, and then at Chappell Brothers' wharf we met the "Skipper"—the same being G. F. Atter—no relation to the famous perfume of roses, he gravely informed Tony when that querulous individual facetiously asked a rude question. The "Skipper" owned the *Bachelor*, and he asked us to inspect the boat. We did, and we

were delighted. The *Bachelor* is a 47-footer, a raised deck cruiser, with a 10.6 beam, and is equipped with a 24 h. p. Eastern Standard engine. Moreover, she was fitted, we discovered, for our purposes, having a fore cabin which would sleep three comfortably, while the main cabin would luxuriously accommodate two large and roomy men—the same being The Big Fellow and myself. But what particularly took the eye of Tony—who claims to be some yachtsman with a capital "S" to the some—was the excellent compass which adorned

her wheel. The bargain was made. We were to be taken to the land of promise, and with great joy we hastened to tell our fellow adventurers. We were to leave the next night—the same being Friday the Thirteenth—which we entirely forgot, and for which we now blame our failure to join the ranks of the millionaire class—and we were in a state of great excitement. There was so much to do, and so little time in which to do it.

There were picks, and axes, and shovels, and mercury, and chamois—through which to strain the gold—and a hundred and one things to do as well as to provision the ship.

It was a serious problem, that provisioning of the ship. Each man knew his own capacity for good whole-



Looking Out Toward the Entrance of One of the Inlets From the Inside



The Entrance to Seechelt Arm, a Beauty Spot Among the Inlets

some food, and each suspected the other of an equally large or larger one. We were all correct, but even at that we did not reckon the quantity which we could secure for our money, but when it was all delivered to the boat when she drew up at the Gore Avenue slip to take on the supplies, we found that we had enough to feed a South American revolutionary army through two civil wars and a peace conference.

The hour of departure was set at nine o'clock. It seemed romantic and fitting that we should start out at night. Maybe it was, I don't know, but this I do know that there was a fog hanging over the harbor which was almost as thick as the bean soup which the Big Fellow concocted and in which the carving knife stood upright.

All our female relatives and a few of their friends came down to see us off, and to whisper to us not to forget to bring each a nugget big enough for a wrist watch setting, or a breast pin. We promised. I was the first to arrive, laden with gum boots, several gold pans, an axe, and a few other implements. Then I heard the voice of the Big Fellow through the fog and he appeared, his arms folded around a half a dozen blankets, overcoats and oilskins.

One of the harbor police hearing him coming and seeing his bulk through the mist, approached to investigate his bundle. The Big Fellow did not see him, and, stopping long enough to get a fresh hold on his bundle, he gathered the big policeman up with it and heaved the blankets, coats and slickers and policeman on the deck together, remarking, "Whew, they were getting heavy."

"No wonder they were heavy. You picked me up too," exclaimed the embodiment of the law, extracting himself from underneath.

Next came Tony with several friends, and then we waited for the Professor, who at last appeared bearing all sorts of queer tools and instruments and a heavy tome on mining under his arms. Now all was ready, and with a "toot" of the siren we prepared to move off. The lines were cast off and the *Bachelor* slowly moved away from the slip, with warnings floating through the fog to us from our fair friends to keep our feet dry, and to avoid colds, coughs and

chills, all of which we promised to obey.

Down in the cabin Tony was busy with a pair of dividers and a rule getting a course off the big chart. Suddenly he popped up and announced that the Narrows lay nor' by west. They may have, but no doubt owing to the density of the fog they moved for the night.

"Some one will have to go out on the bow for a look-out," ordered the Skipper, and I happened to be the unlucky one. Donning a heavy overcoat, I went forward and squatted down on the winch vainly peering out into the blackness of the night. I was looking out for logs. I might just as well have been looking for May flowers. Suddenly I felt a jab in the back, and with difficulty kept myself from going overboard. "Here, blow this," commanded the Big Fellow, handing me a great tin horn.

All around I could hear the bel-
lowing fog horns. There must have been half a hundred

ships in the harbor, and I took it that it was my duty to answer every call. I did. In fact I got in three calls to every one of the others. They were not full blasted clear calls, but rather spasmodic grunts, but I was blowing alright. Behind me I could hear the navigators discussing the various points of the compass.

