

TOILERS OF THE COLUMBIA

By Paul De Laney

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

CHAPTER IX.
Trouble Brewing.

Seadog owned a large store. It was a sort of commissary where all the fishermen were compelled to trade, either directly or indirectly. Those employed by Seadog had to trade with him and the others had to trade with him also, because he had planned the town and placed a proviso in the deed to all the lots which he sold to the effect that the grantees should not deal in certain merchandise. This item covered about everything. Even spirits, venous and malt liquors were prohibited. Still there were nearly half a dozen saloons in the place, but Seadog had contracts by which he received, directly or indirectly, the larger part of the profits. He also owned the local cannery. Chinamen were worked in the place. They lived at a mess house where existence on rice and spoiled fish was easy, and they worked for Seadog for a few cents a day. He had smuggled them overland across the Canadian boundary and they believed they were compelled to remain in his employ; and they were in a measure, for Seadog was not known in the unlawful transaction and could have handed them over to the authorities without risk to himself. He might have sent some of his hirelings to the government prison, but he did not mind this. Men were cheap and money valuable.

Old Seadog also owned miles of fish traps. The ragged lines of piling forming wings and hearts extended up and down the bay and to the middle of the river from disappointment to McGowan's, about a dozen miles.

It is true that a few men had taken advantage of their rights under the law and had secured locations and had constructed traps, but it was necessary to guard these like treasures. If they were left alone the "storm" tone upon the piling and Seadog's traps were constructed in front and on the side of them so that even the luckless fish found their way to the fishermen's traps by the sheerest accident.

One by one they had succumbed and sold to Seadog at his own price, except the few who preferred to work and barely live than become the slaves of any man.

It was on the fatal morning upon which Sankala and Ringwold dared the storm. Old Seadog was up early, as was his custom. He superintended all of his own business. He lent nothing of importance to others. It was to this fact that he attributed his success, and he admonished his sons to follow in his footsteps.

The storm was raging and the man of wealth did not care to stir abroad so early. He grew confidential with Mrs. Seadog. He did this occasionally, but it was only when matters arose that closely affected his business interests. He was by no means a faithful husband to her, as many of the fishermen knew, but he had great confidence in her good judgment. He sought her advice in the matters that weighed upon him heavily.

He was still seated at the table. Daylight had not yet begun to dawn. The storm was raging. The mirt and rain fell upon the roof with a rasping sound. The other members of the family had left the dining room. Mrs. Seadog did her own dishes. She did this from choice because she had been brought up to work.

"Let the work go for awhile, wife, and set down," said the husband.

Mrs. Seadog obeyed the request readily. She knew something was coming. She had already seen it in her husband's eyes and in his actions. But what woman does not like to be taken into the confidence of her husband?

"Do you know, wife, I am in more trouble than a trap full of fish," said old Seadog when his wife was seated.

"I thought the foolish prejudice against old Ringwold and Sankala was something to worry about, but now the troubles are multiplying like sun fish."

"This little to the townsite is threatened. The gill netters are preparing for devilment and even the government had a secret service man here a few days ago trying to associate me with the unlawful importation of the pig tails who work in my cannery."

"I do not understand all of this, or even a part of it," said the anxious wife. "I thought you had a deed to the townsite property. The gillnetters I thought had recognized your measurement of the river, and as to the importation of the Chinamen, I supposed the half-breed and his son-in-law were responsible for that."

"But you can't count on anything these days," continued the fisherman king. "When old Lapham made the deed to his homestead that night just before he died in a drunken fit, there were several present. But all of them are dead from drowning or otherwise, except one of the witnesses that signed the instrument. He has got foolish religious ideas in his head and is trying to make trouble. I had my book-keeper give him \$100 and send him to the Sound, and that may quiet him. But the transaction is beginning to cost me something. Bumbo, the lawyer who drew up the deed, was standing in with the other fellow in a way and I had to employ him yesterday by the year. He doesn't cost much, it is true, but it all counts in the end when you are not certain they consider themselves paid in full."

"But I only have to keep this matter off about three years more. Dan Lapham is the only heir. He is now nineteen. If he neglects to take action for a year after he comes of age he loses all his rights under the statute of limitations."

"How about the gillnetters, husband?" inquired Mrs. Seadog.

"Well, fish are getting scarce on their side of the river. They are scarce everywhere, for that matter. But since the government jetty was built on

A TRIP TO THE MOON.

Some of the Old Things One Might Find on Such a Voyage.

How would you like to take a trip to the moon? It would be a long journey, taking more than six months if you went with the speed of an express train; or if you traveled with the swiftness of a ball from a modern cannon, it would take about as long as a trip across the Atlantic in a fast steamer. Under average atmospheric conditions, a large telescope gives you a view of the moon as it would be without the telescope at a distance of 300 miles from us.

