

IN THE DRIFTWOOD

Flooded River Brings Precious Gift to Reunite Husband and Wife.

By MARGARET CAMERON.
John Bascombe stood upon the bank of the whirling river, looking on the wreck of his home. His wife, Mary, stood at his side, even in this extremity of affliction her hand did not seek his, and there was no sign that their common disaster had united them.

Things had not gone well with them during the three years that had elapsed since their marriage. He had been a clerk in St. Louis, and Mary was a school teacher. It was by a boy and girl flirtation, followed by a boy and girl marriage; then, spurred by necessity and aided by the inheritance of a few hundred dollars, John had purchased a few acres in the flat lands of the western part of the state. There they had struggled almost from the beginning. It was the desperate struggle of the soil-hungry and did to maintain their hold upon the precious earth.

Gradually, under the influence of the hard and remitting toll, they had drifted apart. If Mary had had a child it might have brought them together. But because this was not destined to be they had grown more and more strangers. Mary found the hard struggle intolerable and longed for books, people, intellectual life, such as she had been accustomed to; and John, busy from dawn to dark in his battle with nature, hardly had any other life at all.

When they tried to hope for a child it seemed as though they must drift apart for ever. In fact they had spoken of a separation, at first tentatively, then hopefully, then eagerly, as something to be anticipated.

"You can have everything except the house and the land," John said to her. "I want to be free, as you do. I'll send you—"

"I don't want your money, John," she flashed out at him. "There isn't anything of yours I want—now. There was only one thing—love—and I don't want that any more."

They were to have separated that very day, John remaining there, Mary



Stood Side by Side Upon a Little Knoll.

returning to St. Louis, to take up her work in the public schools again. And then, a week before, the river began to rise. And soon came stories of the floods up the country that were carrying all before them, bursting through levees, overwhelming towns, sweeping away houses and churches as though they were but driftwood floating upon the stream, and drowning thousands.

And hourly the river rose, and Mary, forgetting for the time her own plans, stayed at John's side and fought the floods with him. It was little she could do; but all along the banks were building up the levees, hoping to dam back that roaring tide before it burst through into the fertile fields that they had won from the scrub-covered bottoms of the old water-channel. And Mary, with a corps of devoted women, ministered to the savage, wearied, toiling men.

Then the worst happened; the river burst its banks, and, with the crest of the flood had passed, the little settlement was as matchboxes. Not a house was left standing. Only logs, shingles, and foundations remained. And down the stream poured the debris from a half dozen states on its wild career toward the Gulf of Mexico.

"They stood side by side upon a little knoll and looked at the dull yellow ponds that covered their land. The land was there still but all the fruits of their work had been carried away. They looked into the turbid river, and then into each other's eyes."

"What are you going to do, John?" asked Mary.

"I'm going to move west," he answered. "And you?"

"I shall go back to St. Louis," she answered. "There is no use in my staying here now."

"No," he agreed.

Mary was to leave on the following morning. They were shattered in the railroad depot nearby which seemed dated the homeless survivors and stood just beyond the highest reach of the flood. On the next morning John set off at dawn. He could not

resist the temptation to look once again at the ruin of his home; but he had not the heart to awaken Mary. When he left, the squalid, sordid enclosure it was with no intention of returning.

And Mary knew that. She had not slept the night. She had thought, all through the sleepless hours, of that other ruin, their common life. Had she not also been to blame for that? She recalled times when she might have been more to John; when she had been repelled; times when she had let pride master her inclinations toward reconciliation. And John had not changed, only he had let material things creep up between their love like noxious weeds, and strangle it. Yet she could not bring herself to call him back. She watched his tall, bent figure pass out of the enclosure, and out of her life, as she thought.

Half an hour later he was back, his face ashen. He looked at him in amazement. He might have been another man—no, the old one, her boyish sweetheart who had so long been only a memory to her.

"Mary!" he called. "Come! No, put on your cloak and bring your grip. I will carry it for you. Come—I'll wait!"

She accompanied him outside the squalid buildings to where the receding floods had left a swampy stretch of earth. Here their farm had been, their house and growing crops, and now—

She started in amazement. A new house stood almost upon the spot of the old one. It might have been their house—the house they had planned in the first dreams of their married life. Firm and foursquare it stood, with its slight porch, its neatly shuttered windows, its front door with the gleaming knocker. Mary turned to John.

"It's magic, John. What does it mean?" she asked.

John pointed to the receding river. "It is the river's gift to us," he answered.

Torn from its foundations, hundreds of miles away, in heaven only knew what country or state, even, it had been deposited there by the flood. It needed but two teams of oxen to tow it upon the foundations of the old house. And it was theirs! For it could never be taken away; probably those who had once owned it had died in the cataclysm. It was theirs, this home. They stepped up toward it, wading like children through the swampy places. And, looking in, Mary gasped with wonder. For it was furnished, neatly, cheaply, but tastefully. There was a parlor, with a table and chairs, a living room; over the curtains swayed upon their rods. The river had borne it upon its breast as gently as a child.

