TOILERS OF THE COLUMBIA

By Paul De Laney

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CHAPTER III—Continued.

Left master of the situation, old Seadog pursued his investigations. The ship had filled with sand in the neighborhood of the captain's quarters. It was this very point that attracted the crafty fisherman's attention.

Shovels were secured and the boys were ordered to delve their way into the captain's room. It was easy to find the door since the sand only extended about half way to the ceiling of the cabin.

While the boys were shoveling back the dripping sand, old Seadog was alternately on the lookout inside and out. He let nothing on the stranded vessel escape his observation and kept a constant vigilance out over the bay to see that no one was approaching.

"If I can make sure that they were aboard my future is no longer an uncertainty," said the old man as he mused to himself. "It was impossible for any one to survive," he continued. "The whole crew and all aboard went to the bottom of the sea and the crabs will have disfigured their bodies beyond recognition before they rise to the surface. And even should they escape these busy scavengers they may drift back to the ocean where they will furnish food for the larger fish."

The fishermen were already suspicious of old Seadog and when driven from the wreck at the muzzle of his gun they immediately returned to the village and spread the news.

"The officers ought to take the matter in hand," said one.

"Yes, he is up to stealing the ship and cargo," said another.

The justice of the peace was appealed to as well as the village constable, but these two functionaries declared that they had only jurisdiction on the land and not on the sea.

"But the pillaging should be stopped," insisted the honest fishermen.

When the justice of the peace saw that his neighbors were bent on some kind of legal action, he informed them that the higher courts had jurisdiction on the waters; that the government itself would act if it were informed; that the vessel was a foreign one and that the consul of the country from which the vessel came would protect it from the hands of the land pirates.

Astoria then had her customs officials and she had a United States commissioner. Cape Dissappointment had her lighthouse, but it was in the early days of telephone and telegraph service at that point and there was no way to communicate with the government authorities at Astoria, sixteen miles away on the south bank of the river, except by crossing the stream in a small boat.

But those men of the river were not slow in arranging for the trip. A small sail boat was launched and three of the most intelligent went aboard and were soon cutting their way across north of Sand Island as fast as the wind could carry them.

Old Seadog's watchful eye did not let them escape unnoticed, and he knew that ordinary matters did not prompt his neighbors on such a journey.

"Dig for your lives, boys; lift out that sand! We may have trouble before our job is done. Some of those halfbreeds have gone to Astoria to raise trouble and we must get well and through before the storm blows back."

Old Seadog did not mean to disturb the property left on the vessel. He had a personal motive in view. His mission was not in quest of gold; neither would he have carried away the smallest thing of intrinsic value, but would have risked his life and that of his boys for that which he sought.

While delving their way into the cabin they came upon many valuables. These were cast aside as so much rubbish. Gold and silver trinkets were thrown upon the heaps of sand as if they were of no value.

It was several hours after they had begun work and old Seadog was already casting uneasy glances toward the south side of the river when the boys struck the sea captain's iron chest.

While battling with the storm the rocking, tossing vessel had shaken this heavy receptacle from its usual place and had hurled it about the room like a ping pong ball. But like a wedge it had been driven into a heap of furniture and baggage jammed together in one corner of the room and backed by these and the heavy bank of sand piled upon the top of the whole, it seemed a thing as solid and immovable as the hull of the vessel itself.

It was at this crisis that old Seadog discovered a revenue cutter approaching from the south, at whose helm floated the stars and stripes.

"Exert yourselves, boys, exert yourselves for your lives, or all is for naught! those fools have informed the officers and they will soon be upon us," said the old man.

Then they all put to and gave their energy to securing the iron chest. The old man abandoned his lookout and joined the boys in the work. The timbers were interlocked about it and at the same time deeply imbedded in the sand.

"Get the capstan lever, boys; get the capstan. We must have her now or it will be too late!" exclaimed the excited old Seadog.

Some crowbars had been unearthed from the ship's tool room and with the addition of the capstan lever they set to work with renewed vigor.

"Pry down to the left, boys, pry down to the left!" shouted the father.

Already the exhaust of the government launch could be heard as it slowed up to weigh anchor at a safe distance from the sandbar.

