

Toilers of the Columbia

By PAUL DE LANEY

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



CHAPTER V.

Ringwood and Sankala.

"How did you make it at school today, my child?"

"Just fine, except that Hazel Seadog was more rude than ever. My father, I am kind to Hazel. I do not antagonize her intentionally, and yet she seems to dislike me. She faults the fact in my face that her father owns many fishtraps and has a cannery and that they are rich, while my father is a common fisherman, is old and poor and lives in a cabin, and they live in a big house with glass windows, and have a piano."

"Father, I don't care for this. I am happy with you. I don't envy Hazel, and why should she dislike me above all others?"

"My child, there is an intuition sometimes that tells us more than we know. There is often a guilty conscience that is handed down to posterity and while the posterity knows not what it is, it feels it keenly. In the case between you and Hazel her intuition tells her that something is wrong; that your existence is dangerous to her welfare and yet she does not know why. If you knew the facts, child, you would understand, you would understand!"

"Tell me, father. Why does Hazel feel this way toward me?"

"I will not tell you all now, but I can tell you much. I have a long time contemplated telling you about yourself, but you are yet young—too young to grasp the meaning of the things of a wicked world."

"But you are old enough now to know who you are, who I am and what the future may be to you."

"Why, father, I know who I am. I am Sankala, you are Father Ringwood and my future shall be devoted to my dear father. You know you are getting too old to pull the boat, father, and they say it does not look so well for girls to mingle with the fishermen, but I shall help you at the oars and nets until I have completed my education and then I will teach school or keep books or do something that girls should be respected for doing and take care of my dear old father."

There was a long pause. The grizzled old man sat in one corner of the cabin gazing into an open fireplace bed by pieces of driftwood of various sizes and lengths. These had been gathered from the beach by the girl upon her arrival from school.

As the child busied herself with the dishes and light housekeeping the old man sat deeply absorbed. He was thinking of the past. An ink darkness prevailed outside. A stiff wind hurled sheets of mist upon the roof which fell from the eaves in heavy drops.

As the wind arose and whistled around the corners of the cabin the old man started as if awakened from terrible experience of the past. It was a small structure nesting in the tall timbers near the beach, scantily furnished. A few cooking utensils on the open fireplace were used for preparing the meals. A large bed and a small couch furnished the sleeping quarters in the same room. Though the place was much crowded, everything was kept as neat as a pin.

The man was wearing his four score and ten. The girl was a few days past fifteen. She bore a refined air in spite of her surroundings. Her clothing was of the cheapest kind, yet it was clean. Her garments were not made in the latest style, still they were neat. Her hands and feet were small though the former showed the marks of toil. Her eyes were older than those of most girls of fifteen, but they were no less beautiful. They looked deep into things with an intelligence and innocence that commanded respect.

"Yes, Sankala, I told you I would tell you some but not all. The Seadogs do not like us. They do not know why, but there is an intuition that tells them we are dangerous to the old sailors. Those letters you have brought me from the postoffice all these years are bringing to a consummation the plans which have so long occupied my time. It has been a long and tedious duty but it shall be performed ere the last spark shall leave me."

"Sankala, you have been told the story of the shipwreck by the old women time and again. I have seldom spoken of it. It is a link in the story of your life that is of the greatest importance to you."

"I am the only person living that knows you. I am the only person living that knows the facts which shall some day make you free from poverty. Which shall enable you to live the life that you deserve—will enable you to complete your education and to outshine Hazel Seadog and all of the Seadog family."

"They are sailing under false plumes, Sankala, they are sailing under false plumes. They are wearing that kind of right belongs to others."

"Sankala, I have always passed as your father. I love you better than a father ever loved his child. The idea prevails among the fishermen that only your mother was drowned and that I, your aged father, who had taken care of a young wife at the age of three score and ten had clutched you in my arms at the last moment and that fate had cast us ashore."

"We were cast ashore together, it is true, you a five-weeks old babe in my arms, but your mother and father both went down to a watery grave."

"But you are my father now," broke in Sankala. "I love you as my father and shall always love you as such."

"That is true, my child, that is true, but your real father is dead. It is this that places a heavy responsibility upon you and me. Your father was much wronged and it is left to you and me to right the wrong. Should I continue to live, Sankala, I will right the wrong, but should I die the duty falls

upon you. You are young, I know, but you already possess a woman's intelligence and with the data before you, you will be able to complete the plans which I have inaugurated, should the worst come. I am failing rapidly, Sankala, I am failing rapidly."

