

TOILERS OF THE COLUMBIA

BY PAUL DE LANEY.

Author of "Lord of the Desert," "Oregon Sketches," and other Pacific Coast Stories.

CHAPTER XX.

Sankala to the wheel.

Captain Budlong and the sheriff held a conference with Sankala. The girl had much to tell them that was of interest to their mission.

She had heard all of the plans of the Southsiders and had watched for the approach of the boat that she might intercept it and inform the officers of the treachery of the pilot and the purpose of the law-breaking gillnetters.

She had heard them, long before midnight, agree to postpone the attack upon the Southsiders until daylight on account of the delay of some of their reinforcements and had also heard them state that Gabe Jarvi, the pilot on the boat to bring the soldiers, would keep away from them until they had finished with the northside fishermen.

It had been agreed by Gabe that he would run about the river until daylight, pretending to be hunting for the fishermen, when in fact he would be studiously avoiding them. In the rankings of his treachery he had promised to take the boat as near the bar as he dared to approach where the sea was rough and would upset the stomachs of the citizen soldiers.

Sankala had escaped from the old shack while the men were out on the beach arranging for the attack and had watched for the coming of the boat. She knew that it would go on the southside of the island in order to avoid an encounter with the fishermen who were lined up on the northside, and when she saw the light of the vessel far up the river she launched a boat which was some distance from the plotting fishermen and struck out to intercept the big craft that she might inform the officers.

She had been successful, as the reader knows, but a dilemma now confronted the officers that was difficult to solve. Neither of the officers knew anything about the river and none of the men had the slightest idea about navigation. Sankala told them that the boat was heading straight for the ocean and that they had passed all of the fishermen, who were lined up at the head of the island for the early morning attack.

"This fellow Jarvi is a very mean man," said Sankala. "He is now under bond for the murder of his aged father and is said to be the most brutal of the ignorant Finlanders on the south side of the river. I do not believe he would stop at even running this boat out over the bar where it would surely perish."

"What shall we do?" inquired Captain Budlong to the sheriff.

"Arrest him and put him in irons," replied the county official.

"But who would take care of the boat?" inquired the captain.

The two men went out on deck. Sankala followed them. They could see the breakers now leaping high in the air far away to the front of the vessel, and knew that this was where the river met the waves of the ocean.

"The sounder seems to be carrying us straight to our death," said the captain.

"We will go to him and remonstrate," said the sheriff.

"And compel him at the muzzle of a gun to turn the course of the vessel," replied the captain of the militia.

The officers climbed the narrow stairway again and approached the pilot house. Jarvi disregarded their coming in sullenness. He held on to the wheel and kept the nose of the vessel pointing toward the breakers. Sankala had followed the officers and stood behind the smokestack where she awaited herself of its warmth and at the same time could listen to the interview with the pilot.

"You have brought us past the fishermen and are taking us toward the ocean," said Captain Budlong.

The pilot ignored him in the accustomed manner of steamboat men.

"We want an explanation," demanded Budlong.

"Yes, and we want it at once," spoke the sheriff, who was a man of personal courage and accustomed to the nature of the rough men at the mouth of the river.

"I am running this boat," replied Jarvi.

"But you are running her in the wrong direction," said the captain.

"You had better run her yourself then, since you know so much about it," retorted the pilot scornfully.

"We understand nothing about steamboating, but we do know that you are going in the wrong direction," replied the sheriff.

"Well, if you know nothing about running a boat you had better go down stairs," said Jarvi.

"We will do nothing of the kind," said Budlong who was also a spirited fellow. "I, as commander of the forces for which this vessel was chartered, demand that you turn back and proceed to the head of the island."

"I can't do it," replied Jarvi.

"Why?" asked the captain.

"I am in the south channel and will now be compelled to round the well point of the island and return on the north side," said the pilot.

"Why did you come so far out of the way?" asked the sheriff.