The necessary outfit for the journey must be much more extensive than for any trip on the earth, even the trip to the North Pole. There will be no chance to live off the country. In addition to warm clothing and food you must carry with you all you need to drink, and the problem of keeping it from freezing or thawing it out if frozen will not be an easy one to solve. There is practically no air on the moon, and you must take along a supply for breathing. If you expect to make a fire and cook your dinner you must take, in addition to fuel, an additional supply of air to keep your fire going.

But suppose that in some way you are landed on the moon with a supply of things necessary for sustaining life. If you are on a part of the moon on which the sun is shining you will marvel, perhaps, first of all, at the dazzling brilliance of the sunlight and the intense blackness of the shadows. Everything in the shade will be in almost total darkness, as there is no air filled with little dust particles to scatter the sunlight so that it may illuminate the places out of the direct path of its rays.

And what a sense of desolation will present itself to your view! The Desert of Sahara would look like a luxuriant park in comparison with the lunar landscape. Not a blade of grass, not a tree, or brook, or lake—nothing but a vast, stony, silent desert. There are plains, not quite as level as our Western prairies and great numbers of mountains, most of them much steeper than those on the earth; they are not grouped in long ranges, as our terrestrial mountains generally are, but are scattered all over the surface, singly and in irregular groups. Most of them are shaped more or less like our terrestrial volcanoes, and they probably were volcanoes ages ago, before the moon cooled off.

If you happen to land on a part of the moon where it is early morning you will have plenty of time for explorations before night comes on. The sun rises and sets as it does on the earth, but the time between sunrise and sunset is nearly fifteen of our days. Then during the long lunar night our earth will act like the moon, and will light up that part of the moon's surface which is turned toward it. Only there will be this curious difference: it will not rise and set, but will remain nearly stationary in the same region of the sky. From the side of the moon which is always turned away from us the earth, of course, can never be seen at all.—St. Nicholas.

CHAPTER X.
Bitter Prospects.

The storm had continued throughout the day and arose at night with renewed fury. It was a common thing to have weeks of storms at this season of the year and the sun rarely ever showed itself. But every storm was the "worst" and the oldest individual would verify the fact.

It only goes to show how quickly people forget even the unpleasant things of life. A month of rain and sleet and snow last year, which at the time was declared unbearable, is forgotten in the spring sunshine and when another winter storm comes, although mild compared with former ones, it is a record-breaker while it lasts and the complaint is long and loud.

But such is the way of weak, frivolous humanity. It was sunshine yesterday; it is storming today and tomorrow will be whatever the temperament suggests. It amounts to nothing anyway; forever complaining, forgiving, expecting, being disappointed and disappointing others; yesterday's friend is today's enemy; in the deepest poverty and distress yesterday, rich and happy today.

After all the mind is the weather vane in life's short span of time and the tongue the thermometer. Whatever the mind conceives is so, and the tongue indicates the state of the mind. Life is storm or sunshine just as the mind makes it, and the wagging tongue records the impression.

But whether in reality it was the mildest or most severe storm in the history of the fishing village on the north bank of the Columbia, in the mind of one it was the darkest hour of her life. The wind blew louder, the rainfall on the roof was more rasping and the night had closed in with greater darkness. The fire flickered more gloomily and the shadows flitted about more ghostly.

The eupboard seemed scanted, the furniture rougher, the bed clothing lighter, the floor was more bare and even the good natured house cat seemed gloomier as the rain and wind raged outside and beat upon the cabin as if it were crushed and doomed forever.

Sankala was usually of a light heart and spirit, but her nature was all crushed tonight. She sat beside the bed which was drawn near the fire. She gazed into the flames with tear-stained eyes. She would look into the future, but there was nothing to see. Then the terrible episodes of the day flashed through her mind like a succession of night-mares or hideous dreams.

But she did not forget her duty. As regular as the clock would she turned and changed the damp cloths upon Ringwold's head and examined the hot smoothing-iron at his feet. The cloths were kept cold and the irons were kept hot.

Ringwold barely breathed. The excitement of the day had about-ent the last thread that held his feeble old life. When the life savers rescued them the boat had its nose against Destruction Rocks, which point no boat had ever reached before and been saved. Ringwold knew nothing of the rescue. His last conscious moments were to see himself and Sankala going to destruction. When he saw the inevitable and the struggling frail child battling with the mountains of sea the feeble old man collapsed in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

The long hours of exposure had told on him and it was already whispered about the village that tonight was Ringwold's last night on earth. But the fishermen had become accustomed to his sinking spells and Sankala was left alone with him.

