

## IN THE FLOOD.

Those who have seen the bayous of Louisiana, west of the Mississippi, cannot be said to have a thorough knowledge of America, even if they have visited every other state and territory. It is a country level as a prairie, yet covered with mighty forests, whose interlocking live oaks and cypresses make grand arcades of eternal solitude and silence.

The roads in this land are few and short—the only means of communication being the deep, canal-like bayous that are usually currentless and stagnate in the shadows of the bordering trees.

The plantations along these bayous are famed for their sugar and cotton, and they would be the most valuable in the world were it not for the great sums of money expended by the planters in building levees, or heavy artificial banks, to keep the bayous from overflowing in time of high water, which usually comes when the ice is melting in the upper valleys of the Missouri and Mississippi.

But, though the precaution taken to shut out the floods is great, it is not always effective. Heavy falls of snow in the winter to the North mean heavy floods when spring comes to the plains of the South.

The floods in the spring of 1883 will be long remembered as the most severe that ever swept over the plantations bordering the bayous. Rich plantations were ruined, forests leveled, embankments swept away, homes borne off to the sea, herds drowned and scores of human beings perished in the flood or of hunger.

The plantations of Judge Riel and Mr. Gordon were on opposite sides of the Bayou Rouge, about 60 miles south of the point where the Red river enters the Mississippi.

These gentlemen, though neighborly were not neighbors. They had had a quarrel when young men at college—a foolish, causeless quarrel, and, though 23 years had passed since, they had never had spoken. Both had married in the meantime, but their families held no intercourse.

Judge Riel had two sons, one 23, the other a year or two younger; and Mr. Gordon had two daughters, aged respectively 19 and 17.

Florence and Jennie Gordon were pretty, accomplished girls, and, though they loved their parents and their quiet, solitary home it was not natural that they should now and then yearn to know some hint of the great world outside the water-girdled plantation.

They often saw the sons of their neighbor—of their fathers' enemy—as they thought of Judge Riel, rowing past in their graceful boat, and they always acknowledged the salute of his handsome young men, but beyond this no courtesy was interchanged.

'What news, John?' asked Mrs. Gordon, as her husband came into the house about midnight with a dim lamp in his hand and his rubber garments shining with water like a recently polished stove.

'It is still raining as if it had not been at it a week,' replied Mr. Gordon, with something like a sigh.

'And the levee?' asked Florence, who, with her sister Jennie, had been waiting up for the report on which home and perhaps life depended.

'Every man on the place is patrolling and watching to prevent a break,' said Mr. Gordon, throwing off his coat and running his fingers nervously through his damp, brown hair.

'And the water is still rising,' said Mrs. Gordon; 'still rising; three inches more and Bayou Rouge will be gone.'

Mrs. Gordon set before him some supper and a hot cup of coffee, for which he seemed to have but little appetite. As he stirred the coffee he said, without looking up: 'I think, wife, it would be well if you and the girls would put on warm clothing and have your waterpots ready, with any light articles you may want to save.'

'Do you think the danger is as great as that?' asked Mrs. Gordon, pressing her hands to her breast as she tried to speak as if his words had brought her no alarm.

'It is better to be prepared my dear,' said Mr. Gordon, with enforced calmness. 'I have had rafts made to carry off the hands if the flood comes in, and the boat has been carried to the door.'

In times of great peril women are more apt to be cool and uncomplaining than men. Mrs. Gordon and her daughters realized that a great peril threatened them, but they prepared to meet it with a courage and calmness that lifted a heavy burden from the father's shoulders.

After drinking his coffee, Mr. Gordon put on his waterproof coat and went out again with the lamp in his hand.

He had not been gone many seconds when the ladies were startled by a shrill cry that was taken up by other voices till it rose above the storm.

'The crevasse! The levee is gone!' They caught these words, and they heard the roar of the waters coming near and nearer.

Mrs. Gordon threw open the door to call to her husband to return, but at that instant he burst in shouting: 'Come, wife—Florence—Jennie—to the boat!'

They ran out after him and got into the boat. Mrs. Gordon extinguished the only light in the house as she left, and Mr. Gordon's lamp had gone out.