I was blowing with all my might, when there loomed ahead a great black bulk.

"That must be West Vancouver," I heard the Professor declare, in rather an uncertain voice.

"West Vancouver, nothing. We're not out of the Narrows yet," answered the Skipper.

"It's Brockton Point, then." This from Tony.

"It's not either; it's the oil scow in Coal Harbor," declared the Big Fellow—and he was right. Alongside of the oil scow was a mud barge, and to this we tied.

"You can come in now," ordered the Skipper, for I had been religiously blowing the horn, and I dragged my-

self with great effort back toward the binnacle light.

"You're some fog horn alright," was all the praise I received for my valorous efforts to avoid collision.

"I vote we call him Foggy," said the Big Fellow—and so it was decided, with my dignified and sole protesting vote dissenting.



Narrows Arm Looking Out Toward the Open Water From the Inside



Looking Up the Salt Water Inlet Between the Snow-Capped Mountain Walls

Down in the cabin we piled, there to discuss plans. That we could not attempt to make the Narrows until the mist lifted a little was carried unanimously. This being decided upon, the next question was as to what we should do until then. Play whist. That was it. But first of all we must eat. We were not hungry, but we were like small boys on a picnic—eating seemed the only thing to do. So we ate. And we played whist. The Big Fellow and I won easily, but not honestly.

About midnight the fog lifted a little, Tony having kept a watchful eye on it all the time, and it was decided to again start. This time we got away nicely, and made the Narrows on the charted course.

I saw the Big Fellow with the fog horn in his hand looking anxiously for another victim, so I tipped the wink to the Professor, and he and I slipped down to the cabin and the blankets, listening, with great glee, to the Big Fellow complainingly making his way to the bow to blow the trumpet.

It was several hours later when we emerged on deck again, and found that the fog had settled down again.

"Where are we?" we sleepily asked.

"Well, according to the log—and we're making about 9 knots—we're off Roberts Creek," Tony announced.

The Skipper, numbed by cold, handed the wheel over to me while he went below to brew some hot tea for himself and Tony. "Keep her where she's going," he advised me, and I sleepily assented. I kept her going alright, but I had neglected to note the direction in which she was headed when I gave a preliminary twist to the wheel to see how she answered. We were nearing the Trail Island light when I took command, and when the Skipper again appeared we were still nearing the same light, but on an opposite side. I had evidently—and it's a mystery to me still—been steeple chasing around that light for half an hour. With the Skipper came Tony, and then for the next few brief but lively moments I listened to what they all thought of my navigation. It was not much, and had they been a board of examiners I could not have held a job swabbing decks. I retired again, but had my revenge, for I started to sing in the cabin below, and the steady pounding of the engines could not drown my melodious voice. I desisted only when the others fiercely informed me that they would heave me and my song overboard if I did not choke it.

When I dared to put my head up



The Professor

again it was to find them in difficulties regarding the course again. We were supposed to be, according to that wonderful charted course, off Welcome Pass, but the thickness of the night offered no suggestions as to the accuracy of our reckoning. We picked up Merry Island light. We were sure that it was Merry Island—until another light appeared. Then we were not sure. At last, however, we decided to cast anchor and wait for the dawning day. This we did in a nice little cove we picked out with our searchlight.



Deciding Who Should be Lookout

When day broke we discovered—at least I recognized—that we were in Halfmoon Bay, and for this brilliant piece of detective work I was allowed to again take my place at the wheel, and take her through the Pass. This was done with a skill that still astonishes me. Then on the instructions of the Skipper and Tony I headed her for Pender Harbor, which we made without mishap, and I without breakfast. There had been a deception in the others allowing me to again become pilot—for they went below and regaled themselves on the porridge which the Big Fellow had insisted on making, and when I was relieved it was to assist the Professor in washing the dishes.

I was relieved just as we were entering Agamemnon Channel, through which we proceeded with full confidence, Tony having navigated it on several occasions, while the Skipper knew every stone by its Christian name.

