

# Toilers of the Columbia

By PAUL DE LANEY

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



## CHAPTER VII.

### Toilers of the Columbia.

"How is the storm?"  
"Pretty high, father, but not so high as it was a week ago."  
"I do not believe I can go today, my child."  
"Well, father, I will try it alone. Dan Lapham fishes a trap alone, and I believe I can do so, too."  
"Oh, no, my child. Dan is a strong young man. He has not an equal on the bay, and you are my frail little girl. I know you are willing and your strength at times seems to be supernatural, but you could not fish a trap alone. It is out of the question."  
"But Dan's trap is near ours. You know he often helps me when you are tired and I would help him this morning in return for his services. You are not able to go, my father."  
"But I will go," said the old man as he drew himself feebly from the bed.

"My child, this work is getting too severe for you. For more than a year you have had to pull at the oars and your task has grown greater until your strength is over-taxed. Day by day I grow more feeble and day by day the burden is increased upon your shoulders. If I could only complete the link that still is missing I would place you where you could continue your studies and the old man that I am would spend his few remaining days in comfort as your ward. I know, Sankala, that you would not begrudge me so small an amount if it were yours."  
"No, father, it should all be yours. I have only one desire, and that is to place you where you shall have rest. You need rest, father, you need rest. No one nearly so old as you toils on the Columbia, and yet you go day after day, and often when you are too feeble even to stir. Listen, the storm rages this morning! You should not go at all."

Thus spoke Sankala to Ringwold. Another year had passed in their lives. The price of fish had gone down under the hard times and close competition and Ringwold had for many months been unable to make a support for the two alone. In fact, he had struggled beyond his strength to keep Sankala in school and the cran was close at hand. He was now giving out his last strength. Often he would become completely exhausted and lie for a time in the bow of the fishing boat while the girl worked on alone. It was on these occasions that good-hearted Dan Lapham had come to their rescue and assisted poor Sankala to do her work.

She had become hardened to the work, however, and frail as she was she could handle a boat and draw in the web of the fish trap with the skill of the average man. It was not her strength that did it, however. It was her will power and a nimble, quick motion of an expert nature that women possess over men.

Twice this morning had Ringwold fainted while Sankala was assisting him to dress and she had revived him and carried on the work. The child was accustomed to this and did not realize how serious was the condition of the old man.

When the fishermen reached the beach the waves were coming in with a rush. They threw the drift wood further back with each pulsation. Out in the darkness through the mist and the rain the white caps could be seen leaping about like the salmon they were pursuing. The strongest fisherman paused this morning. They were often compelled to remain ashore until late and even over-day. But this was always a disappointment. The fish ran better when there was a storm and the hard times now urged the toilers on their duty.

While the men were thus pausing from indecision Ringwold and Sankala appeared. Without seeming to notice the disturbed condition of the bay they showed their boat into the water and while Ringwold steered Sankala threw her oars against the seething current. They gradually mingled with the dark phantoms which danced upon the sea until they were lost from view.

The fishermen had become so accustomed to the dangers of their life that they thought but little about it. What to the stranger would have appeared foolhardy was to them duty and choice. But the storm this morning was unusually high and that intuition akin to the instinct that protects animals from destruction, warned the fishermen to be cautious.

But when Sankala braved the waters with her aged companion the most daring of the fishermen followed. Dan Lapham, smarting under his former timidity, was first seen to shoot out in his boat in pursuit of the two who worked a trap near his own. Then one by one the others followed.

The fish traps were constructed along the entire north shore of the river, which is Baker's bay, from Cape Disappointment to McGowan's Point, a distance of a dozen miles or more. The middle of the river was the dividing line. The river is the dividing line between the two states and the fishermen from the two states claim their rights, even to a hair's breadth.

The fishermen on the north had traps while those on the south had nets. The cannerymen on the south side of the river owned most of the nets and old Seadog owned most of the traps on

the north. The fishermen were employed by the day on the nets and given so much for each fish captured. The trappers were employed by the day or worked the traps on shares. All the fishermen used row boats peculiar for their work. Save with rare exceptions the boats were manned by two, both at the nets and the traps. One was called the puller and the other the fisherman. While the latter tended his nets or traps the puller guided the boat to suit the work.