The shouting of the black people—men, women and children—as they made for the rafts, could be heard above the howling of the wind and the roar of the oncoming torrent.

The darkness added to the horror of the situation, as did the cries of the frightened cattle. Nearer and nearer came the flood; they could hear it dashing against the house and feel it splashing fiercely on their faces.

The maddened waters reached the boat and shook it.

Then the frail craft began to rise with

its precious freight and to tug at the rope which held it to a live-oak tree near the house.

Day came at length and revealed such a change as the dwellers in the ark must have seen when they looked out after the waves had been pouring down for weeks and the fountains of the great deep were broken up.

Where fertile fields had been there was now a lake dotted with trees that seemed yielding to the torrent. The cattle were gone. The quarters of the laborers and the laborers themselves were gone. The sugar-house and the dwelling house were the only two buildings left out of a hundred, and up to their sides the waves were rising, and about them the fierce waters roared.

'It looks as if the world were being washed away,' said Florence.

'And that we were the only living beings left on it,' added Jennie.

Mrs. Gordon had thoughtfully placed a basket of provisions in the boat, so that there was no danger of immediate danger.

'There is only one place within 60 miles that is not under water,' said Mr. Gordon in reply to his wife's question.

'Where is that?' she asked, after a pause.

'Judge Riel's,' he replied. 'That plantation is six feet higher than this, and the levees are the best in the state.'

'Might it not be well,' said Mrs. Gordon, thoughtfully, 'for us to try and reach them?'

The question seemed to startle Mr. Gordon, for he looked at his wife for some time without speaking. Finally he said: 'I do not hate Judge Riel, and I would help him were he in the same situation, but I cannot go to him now of all times. No, we must get the boat loose, and, trusting in heaven go on with the current.'

Mr. Gordon unloosened the rope, took the oars, and the boat drifted slowly away from its moorings till it was caught by the white waters of the current, and then it shot away with a speed that was startling.

Like all men raised in this land, Mr. Gordon was a good boatman, but for once he found himself in a position where his great strength did not avail and his great skill was useless.

There was no need to pull the oars; it would have been impossible to drive against the current, so they had to go with it.

There was no trouble so long as the boat was drifting over the cleared fields, but this security could not last long. Beyond the fields were the woods, through which it would have been difficult to pass under the most favorable circumstances, but against which it now seemed that the boat must be dashed.

Mr. Gordon realized this, for he said, as if thinking aloud:

'We must try to get into the bayou; there, at least, we shall be safe from the trees.'

It is doubtful if he could have kept the boat in the course of the bayou had he succeeded in reaching there, for the currents were rushing through narrow channels, and the bayou had expanded into an angry sea. By care and the exercise of great strength, Mr. Gordon succeeded in passing safely the first line of timber, but it was only getting deeper and deeper into the inextricable tangle of drooping branches and swinging vines.

They had not been long in this maze when one of the oars was broken, and the other became practically useless. By reaching forward in the bow, Mr. Gordon succeeded in keeping the boat from plunging against the trunks of trees and so being dashed to pieces, but no man could long keep up this work.

After long hours they reached an open space, an expansion of the bayou, where the waters were comparatively calm, and here Mr. Gordon succeeded in making the boat fast to the branch of a tree.

'Let us wait, he said, desperately, 'till succor or the end comes.'

During the rest of the day they saw the dead bodies of cattle and the wreck of once happy homes drifting past, and now and then caught sight of a boat floating by with the bottom up.

The never-ceasing rain added to their discomfort and kept one of them continually bailing out the water.

They abandoned their first attempt to keep dry, and all were now as wet as if they had been plunged into the seething yellow flood.

Shortly before dark they ate the balance of the cooked food Mrs. Gordon had put in the boat.

Night came—a more horrible night than any words can describe. Sleep was out of the question. All felt that there was but one labor before them, viz., to keep the boat afloat by constantly using the tin dipper that served as a bailer.

Now and then Mr. Gordon muttered against his hard fate, but not a word escaped the lips of his wife and daughters expressive of the tortures of mind and body which they were so heroically enduring; indeed, they tried to speak a cheer they did not feel by assuring him that succor would come on the morrow.

The dawn of the second day found them in the boat. All were famished and broken down with fatigue.