The fog lifted a trifle as we entered the channel, allowing us to catch a glimpse of the glorious scenery of the wooded hills of Nelson Island, the gold and red of the maples standing out in delightful contrast to the dull green of the evergreens and the dull grey of the granite-lined shore. Not a ripple disturbed the waters of the channel as we plowed our way northward, passing several smaller fishing craft bound for Pender Harbor, the passengers of which greeted us with right good will, to which we responded with our siren.

Steadily we "chug-chugged" on our way, past the Skookum Chuck and out into the waters of Jervis Inlet, where the mountains rise abruptly from the water's edge. Running close to the shore, the Professor picked out likely looking places to prospect for the baser metals, but we were not content to stop and inspect them. We headed for Patrick Point, which we rounded into the Queen's Reach. Here we passed an old Siwash jigging for codfish, and he hailed us with a pleasant "Klohowya Tillicum," to which we replied in our best Chinook, which seemed to delight the old man beyond measure, inasmuch as he wanted to come on board. We did not wait for him, however, for when you are suffering from gold fever you don't wait.

Leaving the native and his dug-out behind we continued on our way, and rounding still another point were in view of the Promised Land.

Far up the mountain we could see the water tumbling from the clouds, it seemed. The boat was brought to

a stop and was moored to an overhanging tree, so deep was the water at the shore line.

The Big Fellow had been busy in the galley, and he projected his head up the companionway and summoned us to test his cooking, advising us to "eat hearty" before tackling the long climb. He had constructed a "mulligan" in one of the nice new dishpans which we had brought with us as auxiliary gold pans. At first we were suspicious of the fare, but followed his lead—and it was certainly good, although we did not discover the ingredients.

The next order of business, of course, was to tackle the mountain. This we did. All afternoon we toiled up the steep sides of the mountain, testing the sand here, and washing silt there, thoroughly proving the find, even risking our lives by working across the glacier to the bottom of the falls. There were colors there, but the action of the glacier had carried all the sand down to the deep sea, leaving practically only bare rock and boulders in the bed of the stream. We were disappointed, and it was with sorrow that we came to



Glaciers and Cascades, Jervis Inlet

the conclusion that the creek would not be worth the cost of recording. Then we turned our attention to the

ledges in the neighborhood, but every place we went we met some fresh blaze and newly erected posts—everything had been staked.

There had been great recent activity on the part of the prospectors, and we were too late.

No longer did we dream of gold, or even silver. We were now content to locate some plain old copper ledge, and as we painfully lowered ourselves—the Big Fellow falling at every step—down the old river bed to the boat, we decided to try for copper the next day, or maybe for tin.

It was just a few minutes before dusk when we reached the boat, and the night was settling on the higher peaks.

An impudent little sea hen seemed to laugh at us as we climbed out of the dinghy on to the *Bachelor* again.

"I'm going to get that bird," declared Tony, picking up the shot gun and blazing both barrels at the hen. "Where is it?" he demanded, opening his eyes.

"There," pointed the chief, and the hen with a toss of its head disappeared.



Bowling Along the Rugged Coast Line Above Howe Sound in the Gathering Darkness

"I'll get it," I boasted, and fired at it with the .22, but missed by feet.

"Well, the old man will have to show you," declared the Big Fellow, pumping a shell into his 30:30 and firing. The sea hen actually seemed to laugh as the big bullet splashed up the water two yards from it.

The Skipper then tried the shot gun, and the Professor thought he could get it with a revolver, but with equal success. Then we quit.

We had passed a little logging camp on our way up the inlet and it was decided to return to the float at that place for the night. This was done, and while Tony went ashore to pay his respects to the proprietors of the camp, Messrs. Gunderson & Bendickson, the Skipper started preparing supper—and this is where he disgraced himself. The Big Fellow insisted on having his usual rubber of whist, and to make the fourth hand the Skipper was called in from the galley. Now the Skipper likes the game, and foolishly attempted to watch the tomato soup and play bridge at the same time. He played a good game, but the smell of burning soup soon filled the cabin. With a cry he dove back to the galley, and we could hear him muttering to himself.