"But you will live, father, you will live," sobbed the girl.

"I intend to, my child, but should I fail you must finish the work. Under the hearth there is concealed a small box. It is a small metal affair. It contains evidence, Sankala, that shall some day make you the queen of the fishing village. It will do more for Sankala, it will enable you to travel and to see the great world."

"I shall never forget your mother's dying request. It was on that fearful night just fifteen years ago when the old ship made such a gallant fight on the bar and finally went aground on Sand Island."

"Your father was assisting the sailors and had been swept from the deck. You were born aboard the ship after we had left the old country. The ship's surgeon had given a certificate of your birth. Your mother knew how important that certificate was, Sankala, and when all were lost but the captain and you and I; she came to me and threw you into my arms. She had imbedded the certificate of your birth in wax and thrust this deep into the inside pocket of my vest. She said, calling me by my right name:

"I have a presentiment. You will live and rescue the child. I will be lost. Upon the very eve of reaching the place we so long sought, my poor husband went down in sight of his own wealth. I must surely follow. Take her, my dear friend, take the child and see that she gets what belongs to her. In the name of Him who will reward you, I beg you to be brave and do that for which you are now intended."

"In a few minutes all was lost. God spared me the sight of seeing your mother go. I lashed myself to a spar, clutched you in my arms with the grip of death and became unconscious, at the sea cut the remaining timbers from the vessel."

CHAPTER VI.

Disturbed Peace of the Seadogs.

"I do not know why it is, husband, but our Hazel, young as she is, is worrying a great deal. That girl Sankala, disturbs her peace of mind. She does not like her. The poor girl is kind to our Hazel and all of that but our child seems to have a most natural antipathy for her."

"Sankala is the most popular girl at school. The teachers love her, the girls run after her and the boys worship her. They look upon her as some superior being and yet she is only a poor little waif that you remember was cast ashore here many years ago."

"Old Ringwood, her father, is drinking more and more whenever he can get it, and the child, poor thing, much as she disturbs our Hazel, seems more devoted to the old man every day."

"It would be better for her if he should die, but then it would almost kill her, for the poor thing worships the old fellow. But it would be bad for the village if Ringwood should die. There would be no one to fill the difficult prescriptions at the drug store and I do not know what poor Gosselin would do without him."

"Do you know, husband," spoke the woman more cautiously, "I do not like that girl Sankala. She is all kindness and deserving, but I do not like the child. Her name disturbs me and when I see her a peculiar feeling comes over me which I cannot explain. I do not wish the girl had luck, but I do wish that something would take her away from the village where I could not see her and where she would not disturb our Hazel."

Thus spoke Mrs. Seadog, the wife of old Seadog, the ruling power in the great fisheries on the north side of the Columbia river near its mouth.

"I do not like the kid either, wife," said the rugged old capitalist, who had made his wealth in various ways. He had pulled oars through the storm-driven waves. He had sold goods over the counters of his great store at enormous profit. He had dispensed whisky over his bar that was said to have been of his own make and was warranted to contain snakes to the quart; he had thrown Chinamen from his cannery into the bay because they did not earn ten times their wages; he had robbed the fish traps of his neighbors, stolen their property rights by night, and was charged with having sent gillnetters to the bottom of the river. Upon all of this, old Seadog had built up an immense fortune, but it was whispered about that he had come to the wealth which constituted the foundation of his fortune through some foul means the details of which were shrouded in mystery.

"No, I do not like the kid either," he continued. "And much less do I like the old bunch of mystery who is known as her father."

"Do you know that when I learned that they had drifted ashore from that vessel, no more than half dead and she but little more than a pup, I felt annoyed by it. In spite of the fact that there could be no harm in them I would rather that all on board should have been lost at the time. And it is remarkable that the oldest and youngest should have survived—the very ones that under the laws of nature should have been lost. The weakest are accounted lost on such occasions under the laws, yet that old duck and the young minnow broke the record."

"I don't like to think of those times, and yet I do. My trial for boarding that wreck gave me a close call. In spite of the fact that it was shown that I did not attempt to carry away any of the valuables, and I made the plea that the boys and I were only trying to save life, there was a strong suspicion that we had some wicked motive in board-

ing the wreck and the jury hung out on the case until things looked shaky. "Then it has its pleasant side. Upon that wreck I found the evidence that put my mind to rest forever on one point—that is, it should have done so. I found the evidence of the death of the only person living who could disturb me here. He went to the bottom of the sea. I knew he was on the vessel beyond all reasonable doubt and when I found his name on the ship's register then all questions were settled."