The waters were higher than the day before, and still the cruel rain poured steadily down.

The wind howled and the waves dashed about them, threatening every moment to swamp the boat.

Mr. Gordon saw by the pinched faces and changed color of his wife and daughters that they could not stand another day of this suffering, yet, what could he do to help them? If his own death could save them he would gladly have yielded his life, but neither his aid nor sacrifice would avail.

The afternoon was wearing on, and the night fast approaching, when a sudden, terrific gust of wind upset the boat.

Floating debris was all about them, and Florence and Jennie managed to grasp part of the roof of a shanty that was swirling by them and struggled upon it—holding on with that desperation which lent them strength.

Mr. Gordon and his wife clung to the upturned boat and were borne away by the rushing flood.

Darkness now lent horror to the situation. The poor girls were about to resign themselves to the fate that seemed inevitable, when, from out of the deep gloom they heard a faint halloo. They answered with all their might.

After waiting a few minutes and straining their eyes in the direction from which the sound came, they caught the gleam of a torch, and the next instant a boat shot up to them, and in it were Judge Riel and his two stalwart sons, Paul and Leon.

The brave girls assured them that they were in no immediate danger, and implored the judge and his sons to search for their parents—telling them that they were clinging to the boat after it had been capsized and had been swept away, but the girls still hoped that the boat might have become entangled in the flooded forest and that their father and mother might yet be saved. But the judge insisted upon Florence and Jennie getting into his boat.

The stout boat was then driven forward in the direction pointed out by the girls as that in which they had last seen their parents. At intervals the young men united in shouting and waving their torch, but the howling of the wind for a time drowned their voices.

During a slight lull a faint cry was heard which was answered by the united shouts of all in the judge's boat. Soon they were enabled to distinguish from whence the cry proceeded, and a few strokes of the oars brought to a clump of submerged forest trees, and there, clinging to the branches, they found Mr. Gordon and his brave wife. Their rescue was but the work of a moment, and soon they were safely seated in their 'enemy's' boat.

'Mr. Gordon,' said Judge Riel, 'your hands are all safe at our place and we have been searching all day for you. Our plantation is above water, there is a fire on the hearth and a welcome awaiting you.'

Thus was the last vestige of animosity between the two men swept away.

At Judge Riel's fire and the welcome were found, and Mr. Gordon's family were welcomed as if there had never been aught but the warmest friendship between him and the judge.

The old men soon learned that there was a misunderstanding that parted them in youth and that during all these silent years each had retained the greatest respect for the other.

The floods have shrunk into their beds along the Bayou Rouge; the levees are rebuilt; the cabins are up once more, and the old home is standing. But Florence Gordon is a permanent resident at Judge Riel's, she having recently married Leon, and the gossip says that Paul Riel will take up his home in the fall with Mr. Gordon as the husband of Jennie.

The old men are never happy apart, and Mr. Gordon often whispers to his wife: 'Yes, my dear, we lost a great deal by the flood, but I sometimes think it was a blessing in disguise.'

And Mrs. Gordon agrees with him.

## HE MADE IT PLAIN.

An Apt Illustration of a Preacher Regarding Sunday.

The wise speaker knows that no illustrations are so effective as those which have to do with familiar every-day objects. In this respect the Great Teacher set an example for all who should come after Him. How an itinerant preacher in Tennessee mountains profited by this example is narrated in the American Missionary.

A group of young men were assembled one Sunday in a grove to hear the preacher, when one of them said:

'See here, John, why didn't ye bring up my rifle when ye come to preaching?'

'Well, Sam, I 'lowed 'twasn't right to bring it up on Sabbath. I might see a varmint on the road and git a-shootin', and forgit it was Sabbath.'

'Huh! There's no use being so particular as all that. I think it's all right to do little turns of a Sabbath. Even a little shootin' won't hurt, if ye happen to see game.'

The discussion was joined in on the other side by those around, and it was finally decided to leave the question to the preacher. He was called, and the case stated.

'Look yer, boys,' said he; 's'posin' a man comes along here with seven handsome gray horses, a-ridin' one, and the others a-tollerin'. You all like a pretty beast, and you look 'em all over. You can't see that one is better than another. They are all as pretty critters as ever were.'