It would only require the lowering of a boat and a few strokes of the oars to land the officers upon the fishermen.

Fortune had always favored old Seadog and it favored him again. With a heavy lurch they brought the chest from under the timbers that held it down.

Fortune doubly favored him. When the iron receptacle had been turned round it was found that the keys still remained in the lock. The captain had possibly attempted to open it at the last moment and had been driven out by the waves.

"Rush outside, boys; rush outside; I will do the rest!" commanded the stern old parent. The boys were barely in time. They were confronted by the officers immediately upon climbing to the deck.

"In the name of the government, men, we proclaim you our prisoners," calmly spoke one of the officers.

The boys looked bewildered but spoke not in the absence of their father, to whom they had always looked for advice and guidance.

But the old man was busily engaged. With a surprising quickness he had opened the chest and tore from it the register roll. Then he closed the chest, locked it and cast the keys into the water at the lower end of the hole.

Then he climbed out through a porthole at the rear, hurriedly secreted the roll in the sand at a safe distance from the vessel, climbed back through and joined his boys who were prisoners on deck. But before he had hidden the parchment upon which the ship's register was made he had turned through it quickly. His eyes had rested upon two names. This brought from him the ejaculation:

"Old Seadog rejoices at last; old Seadog rejoices at last; old Seadog has cause to rejoice! In the language of the convict who swam to the Diamond Isles, 'the world belongs to old Seadog now!' "

CHAPTER IV.

Odd Companions.

After releasing the old man and the child from their entanglement they were carried to the nearest fisherman's cabin. The man, though lashed to the spar and pinioned to the earth by the driftwood was held no closer than was the babe. His arms held it like a vise. They had been so long about it that they had formed like clasps around the body and, benumbed by the cold, they were as difficult to pry apart as are the creepers which hold a vine in its upward climb.

Young as it was, only a few weeks old, the infant possessed more vitality than did its aged protector. It stretched forth its little hands and legs with surprising strength and cried pitifully, though in a voice that showed that its lungs were still strong and healthy.

But the old man scarcely breathed. He opened his dull eyes for a moment and stared blankly into the faces of those directly in the line of his vision, and then closed them. He was unconscious of all that was going on about him. His long gray hair hung in strands about his face and neck. His silken gray beard was matted with the sand and trash of the beach. But for the slow pulsation of his heart he would have been pronounced dead by those around him.

The women were running about as busy as only women can be when they are doing some great act of charity, and their devotion was increased by the fact that some dead mother's child had fallen into their hands, and each felt a double responsibility on this account.

Some were bringing dry clothing from the wardrobe of their own children, others were warming cow's milk in a small basin on the stove, while a more thoughtful mother was sharing the breast of her own babe with the little waif. And those good women smiled with tears in their eyes as the little stranger tugged greedily at its new found mother's breast.

"Oh, it will get along all right," said one.

"Yes, so long as it eats, the signs are good," said another.

"Just so you don't give it too much," remarked an elderly woman who was watching the proceedings.

"But I fear it is all over with the old gent," whispered one of the women who had just returned from the adjoining room where the men were working with the child's elderly companion.

The men were rubbing his arms and legs, and irons were being heated to place at his feet. Some brandy had been forced through his lips, but it was slow in showing encouraging effects.

His eyes were fixed in his head, his features were as pale as death. His firm lips were set as if in his last conscious moment he had fixed his determination upon some given object.

He was a little more than five feet as he lay upon the bed. Still he was rather plump and well-kept for his age. But his skin was smooth and his muscles soft, which indicated that he had not been a man of toil.

When the hair was pushed back from his face a broad, intelligent forehead was exposed. Had those fishermen been able to read phrenological signs they would have discovered that the aged man before them was no ordinary being. His intellectual forehead, small feet and hands, dress and general appearance indicated that he had followed one of the professions.

In the meantime the village physician arrived and aided in resuscitating the old man. The child gradually passed away to sleep after its wants were satisfied and slept as soundly as if its own mother still hovered over it. It was a soft sweet sleep such only as is seen in the repose of the innocent before the trials and tribulations of life have come to their knowledge.