The nets were known as gill nets. These were stretched out their full length in the water, which was many feet and even yards. Floaters were placed along the top of the net at proper distances to hold it in position while sinkers carried the bottom of the net deep into the water. The meshes of the net were of such size as would permit the entrance of the average fishes head. When once it entered the meshes the gills were fastened and the fish held prisoner until removed by the fishermen.

The traps, one of which Ringwold and Sankala tended, were constructed differently. A large figure was formed in the shallow water by the driving of piles. It represented a heart and on either side extended long wings. The wings enclosed a semi-circle facing the ocean and immediately in the rear of where they came together was the large heart. A netting, called web, was stretched along the piles from the surface of the water to the bottom of the bay. By this means a perfect heart with wings was perfected.

The valve of the heart opened immediately at the conjunction of the wings. This was at the sharp point of the "V" which is formed at the top of the heart.

As a trap for fish it is a success. The salmon come up from the ocean and enter the mouth of the river fresh and strong. They run in great schools and follow the shallow channels, nailing their spawn as they go farther up the stream.

When the noses of the fish strike the web forming the wings of the heart, they follow the wings to the center. Here they find their way through the opening into the heart. When once into the heart their capture is complete. They circle about the place passing the same apex of the heart through which they entered without ever discovering it as a means of escape, and are thus held as captives until the fishermen take them into their boats.

They sometimes enter these traps by the hundreds within 24 hours. They range in weight from five to 20 pounds and larger.

It was such a trap as this that Sankala and Ringwold tended for old Seadog at wages barely sufficient to sustain them at best.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A Morning of Disaster.

"Hello, Captain!"  
"Hello, lookout!"  
"The sea is high and the fishermen are venturing out."

"All right, I will send out the men." Cape Disappointment life saving station nestled beneath the rocks of the cliffs that extended far out over the sea. Many a mariner had met disappointment here. For from the sea the spot looked like a place of refuge from the storm. But he who dared to trust it had often been dashed to death against its walls.

Shaken and added, as it were, while crossing the river bar, the mightiest rovers of the deep had been broken up here like glass upon the rocks.

It was the treachery of its appearance that gave name to the place. It was the great loss of life that had caused the government to establish a life saving station at the foot of the cliffs.

But the life savers had a double duty to perform. The purpose for which they were originally placed there was insignificant to the duty that later developed. They were provided by the government to watch incoming vessels and save the lives of ship wrecked seamen and travelers on the deep, but later it was found that a hundred calls came from those whose lives were spent on the river to where one came from those who lived on the sea.

Like guardians of children the life savers stood upon watch and as the fishermen came and so were they on duty.

From the early hours of morning until nearly noon, and from early afternoon until late in the evening the fishermen dotted the river in their tiny boats and struggled with their nets verging on the very danger line where ocean and river met. Once across this line and the frail craft of the fisherman was at the mercy of the undertow and many a toiler was dragged to his death ere the government protectors of life could reach the spot in boats prepared for the purpose.

The lighthouse stood upon the highest point of the cape overlooking the sea. Beneath its shadow stood a small structure barely large enough inside for one man to stand, turn about and sit down. It was built of glass save that its framework and roof was made of iron. The glass was thick and almost as strong as iron for it required strength to withstand the terrible storms that beat upon it from the sea.

Its furnishings were a small stove, a stool, a pair of strong glasses and a

telephone. It was occupied night and day by one man at a time. One was on watch from noon until midnight and the other from midnight until noon. Not even a light was allowed for it was not needed by day and by night it would blind the watch so that he could not look out upon the ocean and river.

Throughout the day he peered out through his glasses over the sea and river and bay. At night he followed the great revolving light in the lighthouse above his head and watched for objects on the water while he looked further out for the smaller lights of vessels.

It was on the morning that Sankala and Ringwold had put forth into the storm that the conversation took place over the telephone between the lookout and the captain of the life saving crew recorded at the beginning of this chapter.

The lookout had seen the small craft battling with the surf on the bosom of the bay in the dim light shot out from overhead. He could feel the storm blowing against the structure which enclosed him; besides the register showed a high velocity of wind.

It foreboded a day of hard work. Fishermen would venture forth in dangerous storms and this compelled the life savers to stand on constant guard. They would enter their boats and beat along the danger line like sentinels to keep the fishermen from rowing to their death. And in spite of this precaution scores find watery graves at the mouth of the Columbia every year.

As the fishermen fought their way out on this stormy morning the life savers shot out from under the cliffs toward the bar. Here bordering on the danger line themselves they patrolled the river to rescue those less capable than themselves to withstand the receding tide.