"I swept into the old south channel by accident and couldn't get out," replied Jarvi, doggedly.

The boat continued to head for the breakers. Jarvi looked coolly out into the dark ocean, now and then lit up by

a dash of spray, while the officers looked on in doubt. They did not believe the man. But still they did not believe that he would take them into a death which would carry him with them.

The point of the island butting out toward the bar was now close at hand. While the breakers from the ocean came nearly to its shores, the men believed that the island could be passed by the flat bottomed river boat.

But Jarvi headed straight on.

"Why do you not turn to the right?" asked Captain Budlong.

"We would run her into the sand," replied the pilot.

"But you are running her into the breakers," replied the sheriff.

"It is better for her there," coolly replied the treacherous man at the wheel.

The boat began to rock and leap like a wild animal which found itself suddenly in the clutches of an enemy. It was but a shell, only intended for the smooth waters of the river, and could not be expected to live on the ocean and especially on the river bar, one of the roughest places known to seamen. The men down stairs fell about the deck like drunkards and while some became deathly sick, others were alarmed.

Sankala could conceal her fears no longer. "That man," she said, "is taking us to our doom. The boat can't live in this sea. He could have passed the point of the island without coming into the breakers. The water is deep there."

She had come from her place of concealment and spoke with all of the earnestness of a woman, and the coolness of a man.

Jarvi looked around at her with a ghastly smile of contempt, but did not budge the wheel.

"Consider yourself a prisoner," said Captain Budlong.

"All right," replied the pilot. Then he released the wheel and walked out of the pilot house. The boat leaped and reeled. The propelling wheel alternately rose above and sank deep into the water revolving as uselessly as a fluttering mill. The vessel was left to the mercy of the breakers.

The last extremity had been reached. The sheriff drew his revolver, and, pointing it at Jarvi, said:

"Go back to that wheel and take us out of this or I shall shoot you like a dog!"

"All right," replied Jarvi in a contemptuous voice.

Then the man started as if he would enter the door of the pilot house, but he turned quickly and leaped into the foaming breakers below.

Sankala, keenly alive to the impending crisis, had leaped and had armed sprang to the wheel. She glanced down into the angry sea, and hurriedly examined the shore line to the north; then with distended muscles she bore down on the lever that governed the rudder, and rang the engineer to turn on the steam.

CHAPTER XXI.

Old Seadog Wounded.

"Is that a boat or light on shore?"

"It is a boat, you see she is to the right of Chinook Point and there is a wide channel of river there."

"She may bring the soldiers."

"I hope to God she will. Those fellows are reinforcing their strength and we can't hold out much longer against them."

Thus spoke old Seadog. A hand had lighted had just taken place on the water and while the encounter was a draw the northsiders knew that their strength was being exhausted while that of their enemy was being increased by force of numbers.

The only hope of the northsiders was the arrival of the state troops. The militia was not ordered out for the purpose of taking part in the fight, if it could be avoided, but to patrol the river and prevent bloodshed.

The state maintained the right of its citizens to fish to the middle of the stream wherever that might be determined to be, and claimed the right to protect their life and property north of that point.

It was a question of boundary line and as is usual where there are disputes about such matters, each side constantly encroached on the rights of the other. The first bloodshed had brought out the worst element of the southside and they determined to drive back or destroy even to the line of the north shore.

The boat came slowly down the river. The belligerent fishermen watched it with intense interest on both sides.

"I hope to God she brings the soldiers," repeated Old Seadog as it came nearer and nearer. "Gabe Jarvi will take care of them," casually remarked a southside leader to his companion.

It did contain the soldiers, and the reader already knows of its movements, and the treachery of its pilot.

After the boat passed away to the south of the island, the northsiders relaxed into a feeling almost hopeless.