It knew not of its lost mother and father, the fearful storm at sea, the hours in the water, the terrible night among the driftwood on the beach. It slept in a repose akin to perfect bliss.

"She's a darling little girl," said the woman who had shared her own child's clothing with the little sleeper.

"What pretty blue eyes she has," remarked she who had warmed the milk.

"Such dainty little limbs," said the woman who had run about the place nervously trying to do everything and had accomplished but little.

"But look what pretty features and sweet lips," said the one who had nursed the child to sleep, with an air of superiority.

The child did not exceed one month in age. It was probably younger. Its light hair, fair skin and pretty blue eyes even at so young an age showed that it was a born beauty. Still its features were much like those of the Finlanders, so many of whom had settled along the Columbia in the fishing districts.

"They think the old man is dying," said one of the women in a whisper who had been watching the men work with the aged sufferer.

"Oh, such a pity," remarked the women in a subdued chorus.

"We will never learn the child's name or anything about the fate of its mother or father."

"It must have been born on the voyage," said one, "for they say the ship was a Finnish vessel and has been many weeks at sea."

"Old Seadog's action in the matter is a mystery to everybody. Why he made such quick haste to board the ship is beyond all understanding. And he actually pointed firearms at the men when they attempted to go aboard the vessel," said a woman who had just been talking with her husband on the outside. "But the officers will ravel the matter out," she continued as she remembered the details of the episode as given her by her husband.

Then there was a commotion outside. A fisherman had just arrived from the sand spit. He had brought news of the arrival of officers at the scene of the wreck.

"Old Seadog and his boys are all under arrest!" was whispered from lip to lip.

(To be continued)

THE DAYS GONE BY.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!
The apples in the orchard, and the pathway through the rye;
The chirrup of the robin, and the whistle of the quail
As he piped across the meadows sweet as any nightingale;
When the bloom was on the clover, and the blue was in the sky,
And my happy heart brimmed over—in the days gone by.

In the days gone by, when my naked feet were tripped
By the honeysuckle tangles where the water lilies dipped,
And the ripples of the river lipped the moss along the brink,
Where the placid-eyed and lazy-footed cattle came to drink,
And the tilting snipe stood fearless of the truant's wayward cry,
And the splashing of the swimmer, in the days gone by.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!
The music of the laughing lip, the luster of the eye;
The childish faith in fairies, and Aladdin's magic ring—
The simple, soul-reposing, glad belief in everything,
For life was like a story, holding neither sob nor sigh,
In the golden, olden glory of the days gone by.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

The Other Fellow's Job.

There's a craze among us mortals that is cruel hard to name,
Wheresoe'er you find a human you will find the case the same;
You may seek among the worst of men or seek among the best,
And you'll find that every person is precisely like the rest.
Each believes that his real calling is along some other line
Than the one at which he's working—take, for instance, yours and mine.
From the meanest "me-too" creature to the leader of the mob,
There's a universal craving for "the other fellow's job."

There are millions of positions in the busy world to-day,
Each a drudge to him who holds it, but to him who doesn't, play;
Every farmer's broken-hearted that in youth he missed his call,
While that same unhappy farmer is the envy of us all.
Any task you care to mention seems a vastly better lot
Than the one especial something which you happen to have got.
There's but one sure way to smother Envy's heartache and her sob;
Keep too busy, at your own, to want "the other fellow's job."

—Success.

The Word Picnic.

The derivation of the word picnic is uncertain. In London Notes and Queries of 1853 attempts were made to trace its origin.

One correspondent says:

"Under a French form the word appears in a speech of Robespierre, 'C'est ici kqu'il doit m'accuser, et non dans les piquenique.' An earlier instance occurs in one of Lord Chesterfield's letters, dated October, 1748."

Another writer of the same date tries to trace the word from France into Italy. Starting with the assumption that piquenique in French implies a party at which each guest provides some particular dish or performs some special duty, he finds the Italian expressions nicchia (duty) and piccola (a trifling service), and from these he coins piccola nicchia (picnic).