"Hello, captain!"  
"Hello, lookout!"  
"Signal distress off west end of Jetty Sand spit. A boat is heading for the breakers!"

"Bing, bing, bing!" went three guns.

"Hello, captain!"  
"Hello, lookout!"

"Signal distress off Pacific rocks. Boat seems to be capsized and men clinging to upturned hull!"

"Bing, bing!" went two guns.

After a few minutes pause the captain's phone rang again.

"Hello, captain!"  
"Hello, lookout!"

"Signal distress off Disappointment rocks! Boat shoving for breakers like a rocket! Girl at the oars; is powerless—think it is Sankala, the old chemist's daughter."

"Bing, bing, bing, bing, bing!" rang out five shots from the cliffs below. This was the most dangerous point at the mouth of the river and was called the hell gap, for it was here that so many fishermen had lost their lives.

The swift receding current forned a sort of maelstrom at the point of the rocks and when once fairly in its clutches boats were swept like chaff into the breakers and disappeared like shot thrown into the water.

The life savers knew the signals as well as their alphabet and rushed to the rescue like firemen to the call of fire. And when the signal came for Disappointment rocks the sturdy boys lying off that point bent to their oars with all their might.

The life savers were divided up into crews and each of these divisions covered given points. The men selected for the most dangerous places were the most experienced and dared the elements as veteran soldiers face the death line in battle.

While the rescuers were hurrying to the calls of distress the captain had ascended to the lookout's station. Day was already dawning and while signals were given at night by the discharge of firearms, they were given in day time with flags from lookout point.

With the advancing day the river and bay presented a busy appearance. A speck here to the natural eye was revealed through the strong glasses to be a fisherman's boat struggling with the nets or waves. Some were going, some were coming. Each was oblivious of the other. One was dashing to its ruin at another point and life savers were going to its rescue, while the men in danger were often unconscious of the fact.

But in the work which was so common as to bring no excitement to the veteran captain of the crew he surveyed the waters as a general does his battlefield.

This morning, however, a change came over his face. He saw a frail fisherman's boat being swept toward Disappointment rocks. Standing up working her useless oars with all her strength was Sankala. The glasses revealed her firm features and while she looked into the jaws of death she was as calm as the rocks which awaited her approach. Ringwold lay motionless in the boat. Whether dead or asleep the glasses did not disclose. It was evident that they had never reached the fish trap for the boat was as empty as it had been when they had first started out.

The captain raised the signal flag high above his head and waved it five times in succession. But here the life boat which was giving Sankala's boat a stern chase, passed behind some rocks that had just hidden her and several seconds must pass before they would appear again.

## An Angry Landlady.

Boarding No. 1—What's that loud thumping noise in the kitchen?  
Boarding No. 2—It's the landlady hammering the steak and wishing it was the beef trust.—Chicago Tribune.

Mayor McClellan asserts that he would prefer to be Mayor of Greater New York than Governor of the Empire State.

## AN AUTUMN REVERIE.

'Tis autumn—and off together,  
Over the hills and away,  
We go in golden weather,  
My lady and I, to-day.  
And sit on the hillside sunny  
Where the purple grapes hang low  
And watch the clouds a-floating by  
And their shadows come and go.  
We hear the clear pipe of autumn—  
The call of the hiding quail—  
And see the flash of gold as he flies  
Over the old fence rail.  
My lady's face is dreamy,  
And her thoughts seem far away,  
As she twines the leaves for a garland,  
To trim her hat to-day.  
"Of what are you thinking?" I ask her,  
And she lifts her eyes so brown;  
"I was wondering," she said—the mischief!  
"Will the new hatbrims turn up or down?"  
—Millinery Trade Review.

## PALMISTRY.

ALONE James did it. I have told him since that I owe him a debt of gratitude which I never, never can repay. His reply, that he would rather I owed him something which I could repay, touched me deeply, but had no other immediate result.

I must give you his name in full: James Arthur Brocklebank. Perhaps some day will find me teaching my children to lip that dear name at their mother's knee. This is what they do in novels, though I should not think "Brocklebank" allows of much scope for liping. Still, there it is.

It was at a fancy bazaar. Most of us at the hall were helping in some way. Our dear hostess was selling—what are those things that ladies buy?—while her daughters had sweet and scent and tobacco stalls, and so forth. I thought at first that I was the only unemployed one until James strolled up.