Supper was served, and the soup formed the central dish, but it had a peculiar flavor—a kind of a crisp taste. The Big Fellow refused to partake of it, much to the delight of the Professor, who played Oliver Twist and asked for more, remarking, "I like that burned taste." This remark caused the Big Fellow to go into convulsions of laughter, which at the time were unexplainable, but after the meal he took each one of us aside and revealed the cause of his mirth.

He had been watching the operations of the Skipper in the galley. That noble seaman, on discovering that the soup was burned, had picked up the wash basin, in which several sets of greasy hands had been washed. The peculiar taste which had proved so pleasing to the rest of us had been caused by a mixture of grease, grime and gasoline. It was a horrible revelation for all of us except the B. F., who thought it a huge joke.

The next morning we had our revenge, for Tony, the Professor and I walked ashore and had our breakfast at the camp, leaving the B. F. on the float, he not caring to walk the floating logs to the shore.

There are some peculiar people living on the shores of Jervis Inlet. We heard tell of one family which had resided in the woods for thirty

years, much after the manner of natives. The five or six children had been born there and had all reached their maturity before ever having been away from the mountain enclosed inlet. One of the lads had just returned from his first visit to civilization, and one of the loggers had asked him how he had enjoyed the sights of Vancouver. "I didn't like them at all," he responded. "I got lost, and I couldn't blaze a trail there, for the posts on the street were all iron."

The next morning we again essayed to locate a ledge which was unstaked, but could not, and decided to



Tony Brings News of a Strike

cruise homeward prospecting the coast line.

At Britain River the first stop was made, and Tony went ashore in the dingy to question the occupants of the two rudely constructed houses which clung to the river bank regarding the locality. He came back in a hurry, having learned that there was a prospector at work several miles away "on something good." The anchor was hoisted and away we went again.

In a little nameless bay we again stopped and here the Professor and I went ashore, and started prospecting. We found an excellent ledge, and wild with excitement we traced it for some distance, only to find freshly erected location posts. All day we prowled about the vicinity with the same result. Every available foot of land was staked.

The fog had descended again and once more we had to resort to the chart and the look-out when we again

started the engines. All went well until we entered Agamemnon Channel. The Skipper was at the wheel and for the moment the look-out had retired, when with a terrific crash we struck a submerged log. The whole ship shivered with the shock, and the four of us in the cabin made a wild scramble for the deck, sure that we were sinking. We were not, and the Skipper laughed at us for our fears. Luckily, the careful Skipper had the boat in half speed when she struck, and the damage was not fatal.

We were making for Green Bay, on Nelson Island. Green Bay is one of the best small boat anchorages to be found any place, but it has a difficult, almost concealed entrance. This we made, however, and dropped anchor. The Professor and I immediately decided to go salmon fishing despite the lateness of the hour, and for some considerable time rowed up and down the harbor, our little dinghy leaving a brilliant phosphorescent wake which was beautiful to see.

We were loathe to leave the bay when by the early morning light we saw its marvelous beauties, the wooded hills with their saffron-shot maple clusters reflected in the mirror-like waters of the little nook. Before leaving, however, we again sought for the mineralized ledges which were to make us wealthy—and found them, as before, "staked."

We decided it was now time to start for home, and as we again headed out into the channel the mist descended and the wind arose. When we passed Pender Harbor it was blowing half a gale, and it was a difficult matter keeping to the course. We did, however, and without incident we passed through Welcome Pass, down the coast line, and into the Narrows. Here the cards were cut for the remainder of the supplies, and Foggy won.

The Professor, the Big Fellow and I disembarked at the Gore avenue slip, while Tony went around with the Skipper to Chappell's wharf. Then quietly, and without pomp or ceremony, we each slipped back into our respective places as ordinary wage-earners and in a few days we forgot all about gold.

But we did not forget about the golden experience that we had among the beautiful waters through which we had cruised or the scenery that we had enjoyed among the mountain inlets. These things have left a lasting impression and made us resolve that gold or no gold, we would cruise north again next season.