The night was cool and calm, but an unusual darkness settled down upon the waters. The stars shown out and gave forth shadows that darkened the surface of the water. A black veil hung above it like a mantle. The contending fishermen lay upon their oars and arms. The first blush of dawn would bring the southsiders upon their enemy. The southsiders were counseling one another to stand firm to the end. If they could only stay the destruction of their traps until the arrival of the soldiers they feared no further trouble.

With the first flash of the red in the east the southsiders moved out to the north. They did not apprehend any danger of interference from the soldiers.

They left that to Gabe Jarvi. Their purpose was to make the fight final this morning. They knew that they possessed the numbers and should they succeed in destroying the northsiders' traps

and return to their homes on the southside the victory they had so long sought would be complete. When once at their homes the enormity of their crime would be lost sight of in a measure and the future would find them masters of the river.

When the traps were once destroyed it would be difficult to rebuild them, and through the prejudice they expected to create against the traps, they hoped to interest their own state and the United States congress against the construction of fishtraps in the Columbia river. They had already sent a long petition to their congressman, not only showing that the traps were destructive to the fish industry but were also detrimental and hazardous to navigation.

Axes, drags, arms and dynamite had been provided by the southsiders. They did not wish upon the whole to resort to bloodshed. They came, however, determined to win. They expected to do this through intimidation and overwhelming numbers.

But there were those among them who are always found in a mob organization, that preferred bloodshed to any other feature of the fight between the two factions.

The southsiders moved along like so many shadows to the attack. A couple of launches used for towing in the fishing boats on other occasions had been secured, and sailboats had been converted into rowboats for the morning attack. These were manned by large forces and formed a line for the main encounter.

Old Seadog had assembled his men near the center of the largest group of traps and took active command at this point. It meant more for him than for all the other northsiders combined and he interested himself accordingly.

He possessed an iron nerve and this was wrought up to the highest tension. It was the critical point of the long struggle and should he lose, thousands of dollars worth of property would pass from his hands. With his traps destroyed his cannery would be useless; with traps and cannery both out of use the men would be out of employment and could not pay their bills at his store; neither could they pay their rent. The traps were the life of the town and the town was owned by Seadog.

His dark flotilla rose and fell with the swells of the bay like a school of whales lying at rest, and old Seadog was as silent and watchful as the bull leader of such an aggregation. He was as rugged as a water dog and feared the waves no more than did old Neptune, who ruled them.

The suspense was finally relieved. In the shadows of the slowly approaching morn could be seen the boats of the southsiders stretching up and down the river like a great black wave. Their numbers looked as ominous as did their dark line of advance.

"Men, to your arms and oars!" hissed old Seadog. And this command was taken up and passed down the line.

The arms consisted principally of long poles. These had been cut for the double purpose of keeping back the boats of the enemy and at the same time to be used as cudgels in case of resistance and hand to hand conflict.

While it was a justifiable case for employing firearms, the fishermen found that they were not accustomed to their use and they realized further that the less bloodshed on the occasion the better it would be for their cause in the long run. This was the sentiment on both sides though many had brought along rifles and revolvers to use in the direst extremities.

(To be continued.)

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(Timber Land, Act June 3, 1878.)
NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

United States Land Office, The Dalles, Oregon, Nov. 23, 1901.—Notice is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the act of Congress of June 3, 1878, entitled "An act for the sale of timber lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," as extended to all the public land states by act of August 4, 1892,

of Blackduck, county of Beltrami, state of Minnesota, has on October 5, 1901, filed in this office his sworn statement No. 2187, for the purchase of the E 1/2 NW 1/4 and E 1/2 SW 1/4 of section 9 in Township No. 2 North, Range No. 1 E, W. M., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish his claim to said land before the register and receiver of this office at The Dalles, Oregon, on the 17th day of March, 1902.

He names as witnesses: August Wolden, of Benfield, Minnesota; Ernar Wila, of Portland, Oregon; Louis Nelson, of Deschutes, Oregon; R. W. Curran, of Viento, Oregon.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above-described lands are requested to file their claims in this office on or before the said 31st day of February, 1902.