A French encyclopedia, 1843, has it that the word is compounded of the simple English pick (to choose) and nick (in the nick of time, on the spur of the moment). In France the term is also used for indoor picnics.

A Domestic Chef.

Mrs. De Style (after giving her order for dinner)—Can you remember all that?

New Girl—Sure, it's a French chef yez think Oi am.

"It is our ordinary company dinner. Guests are expected, you know."

"Wull, mum. Oi'll just make yez an Oirish stew, an' thin yez can sort the things out to suit y'rsilves, an' call thim as many nose-crackin' French names as yez loike."

The Other Woman

"Of course," said Polly, shoving her heel down into her skate with a little tramp and striking out over the ice like a bird learning to hop, "it was the fault of the other woman!"

We had been talking about the breaking off of Abbingdon Dare's engagement to the auburn-haired Downing girl, and of how Miss Downing had discovered the other flirtation by listening down the dumb waiter shaft.

"Of course," I agreed. "It is always the fault of the other woman."

Polly gurgled mirthfully and I thought satirically.

"Surely," I asked anxiously, "you do not blame the dumb waiter shaft? I never saw a dumb waiter shaft with peroxide hair and a dimple in its chin."

Polly gave me a reproachful glance.

"And," I went on, "you certainly do not blame Miss Downing for breaking it off when she found out——"

"And, of course," broke in Polly, "I could not possibly blame—Abbingdon Dare, for instance."

"Won't you take hold of my hands, Polly? The ice is—er—very slippery."

For answer, Polly buried both her hands deep in her muff and continued to mope along in jerky little semicircles.

"And now," she went on, ignoring a brilliant pigeon wing I had cut for her benefit, "the auburn-haired Downing girl and the other girl don't speak."

"Then," said I, bringing up beside Polly with a flourish, "Miss Downing blames the other woman, too?"

Polly looked at me as though knowing things like that were the most natural thing in the world.

"Of course!" she declared emphatically. "A woman always does blame the other woman. That is the funniest thing about it. She seems just as anxious to make a pack-horse for the masculine sins out of some other woman as the man himself. I suppose tomorrow that, if you held one hand over your heart and the other over the family Bible and took an oath of allegiance, and if the very next moment I detected you admiring a pretty face——"

"It would have to have a brown pompadour above it and a dimple in its left cheek," I declared, looking at Polly.

Polly blushed.

"Or saying nice things to another girl in the conservatory," she went on, "Everybody would expect me to blame the pretty face or the other girl. But I shouldn't!" and in her momentary excitement Polly forgot to be frightened, and almost did some real skating.

"Well," I grumbled, "why shouldn't you?"

"Because," said Polly, "it wouldn't be the girl who owed me allegiance."

"Then I suppose," I remarked, "that you approve of the fact that Miss Downing has cut Abbingdon Dare off irretrievably?"

"I would," said Polly, "if she had; but she hasn't. He'll only have to wait until the first burst of temper wears off and then come around with a pathetic story of how the other woman lured him——"

"And invited him to call."

"And fed him with flattery and lobster a la Newburgh."

"And told him a sad little story of her past life."

"And actually pursued him to his office."

"And had her brother bring him up to dinner."

"And sent him pink notes—that he couldn't, in politeness, refuse to answer."

"Well, that's the way they do it," said I.

"Do—what?"

Polly had to wave her arms wildly to catch her balance.

"Polly," said I, "the moment a man becomes devotedly attached to some one girl all the other girls in her set begin to find him fascinating. I fancy it's something like setting a new style. If one of you wears a fur hat or a feather boa immediately all the rest of you buy fur hats and feather boas. If one of you finds a man worth while all the rest of you step into line to see if you can't wrest him from her. Added to this fashion, the very fact that he is not attainable makes him all the more popular. That's a little twist in the feminine make-up, Polly, dear."

"Mr. Sylvester," said Polly—and the ice looked warm beside her voice—"I can skate quite as well if you do not hold my hand. An engaged man—or a married man, either," she continued, "is exactly like the little fox terrier who couldn't be made to come out of his house until they tied him up. Then he chewed up the rope and began romping around the back yard. The very moment a man feels the cords of an engagement or the bonds of matrimony binding him he wants to slip them off. Why, a man who would laugh at pink notes and snub the girl who pursued him with lobsters before marriage will succumb to them like a violet to the sun or an icicle to the fire after matrimony. But I don't blame him!" declared Polly, trying to wriggle her hand away.