Sankala had not been afraid. She was not afraid now. It was not because she was less braver than other girls or naturally braver than other girls. It was because she had been schooled against fear. Her life had been her schooling and it had been one in which all of the hardships had been taught in practical lessons. Not performed and rehearsed for the occasion, but lessons that came with the routine of every day life.

When a mere babe she had been cast ashore like so much driftwood. And all of her young life she had been buffeted about on the bay and river in a small fishing boat like a cockle-shell. She had become so interlinked with danger that it seemed her constant companion and she only thought of it as such.

"That kid was as calm when we drew her from the jaws of death as if she were rowing a boat on a summer's day," had remarked one of the life savers.

"The first thing she did was to bend over the old man and begin rubbing his hands," said another.

It was not Sankala's had seamanship or lack of skill that led her across the danger line, but it was her lack of strength. The trap they tended lay to the west near the bar than others and while rounding the rocks to reach the trap the undertow, unusually strong from the all night storm, caught her and carried her boat away by sheer force.

She was meditating over the day's exciting episodes and the condition of her companion. Young as she was, she knew that Ringwold could not last much longer. They were reduced to the direct straits. Fishing was poor and wages were poorer. Ringwold was no longer useful. He was more of a hindrance as a co-worker. His companionship was all that was left her.

They now only earned a scanty living and should Ringwold become bed-ridden she did not know what she would do. He had not confided fully to her the secret of her life and the mysteries of the documents concealed under the hearth. Would these help her? She made up her mind that should Ringwold recover again she would broach the subject to him.

It was not so much for her own self that she was prompted, but she wished to see the old man's life in his last days. He had made a great struggle for her and she wished to repay him in some way.

While meditating over her troubles, there came a loud, heavy knock at the door. It sounded like the rap of doom. She could not tell why, but she trembled. Sankala was not in the habit of experiencing such sensations. She went to the door and opened it.

"Come in!" she said in a hollow tone.

It was old Seadog! What could bring him at such an hour of the night. Then old Seadog always sent for his employes instead of calling upon them.

"Will you be seated?" asked the girl.

"No. Have but a minute. How is Ringwold?"

"I cannot tell," replied Sankala. "He is quite feeble, but he has been that way quite often of late. He is getting very old, you know."

"Yes," replied Seadog. "He is getting old and feeble to work. He has become worthless to me. I came to tell you that I have had your trap provided for. He should be taken to the poor farm—and, I presume that is the best place for you, Sankala—you know you would like to be by the old man's side his remaining days. I will look after the arrangements tomorrow."

Thus spoke old Seadog. Then he turned and walked out into the gloom without saying good-night.

(To be continued)

STORY FROM AN ABSTRACT.

Farm Now in Kansas City Sold by Senator Cockrell in 1904.

If Senator Francis Marion Cockrell could have foreseen when he was a boy that the great city of the Missouri valley would be built here at the junction of the Kaw and Missouri rivers he might now be a multimillionaire. In examining an abstract to a lot on Tracy, between Thirty-sixth and Thirty-seventh streets, R. J. Holmden, the attorney, made the discovery that Cockrell, in 1847, when he was a boy of 13, owned eighty acres there, and he sold it all for \$300. The lot which Mr. Holmden was looking up sold recently for \$5,000.

The land, 690 acres of it, was deeded by the United States government in 1827 to the State of Missouri for seminary purposes. The tract was all of section 21, township 49, range 33. In 1833 Joseph Cockrell, father of the Senator, bought eighty acres of it from the State for \$202 an acre. Mr. Cockrell died, and in 1847, when Francis Marion Cockrell was 13 years old, he petitioned the court, through his guardian, to sell the eighty acres.

In his petition he said that he already owned a farm in Warrensburg sufficiently large for his needs when he should become of age, and, besides, he said, the big storm of 1844, the year of the great flood, had blown down all the trees on his eighty-acre tract in Jackson county and therefore it would be useless for him to hold it because, when he would come of age, the timber would be all dead. Hicks and Smart of Independence were Cockrell's lawyers. The court granted his request and the land was bought by Joseph Brown for \$300.—Kansas City Star.

Storm Cannons.

The storm cannons now in use along the southern side of the Alps, where damage from hailstorms during harvest time is imminent, look like huge megaphones, such as boat-crew coaches use, and they are set, with their wide mouths gaping skyward, beside little mounds that look like sentry boxes. When they are fired they boom like "stray enough" catons, and send reverberating, echoing, boom-booms caroming about among the hillsides; but instead of a ball or shell, or other similar projectile, they emit a ring of smoke which grows larger and larger as it ascends, until at last, before it breaks, it is big enough to surround a ten-acre field. What the effect of a smoke ring upon a mischievously intent cloud is I cannot exactly say, but instead of hail, only rain falls when the guns are used, and damage to crops is prevented.

Diagnosing Herself.

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