"Hello," he said; "you're doing nothing."  
"I wanted to help," I exclaimed. "My idea was to keep a tobaccoist's stall, and then one could smoke cigarettes all the time. The assistants in shops always do that to advertise their goods."

"Oh! And I suppose assistants in sweet shops eat sweets all the time?"

"Of course."

"Have you ever thought," said James, reflectively, "what a tired time the right-hand man of a butcher must have?"

"Look here," I said, "did you come to talk to me?"

"No; I want you to have your fortune told. There's a palmist here."

"But I haven't a fortune."

"You don't want one. Half a crown's enough."

I went with him under protest. It was a very dark tent into which we plunged, and I could see no fortune teller.

"Where is she?" I asked impatiently.

"The other side of the curtain," said James; "but you mustn't go in. You put your hand through there, and she is on the other side. Of course, if she saw you, it would spoil everything."

"Who is it?"

"Never mind."

I put my hand through. Some one took it, and it seemed as though she were going over the lines of my palm with a pencil.

"You are quick-tempered, slow-minded, thin-skinned—"

"Fat-headed, go on!" I said bitterly.

"Just you wait till I see you."

"I'm awfully sorry," said the voice.

"I don't think I have the right hand."

"Of course you haven't. It's the left."

"Yes, that's right. Oh, I see! I was looking at it upside down. You are modest, clever, athletic and of an artistic temperament."

James laughed unkindly.

"Did you laugh?" asked a voice.

"Certainly not!" I replied. "I wouldn't think of such a thing. But you are only saying things I know already. Won't you tell me my future?"

"You will be married within a year."

I gasped.

"Did you gasp?" asked a voice.

"That was the impression I intended to convey. But are you sure?"

"Quite, quite sure. The line of the heart says so."

"Heart lines, old chap!" said Jim, nudging me.

"What did you say?" asked the voice.

"Nothing," I answered. "What you heard was a hitherto honored and respected friend being kicked. But I say, tell me. When shall I be engaged?"

"Before the end of the week."

"Hi! Jim, quick!" I shrieked. "What's the day now?"

"The thirteenth," said Jim.

I shot a glance of scorn and loathing at him.

"Sorry, old man," he said, hurriedly. "It's Saturday."

"Why—good Lord—then I shall get engaged to-night!"

"Why not?" asked Jim.

"Why not? O, you idiot! She's not even in the house. She's in London."

"Who is?"

"Who?—why—O, nobody. You see what I mean. There's nobody in the house that—"

"It's no good," said James with a grin.

"You've given yourself away."

I turned back to the curtain.

## GEORGE FRISBIE HOAR, STATESMAN.



GEORGE F. HOAR

In the death of George Frisbie Hoar, of Massachusetts, the United States Senate loses one of its most honored and influential members and the country a statesman of a type which is growing rare. It has been said that the chiefest of a nation's liars is he who writes the epitaphs of a nation's dead; yet the work of the man who chisels "Statesman" on the monument of George Frisbie Hoar is as ruggedly honest as is the enduring stone.

Senator Hoar was one of the few surviving representatives of the "old school" which dominated in public affairs before the era of so-called commercialism set its seal upon American politics. Like Webster and Clay and Sumner, of ante-bellum days, and like Trumbull and Morrill and Vest of the later period, Senator Hoar revered the Constitution and measured his Americanism by the Declaration of Rights. With him, as with them, politics was a sentiment in which "business" had no place.

Senator Hoar was splendidly equipped for his position as a leader among American statesmen. He was of scholarly tastes and inclinations. His general learning was vast and his familiarity with the details of national administrative work was extraordinary. While not an orator as the word is usually accepted, he had the eloquence that comes of sincere conviction and the capacity for intense feeling. He will be remembered not so much for these gifts, however, as for his determined devotion to principle, his high ideals and his absolute freedom from any sort of participation in the game of politics as played by the average politician. In this he has set a standard of disinterested patriotism which is altogether too rare.

"Are you still there?" I asked. "Are you there, are you there, are you there, are you—"

"I've finished, thank you," came the voice.

"But are you quite sure about being engaged by the end of the week?"

"Quite, quite sure," said the voice a little shakily.

James and I went out.

"Who is she?" I asked. "I didn't recognize the voice."

"Oh, she'd take good care about that."