"Neither do I!" I agreed, enthusiastically, clasping the hand tighter than ever.

"I blame the woman," announced Polly.

"Which woman, Polly?" said I. "The other woman?"

"Why, no," said Polly. "The other—that is, both of them. Now if they would only join hands——"

"What!" I exclaimed. "Two women?"

"And co-operate for the punishment and confusion of the man——"

"Polly Lee," I asked tragically, "would you undermine the whole social system? Why, co-operation between two women would be worse than the Servant Girls' Union. Ever since there have been two women and a man on earth there has been feminine warfare."

"And that," said Polly, "has been the cause of most of the masculine sins. It is always a case of woman against woman. You find it everywhere, from the nursery to the divorce court. When Bobby is a small boy he promises Marjorie and Gracie each his box of candy. When Marjorie and Gracie find out this perfidy, instead of uniting against him and taking it out of him, they begin pulling one another's hair and scratching at each other's eyes; and Bobby walks serenely off and gives the candy to little Mary Anne around the corner. When he grows up Bobby may have as many wives as Solomon, but when he is brought into court there are always half of them dying to send him to prison and the other half aching to take him back to their arms again, and all of them glaring daggers at each other——"

"And," I added, "there is always still another woman waiting round the corner with a heart full of sympathy."

"And such fascinations as peroxide hair."

"Is it absolutely necessary that the other woman have peroxide hair, Polly?" I inquired.

"Oh, that's a way with other women," said Polly.

"And yet," I remarked, gliding along meditatively, "I once knew—another woman—who didn't dye her hair."

Polly wriggled her hand out of mine and tucked it in her muff.

"It was—let me see—about the time I announced my engagement," I went on, reflectively.

Polly turned and struck out for the shore with a spurt of which I had not thought her capable.

"She was," I continued, "a girl in your set."

"I do believe the sun is going down, Mr. Sylvester," remarked Polly, slowing up perceptibly.

For reasons of my own I did not attempt to carry on the conversation. After a few moments' silence what I expected happened.

"Who," said Polly, faintly, "was the girl in my set?"

"Why, the other woman, of course," I replied. "She had hardly observed my existence before the day that my engagement was announced. The very next evening she asked her brother to invite me up to dinner."

I fancied Polly said something like "contemptible!" but I must have been mistaken.

"Of course you didn't go, Mr. Sylvester?" she remarked, aloud.

"I'm afraid I did," I confessed, ruefully. "You see, I didn't exactly understand things then, as I do since you and I have been engaged for some time. And the girl was very pretty and alluring——" Polly gave a little gasp, and sped on.

"And," I continued, keeping beside her, "when she invited me for a sleighing party on the following night and named a nice girl——"

Polly stopped short in the middle of the ice.

"I accepted," I finished.

"You—went—Jack Sylvester?" Polly's voice would have been awful, if it had not threatened to be teary.

"Oh, no," I answered quickly. "I didn't go. You see the snow melted next morning, and so she sent me around a little pink note to say that she would be at home, anyhow."

"I know whom you mean," said Polly, striking out for shore once more. "It was that Edgerly girl—the one who rouges and wears such awful hats."

"Oh, no—not the Edgerly girl," I said, scornfully. "It was——"

"Then," declared Polly, "it must have been Alicia Brown. That's her only method of getting attention, Mr. Sylvester. She keeps a little list of eligible men on her dressing-table. Doubtless you are on the list. I think, though, it is rather detestable of her to treat me so sweetly——"

"But you don't blame me, do you, Polly?"

"Not if it was Alicia Brown," said Polly sarcastically. "You couldn't possibly have escaped her, Mr. Sylvester. No man could."

"But it wasn't Alicia," I explained, as I knelt down to unfasten Polly's skates. "It couldn't have been, you know—because, at that time, Alicia was my fiancee."

Clash! My skates, which Polly had been holding, fell with a clatter.