1212a29 MICHAEL T. NOLAN, Register.

(Timber Land, Act June 3, 1878.)
NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

United States Land Office, The Dalles, Oregon, Nov. 21, 1901.—Notice is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the act of Congress of June 3, 1878, entitled "An act for the sale of timber lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," as extended to all the public land states by act of August 4, 1892,

of Waynoka, county of Woods, Territory of Oklahoma, has on April 12, 1901, filed in this office his sworn statement No. 2296, for the purchase of the NE 1/4 SW 1/4 and lot 4 of section No. 7, in Township No. 1 North, Range No. 11 E, W. M., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish his claim to said land before the register and receiver of this office at The Dalles, Oregon, on the 31st day of February, 1902.

He names as witnesses: Arthur R. French, of French, Albert M. Campbell, of Bert L. Wooley, all of Waynoka, Oklahoma; Edmund C. Miller, of Woodworth and Ray, all of Hood River, Oregon.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above-described lands are requested to file their claims in this office on or before the said 31st day of February, 1902.

1212a29 MICHAEL T. NOLAN, Register.

(Timber Land Act June 3, 1878.)
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United States Land Office, The Dalles, Oregon, Nov. 21, 1901.—Notice is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the act of Congress of June 3, 1878, entitled "An act for the sale of timber lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," as extended to all the Public Land States by act of August 4, 1892,

of Portland, county of Multnomah, state of Oregon, has this day filed in this office his sworn statement No. 235, for the purchase of the lots 3 and 4 and NE 1/4 SW 1/4 of section No. 7, in township No. 1 north, range No. 9 E, W. M., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish her claim to said land before Geo. T. Prather, U. S. Commissioner at his office in Hood River, Oregon, on the 31st day of February, 1902.

He names as witnesses: Lewis E. Morse, Charles Cantner, Isaac C. Morse and William F. Rand, all of Hood River, Oregon.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above-described lands are requested to file their claims in this office on or before the said 31st day of February, 1902.

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of Hood River, county of Wasco, state of Oregon, has this day filed in this office her sworn statement No. 232 for the purchase of the lots 3 and 4 and NE 1/4 SW 1/4 of section No. 35, in township 2 north, range 7 E, W. M., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish her claim to said land before Geo. T. Prather, U. S. Commissioner at his office at Hood River, Oregon, on the 31st day of February, 1902.

She names as witnesses: Judson H. Ferguson, James Ingalls, Lewis W. Clark, Charles L. Rogers, all of Hood River, Oregon.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above-described lands are advised to file their claims in this office on or before the said 31st day of February, 1902.

1212a29 MICHAEL T. NOLAN, Register.

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of Portland, county of Multnomah, state of Oregon, has this day filed in this office his sworn statement No. 235 for the purchase of the lots 3 and 4 and NE 1/4 SW 1/4 of section No. 35, in township 2 north, range 7 E, W. M., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish her claim to said land before Geo. T. Prather, U. S. Commissioner at his office at Hood River, Oregon, on the 31st day of February, 1902.

She names as witnesses: Judson H. Ferguson, James Ingalls, Lewis W. Clark, Charles L. Rogers, all of Hood River, Oregon.

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of Portland, county of Multnomah, state of Oregon, has this day filed in this office his sworn statement No. 235 for the purchase of the lots 3 and 4 and NE 1/4 SW 1/4 of section No. 35, in township 2 north, range 7 E, W. M., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish her claim to said land before Geo. T. Prather, U. S. Commissioner at his office at Hood River, Oregon, on the 31st day of February, 1902.

He names as witnesses: Glen Patrick, Isaac C. Morse, Lewis E. Morse and William F. Rand all of Hood River, Oregon.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above-described lands are requested to file their claims in this office on or before the said 31st day of February, 1902.

1212a29 MICHAEL T. NOLAN, Register.

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