"When I found a woman's name on the register identical with that of his own I did not understand. But upon investigation I found that he was married a year before sailing and this cleared all matters on this point. She went to the bottom of the sea with him."

"I first had fears that the Sankala might have been of their issue, but I find from the ship's register that one Ringwood and his wife and child were aboard and since old Ringwood claims her that set all doubts straight on this point."

"Ringwood was very old at the time, but he appears to have had a younger wife. Besides the old fellow is half crazy and does not know what he is doing half the time."

"But if this Sankala should have been the child of the son of my only brother, she could never prove it. All records not in my possession are destroyed. But, still I am like you. I do not like either the old man or his daughter. She gives me that unpleasant feeling of uneasiness—or rather unpleasantness and he, well, he reminds me of a rival of the olden time."

"That rival was about his height, but he was slender and stood high in life. He was even a druggist to the crew. But I, a mere commoner, won out over him and it cost me my country. I had to escape by flight and come to America. He swore vengeance on me and I should tremble in my shoes were I sure he is living today."

"This Ringwood has eyes like the fellow and I do not like him for this reason. But he is a different kind of man. He was quick motioned, had a springy step, wore no beard and kept his hair cut short."

"But Ringwood is like him in another characteristic, though a mere imitator. While Ringwood is considered an expert prescriber for this fishing village my rival was the best chemist of all the Russians. The czar prized him above all others. No other could fill a prescription for his family. His position was that of royalty."

"What rivalry existed between you and this man, my husband?" inquired the interested wife.

"Oh, it is a long story, my dear. There was not a woman in it. There goes woman's curiosity. But, never mind, I will tell you the story another time."

"But this Sankala and the old fellow! He is getting old and cannot last much longer. When he is dead the girl will have nothing to keep her here. She can do us no harm; or, still, I would like to see them away. They seem to be a menace to the peace of the Seadog family."

(To be continued)

Queer Place for a Magazine.

An American traveler who explored the northern part of Siberia states that he found in the hut of a Korak peasant a picture of Mayor Dix cut out of a copy of Harper's Magazine. The Mayor's picture was enthroned on a wooden shrine, and adored by the Korak and his family as their household deity.

This is probably the most extreme case on record of veneration for a magazine page. But fifty years ago in this country it was not uncommon to find a single copy of a magazine being read by fifteen or twenty families every month, and regarded by all as an infallible authority.

It is said that when the Shah of Persia visited England several years ago it was one of his chief delights to buy a dozen magazines and "read the pictures." As there are only about 3,000 people in Persia who can read and write, his amazement at the number of magazines is not surprising.—Woman's Home Companion.

Nothing White There.

Albert, the young man of the family, was undeniably ill. The doctor was sent for. He pronounced it a case of jaundice, as indeed the parents had suspected, from the patient's yellowish appearance.

Albert's little sister was explaining to a caller.

"He's got the yaller jaunders," she said. "The doctor says so."

"But how could the doctor tell, Bessie?" asked the caller.

"Easy enough," replied Bessie. "Anybody could tell it by 'lookin' into the—the yells of his eyes."

Taking Him at His Word.

"I don't do it, your honor."

"But two witnesses here say they saw you pick his pocket."

"I'll tell you how it was, judge. We were on the car coming home from the races. I remarked that I wondered where I was going to get the price of a night's lodging and this gentleman replied: 'You can search me.' Well, I searched him. Nothing wrong in taking a man at his word, is there?"—Kansas City Journal.

The Lesser of Two Evils.

Nervous Passenger (as the train stops) says, conductor, are those two men taking a straw vote?

Conductor—No; they are taking up a collection. Train robbers, you know.

Nervous Passenger—Oh, then it isn't as bad as I suspected.

All Bets Off.

Miss Lakeside (of Cleveland)—You can just bet your sweet life that I'll be wearing an engagement ring before the end of the season.

Miss Browning (of Boston)—Excuse me, but I do not care to wager my saccharine vitality.

How He Got It.

Blanks—Queer that Charley Moberg could acquire such an automobile face. He never drives his machine over eight miles an hour.