"And," I went on, ignoring the study in scarlet above me, "when you invited me to that dinner and I met you there in that gauzy, yellow thing you wore, and you smelt of hyacinths and danced like a butterfly——"

"Jack," said Polly, "it's getting perfectly dark."

"And," I continued, "you simply wouldn't take a refusal for the sleighing party, you remember——"

"Mr. Sylvester," said Polly, "there isn't a soul left on the ice."

"And the little note you wrote me on scented paper was so very——"

"In a minute they'll be lighting the lamps," persisted Polly.

"Why, so they will," I remarked as I rose from the ice and flung my skates over my shoulder, "and," I continued, coming closer to Polly, "I have only a moment in which to——"

"Stop! Stop! Stop!" cried Polly. "You're mussing my hair!"

"—kiss the other woman," I finished.—Travel.

SAFETY IN MOTOR'S NOISE.

If Perfectly Silent Automobiles Would Give People No Warning.

The opinion is commonly expressed that a decided improvement in motor vehicles would be gained if the noise of the motor could be reduced or suppressed altogether. The enormous number of small explosions which take place in the engine of the motor car or bicycle create a noise which is undoubtedly at all times offensive to the ear, but which is far worse when the chauffeur or rider is not a master of his engine, for then the explosions are often irregular. Rhythm makes even the noise of a motor less disagreeable to the ear than an ill-timed succession of reports.

It is debatable, however, whether, after all, it would be desirable to reduce the present loudly palpitating machine to an absolutely noiseless vehicle. The noise of the engine in the present motor gives ample warning of its approach on the road, a warning which, considering the comparatively high speed oftentimes attained by the car, might be sounded by the horn too late. It is common on the highways to find coachmen who are driving restive horses on the alert long before the car comes up to them, warned by the distant sound of the regular beating of the engines.

A motor car proceeding, say, at twenty miles an hour in perfect silence would almost be certain to be a source of terror and disaster. Even in the case of the ordinary bicycle there is danger in its silence of action and when the noiseless rubber tires first came upon the scene a continuously jingling bell accompanied them. In the same way other rubber-tired vehicles carry a similar signal, although the clatter of the horses' hoofs upon the road conveys some sort of warning. It is doubtful whether a bell continuously ringing on a motor car or bicycle can ever be as effective or timely a warning as the penetrating beat of the motor engine.

The shrieking whistle of an express train is often too late to enable danger to be avoided and it is appalling to think what would happen if an express were designed which could travel at the rate of sixty miles an hour without the slightest warning noise being given by its wheels rotating or by its intermittent escape of steam. The same holds good for motor vehicles, and though as it is they add to the dangers of locomotion on roads these dangers would be considerably accentuated if it were not for the perpetual and penetrating beat of the engine.

HOW SHE GOT EVEN.

A Woman's Method of Humbling a Conductor.

She was one of those women with a righteous look and firm chin.

"Please stop at Thirty-ninth street," she said to the conductor, as the car whizzed past Thirty-sixth.

At the next corner she rose, to be ready to alight, but the car did not slow up, the conductor being busy doing the hospitality of his car to a chance acquaintance. Before she could catch his eye and stop the car she had gone a block past her destination. She put her foot on the step, then drew it back and calmly sat down again. The conductor, his hand on the bell rope, waited, the picture of vigilant duty. She gazed straight ahead and made no sign. With a profane remark he jerked the rope and the car moved on.

Two blocks further she arose and caught his eye again. This time he managed to stop at the first corner. But she apparently changed her mind and sank comfortably into her seat while an appreciative smile overspread the faces of the passengers.

At the end of another two blocks she once more signaled to him to stop, and though he was bursting with wrath, a dozen pair of eyes were upon him, and he controlled himself. The car came to a standstill, but she did not move.

"It's the next corner I want," she explained, in a clear voice, as a titter went around the car. "When I asked you to stop at Thirty-ninth street you carried me to Fortieth, so I supposed if I signaled you for Forty-third you'd carry me to Forty-fourth."

And at the next corner she smiled graciously at the conductor as she stepped down and out.—Chicago Inter Ocean.