"Well, anyhow, it's impossible."

We entered the refreshment tent and drank things. Jim tried to be facetious about my rapidly approaching engagement. He even misquoted poetry to me. Things about love and so on.

"Did you make that up yourself?" I said wearily. "It's very bad."

"Why, it's Shakespeare, man," he said indignantly.

"O, I thought it was you."

"I don't mind having it," he said.

"Kindly observe the new Swan of Avon."

"Are swans such great drinkers, then? I didn't know."

"You're in a nasty horrid temper, and I shall leave you," said Brocklebank.

I watched him go through the door of the tent. Some one was coming up. He went on and spoke to her. It was a lady. He came back with her and brought her up to me. Good Lord! It was Kate!

"He'll give you tea," said James.

"I must go. Good-by."

He raised his hat and went off.

"It is impossible," I said.

"Well, what's the matter?" asked Kate. "Aren't you glad to see me?"

"Go away. You're in London."

"I've just this moment come. You knew I was coming, didn't you?"

"No, I've hardly seen any one. I've only just come myself. Why, what train—"

"Never mind the train," said Kate, hurriedly. "I want some tea."

We had tea. All the time I was wondering if I dared "to put it to the touch, to win or lose it all." At last I took out a penny and tossed it. If it turned tall, why then, so would I. But if not—

"Heads," said Kate.

"It is. That settles it. After all, who am I to blast the reputation of a respectable and, for aught I know, beautiful palmist?"

"I don't know what you are talking about," complained Kate.

"Kate," I said, impressively, "it's written on my hand"—and I showed her my hand—"that I shall get engaged to-day."

"Is that what they call shorthand?"

"It's palmistry. The line of heart has done something exuberant."

"Well, I hope she'll have you," said Kate.

"Do you think she will?"

"You should ask her."

"I am," I said, and I took her hand.

"Dear, do you think she will?"

"I don't know," said Kate, looking down. "Perhaps she might."

"Only perhaps? Kate, say you're sure she will."

"Quite, quite sure," said a voice.

Something in the words struck me.

She looked up at me with a smile. Then I began to understand.

"Kate!" I cried.

"Isn't it a beautiful day?" said Kate.—Black and White.

## SOME LIVELY BALLOONING

### Aeronauts Caught in Menacing Thunder Pack with Active Lightning.

For the first mile while slowly rising, the balloon zigzagged between the lower currents, until at approximately 3,000 feet it encountered a main sweep of air, which at that height was following the course of the valley below. The horizon had been clear at starting and the impression was as we sailed along in the current that we should have a fair passage, unless some cloud, not yet apparent, in our wake could ride after us and overtake us at a higher level, where wind velocity is generally greater. Perhaps, therefore, we paid insufficient heed to a murky veil ahead of us, which began gathering and deepening and blotted out the view. We were soon enveloped in this gray curtain and thus its true appearance was lost to us; but at Newbury, our starting ground, a large crowd was watching us entering a vast and most menacing thunder pack, and was wondering why we did not come down.

The first real warning which we had of our predicament was a flash of lightning close on our quarter, answered by another on our other side, and almost before we could realize it we found we were in the very focus of a furious storm which was being borne on an upper wind, and a wild conflict was already raging around us. There was our own fast current carrying us westward; there was the storm cloud slightly above us hurrying to the east, and added to these there now descended a pitiless down draught of ice cold air and hail. We were doubtless in a cloud which was discharging lightning over a wide area, each flash, however, issuing from the immediate vicinity of the balloon, and the idea formed on the writer's mind was that many flashes were level—that is, as if from one part of the cloud to another. Any that reached the ground must from our known position have been at least a mile long.

There was another idea forced upon the party, which was that they would be more comfortable and far safer elsewhere, and when suitable opportunity occurred a descent was made to earth.—Longman's Magazine.

Main Allegation True.  
Mrs. Gadabout—People are saying you called on Mrs. Verdigris the other day and got a setback.

Mrs. Upjohn—What a willful perversion of truth! I called on her and got a set of Dickens back that I'd lent her two years before.—Chicago Tribune.

Don't Brag.  
"Don't brag because you happens to be a little lucky," said Uncle Eben. "If de hen wouldn't cackle so loud about de egg she done laid de white folks wouldn't be so lib'le to rob de nes!"—Washington Star.

When it comes to calling people from their beds the fire bell double discounts the church bell.