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seen among these mountains, though there will be differences in horses, boys. When you come to know 'em no two is alike. Well, that man says 'Here boys I'll jest give ye six of these beasts for your own,' and he gits on the other and rides off. I s'pose now, you mount yer horses and ride after him, and make him give ye the other horse, or at least let you keep it till yer craps was all in.'

'No; we aint so ornery mean as all that, preacher.'

'Well, thar, can't ye let the Lord's day alone?'

A blank look at the preacher and at each other; then Sam spoke out: 'You've treed us, preacher. John, I'm right glad you didn't bring that gun.'

## BAROON A SOUTH AFRICAN PEST.

Prey on Valuable Stock and Delight in Mischievous Deeds.

The South African colonists have got rid of their lions and elephants, but they have not yet been able to get the better of the baboons. A baboon, although somewhat like a dog, has all the mischievousness of a man. It is the ugliest animal in all creation. The Boers call him Adinis, and never designate him under the official name that has been given to him by science.

Now this creature is the curse of the Cape colony. He commits depredations for the love of the thing. Any imprudent tomcat that ventures too far away from home is sure to be captured and strangled for fun by a baboon. Nearly all the Angoras, the choicest and most costly animals imported by the colonists, have been destroyed by these huge monkeys. Even the dogs share the same fate.

The bravest and most pugnacious of the English canine breeds are unable to cope with adversaries, armed with just as powerful jaws, and with the immense advantage of having four hands instead of four paws. With a dexterity that conspicuously exhibits his surgical aptitudes, the baboon bleeds his enemy in the throat, and in less than a minute the duel ends in the death of the dog.

When the shepherd is away and the dog has been disposed of the flock is left without defense. Although the baboon generally feeds upon lizards and beetles, he does not despise a few mouthfuls of mutton, which he devours seated on the back of his living victim. Unfortunately are the goats and sheep that are attacked by these cynocephali. When Adonis finds his appetite fully satisfied he enjoys at a little distance the contortions of his victim. He frequently attacks cows, but never attempts to get into close quarters with a bull. The ostrich, thanks to its extraordinary speed, can easily get away from the baboon, but it is very much afraid of him, and immediately runs off on hearing his bark. It is noteworthy that nature has given the baboon not only the head of dog, but also the voice of a dog. All birds that are not remarkable for their intelligence have an insurmountable dread of the cynocephalus.

One of the principal amusements of those big monkeys is to gambol around the wire fences that protect the tame ostriches just to terrify them. The panic among them is so great that they often break their legs in their wild rushes. This is a pastime which the monkeys seem to enjoy hugely. It is known that a broken leg for an ostrich means a death sentence.—Paris Figaro.

## Not From Heaven.

Thirty years ago a steamer which was about to make its first passage from one Southern city to another was the scene of an evening reception, at which a calliope played an important part.

It was the first instrument of the sort which had ever been heard in that region, and as its peculiar far-reaching notes floated out on the evening air, the breasts of a large part of the colored population were filled with alarm. Many were the conjectures as to the source from which the unearthly sound proceeded.

One old darky stood listening in silence for some time in his doorway, not far from the scene of the festivities. At last he spoke in encouraging tones to the frightened group gathered near the little house.

'I tell you what,' he said slowly, 'I don't b'lieve dat am Gabriel a-playing on his tromp; but if it am Gabriel, he's playing 'Wait for de Wagon,' sure's dis chile's got ears!'

## HEART'S HEALER.

Mrs. Mugger, Wife of Captain Charles Mugger, of Sydney, C. B., Got Relief in 30 Minutes From Heart Disease of Four Years' Standing, and Declares She Owe Her Life to Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart.

'It affords me great pleasure to commend Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart. I was sorely afflicted with heart trouble, accompanied with dizziness, palpitation and smothering sensations. For over four years I was treated by best physicians, and used all remedies known to man. I determined to try Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart. The first dose gave me great relief inside of thirty minutes. I used two bottles and feel to-day I have been completely cured.'

Ingenious Time Recorder.

The following clever device is the way in which the natives of Liberia, in West Africa, who have no clocks, tell the time:

They take the kernels from the nuts of the candle-tree and wash and string them on the rib of a palm leaf. The first or top kernel is then lighted. All of the kernels are of the same size and substance, and each will burn a certain number of minutes and then set fire to the one next below.