Jinks—I know, but he got it when his first month's bill for the repairs came in.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

Couldn't Read Musto.

"Paw's that, Moik?" asked Pat, as he picked up a Hebrew newspaper.

"B'gorry, Oi dunno of wat tunc it do be," replied Mike. "O'm no afther knowin' was note from another."

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



One Hundred Years Ago.

The remodeling of the White House at Washington at a cost of from sixteen to twenty thousand dollars was started.

France contemplated taking possession of the Neapolitan fortresses in case of war with Russia.

The British East India Company distributed a large sum of money among the officers and crew of the Chinese squadron for the protection they gave the company's ships against the French.

According to the new divorce laws of France, a twelve months' residence was compulsory.

An unfounded report of hostilities in the part of Morocco brought two American men-of-war to that country.

A Dutch ship on entering a Japanese port and rebelling at the customs regulations of the country fired on the shore, but afterward surrendered.

Five thousand troops were ordered from Cuba to Florida to defend that territory against expeditions from the United States.

Seventy-five Years Ago.

The Society of Friends in America published an octavo edition of the bible in large type and on the paper.

Washington Irving accepted the post of secretary of legation to the court of St. James.

The ship Constitution arrived at Norfolk with seventeen mutineers who were to be tried in the States.

The thirteenth amendment was ratified by a two-thirds vote.

An expedition fitted out by private individuals left New Bedford, Conn., on an exploring trip to the South Sea Islands.

A table was published giving the whole number of votes at the recent Presidential election as 1,188,045, of which Jackson received 671,170 and Adams 517,475.

Fifty Years Ago.

The grand European "Tartar hoax" was started on its mission from Turkey.

Many English emigrants were crossing over from Canada and settling in Michigan.

The Russians closed the harbor of Sevastopol by sinking seven ships in the entrance.

The reciprocity treaty between the United States and Canada was signed by the governor general.

A British steamer collided with a French bark near Cape Race, entailing a loss of over three hundred lives. Owing to the conduct of the crew, not a woman or child was saved.

Gen. Santa Anna left the City of Mexico and retired to Tacubaya in consequence of popular demonstrations.

The United States ship of war Albany left Aspinwall and never again was heard of.

Forty Years Ago.

Gold was quoted at 109 a decline of 20 cents, during a week of Union military successes.

John C. Fremont withdrew as a candidate for President to which he had been nominated by the Cleveland convention.

Gen. Sheridan defeated the Confederate forces under Early for a second time at Fisher Hill.

Governor Brown of Georgia was reported to have withdrawn the State militia from Hood's army.

The vicinity of Pulaski, Tenn., was the battleground of fighting between Confederate raiding forces under Forrest and Union forces under Rousseau.

Thirty Years Ago.

Francis D. Moulton was arrested under two indictments for libel growing out of the Beecher Tilton scandal.

The overlanding of the Segre River, in the province of Lerida, Spain, was attended by great loss of life and the destruction of much property.

The Prince of Wales accepted the Grand Mastership of the order of Free Masons.

Many buildings were leveled and over 1,000 persons were killed in a typhoon that swept over Hongkong.

Twenty Years Ago.

A statue of Bach, the composer, was unveiled at Eisenach, Germany, in the presence of Liszt, Joachim, Villiers and Stanford.

The British gunboat Wasp was wrecked off the coast of Donegal, Ireland, and fifty-two members of the crew were drowned.

Judge Gresham was sworn in Secretary of the Treasury to succeed the late Secretary Folger.

Ten Years Ago.

David R. Hill was nominated by New York Democrats for Governor.

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ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF MAILS.

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The carriers on R. F. D. routes No. 1 and No. 2 leave the postoffice at 8:30 daily. Mail leaves for Mt. Hood, daily at 12:00 m.; arrives, 10:20 a. m.

For Chewnet, Wash., at 7:30 a. m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; arrives same days at 5 p. m.

For Underwood, Wash., at 7:30 a. m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; arrives same days at 5 p. m.

For White Salmon, Wash., daily at 2:45 p. m.; arrives at 11 a. m.

WHITE SALMON. For Hood River daily at 9 a. m.; arrives at 1:45 p. m.

For Husum, Trout Lake and Guler, Wash., daily at 7:30 a. m.; arrives at 12 m.

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For Hurdell and Snowden, Wash., at 10:30 a. m. Tuesdays and Saturdays; arrives same days, 10:30 a. m.

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