## BEARS AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE.

How a Brave Teacher Managed to Keep old Bruin Outside.

Bears were unusually numerous in Maine during the season of 1896, and were seen in places never before known to be frequented by them. An exceptional abundance of food may have accounted for this in part. The bears relished the plentiful yield of berries and apples. In some instances they became bold enough to approach the habitations of men.

A story is told of a farmer's wife who had made ready for churning on the back porch of her house, which stood near the end of a wood. She left the cream in a churn for a half-hour or more, while she was busy elsewhere, and when she returned to the porch, she found the churn overturned and a black bear engaged in lapping up the cream. The animal made off at her approach and disappeared in the woods.

A teacher in the western part of Maine had a singular experience. Hearing a peculiar noise in the entry during the morning session of school, she opened the door and looked out. To her dismay she found a black bear with her two cubs making free with the children's lunch baskets.

The animals stopped nosing and eating as the teacher appeared, and then the old bear, resenting the interruption, and perhaps fearful for her cubs, came toward the door with menacing aspect.

The children saw the brute and were terribly frightened. Some screamed, others climbed on the desks, and two jumped from the window and ran toward home.

Acting on the impulse of the moment, and prompted by the sense that she must protect the children, the teacher seized the broom, which chanced to stand just within the door, and thrust it, brush end foremost, into the bear's face and eyes.

The brute, astonished by this reception, backed away, and the teacher, seizing the opportunity, stepped in and hurriedly shut the door.

Then, assuming a calmness which she was far from feeling, she did her best to quiet the frightened children. Meantime, the two who had escaped by way of the window ran home as fast as their feet could carry them. They found some men at work on the road and gave the alarm.

In the course of an hour several men armed with guns came to the schoolhouse. The bears had gone to the woods, but the hunt was soon organized, and with the aid of dogs the old bear and one cub were shot. The other one was captured alive and presented to the brave schoolmistress.

## "BLACK ROCKS."

An Incident Connected With the Discovery of Soft Coal.

A writer in Forest and Stream says that Elias Blank, one of the early settlers of what is now the great Connellsville coal region, in western Pennsylvania, was among the first Americans to burn soft coal. How the thing came about is thus described:

One night Mr. Blank was aroused by a rapping at his door. Opening it, he admitted a famous Indian fighter, Lewis Whetzell, and a companion, Jonathan Gates, commonly known as 'Long Arms.'

'Friend Lewis,' said Blank, 'where have thee and our friend been, and where bound?'

'I want to get out of here at once,' said Whetzell, 'and Long Arm is of the same opinion. This country's bewitched and Long Arms and I are nearly scared to death.'

'Friend Lewis, thee must not tell such stories to me,' said old Elias. 'Thee knows I am thy friend, and I have saved thee when a price was on thy head. I know thou art a man of courage, and friend Jonathan Gates, whom some call Long Arms, fears nothing on earth, and I'm fearful nothing anywhere else; and yet thou tellest me that he and thee are scared even almost unto death. Shame on thee so to declare before thy friend, who loves ye both as he were thy father!'

'No, no, Elias,' said Whetzell, dropping into the Quaker speech. 'I tell thee no lie. We are scared. Yesterday afternoon we were in hiding about a mile from Dunkard Creek, an' in the evening we built a fire under the bank very carefully, and we got some black rocks to prop up a little kettle, and put them beside the fire rather than in it, and the black rocks took fire and burned fiercely, with a filthy smoke and a bright light, and Long Arms said the devil would come if we stayed, and we grabbed our kettle and poured out the water, and made our way here, leaving the black rocks to burn.'

Elias Blank was much interested. He did not tell Whetzell what the black rocks were, but he found out exactly where the men had made their fire, and when they went away he gave them each a new Ezra Engle rifle, a knife and a tomahawk, with four pounds of powder and a supply of lead.

Then he hunted up their camping-ground found the 'black rocks' and opened a coal-bank into one of the river hills; and this coal-bank is still in existence in a twelve-foot vein of coal that is absolutely free from slate and burns like pitch.

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