"I wonder if the upper floor is furnished," Mary, John suggested.

Suddenly she caught his hand in hers and motioned to him to remain silent. "Hush, John!" she whispered, listening intently. "Did you hear anything?" she asked presently.

John had heard nothing except the sullen lapping of the waves upon the river banks. But Mary's eyes were alight with a strange fire and her cheeks flushed and the hand that he held in his was trembling.

"What is it, Mary?" he asked stupidly.

Suddenly she dashed wildly up the steps of the stranded house, while John looked after her, wondering at the feverish eagerness which had succeeded her customary apathy. She disappeared inside, and almost immediately afterward she reappeared. Her hair was tumbling all over her face, upon her lips there played a smile of tenderness that he had often imagined there but had never seen. In her arms she carried a bundle.

She came toward him, and as she unwrapped it, the feeble cry of a child smote upon his ears.

"Look, John!" she whispered.

An infant of six months was lying in her arms. And even as John looked he saw the little arms go upward, seeking Mary's neck, and, having found it, they clasped themselves contentedly around it.

"What do you think, John?" said Mary, with a little laugh. "He hasn't even finished his bottle—although the milk is souring. You didn't hear him," she added, "but I did."

She stood there so proud, so happy in this vicarious motherhood, that John's arm stole timidly around her waist and he drew her toward him.

"Mary, dear," he whispered, "I have often thought that if I had a child—like this—it would have drawn us together. We would not have drifted apart as we have done."

"Do have!" she answered passionately. "I tell that, you remember it, John, my—my childlessness, and so—"

"You hadn't grown tired of me?"

"No, John, indeed not. If I had thought you wanted me to stay—"

"But I did and do want you," he answered triumphantly. "Only, Mary—"

"John!"

"He stays with us."

"Of course," she answered, turning up the little face for her husband's kiss.

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Niala Gossip.

"There goes Susan Brett," remarked Yorick Hamm. "She loves to hear herself talk."

"Then it must be a great trial to her," responded Hamlet Pitt, "to have to work all the time for the movies."

Her Way.

"Does your maid ask for many evenings out?" "No." "That's good." "She takes 'em."

Her Work Undone.
After a woman has spent twenty years trying to make a man of her son, along comes another woman who proceeds to make a fool of him in twenty minutes.

Preserves Indian Relics.
Inscriptions and carvings on the rocks, the work of ancient Indian tribes, are being preserved by the government by means of an impression made in paper.

Wants Just a Taste.
Even when a man prays for delivery from temptation he is telling himself that it isn't going to hurt him to take a look at it.

An Electric Restaurant.
An electric restaurant is in successful operation in London. The cooking is faultless and the prices are lower than those of the neighboring establishments of the same class.

Experience a Leggard.
The faultiest most of us have to find is that experience follows at the heels of opportunity, instead of being its advance agent.

Their Object.
"Why do people have their hands read, anyhow?" "To get a palmy future."

Comparisons.
"I came near planting a garden this spring." "My garden came near planting me."

A Mixup.
"When do you expect to take a hand in this business?" "When I get a foot in it."

There a Limit.
Every man boasts of his self-control, though there never was a man who had so much he could hold a lead pencil in his hand without marking with it.

A Hint to the Wise.
A wise wife soon learns to manage her husband, while a wise husband never tries to manage his wife.

1913 TAX LEVY ORDINANCE.

No. 51 (New Series).

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Village of Barrington, in the County of Cook and State of Illinois, did, on the 2nd day of June, A. D. 1913, pass the ANNUAL APPROPRIATION BILL for said Village for the fiscal year, beginning on the first day of May, A. D. 1913, the aggregate amount of which was the sum of Thirteen Thousand (\$13,000.00), which said appropriation bill was duly published on the 15th day of June, A. D. 1913. Now therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Barrington, that there be and is hereby levied upon all of the taxable property within the corporate limits of said village for the year A. D. 1913, the total sum of Eight Thousand Dollars, for the following specific purposes mentioned in said appropriation bill, and in the respective sums as follows, to-wit:

For interest on bonded indebtedness

For payment of maturing bonds

For payment of necessary miscellaneous and incidental expenses of said village

For maintenance of streets and alleys

For salaries

For lights

For maintenance of waterworks

Total

And the Clerk of said Village is hereby directed to file with the County Clerk of said county duly certified copies of this ordinance.

Passed July 7th, A. D. 1913.

JOSEPH D. ROBINSON, Village Clerk.

Approved, July 7th, A. D. 1913.

MILES T. LANEY, President Board of Trustees.

Actual Results

Age at issue, 29. Year of issue, 1898

Kind of policy, 25 year endowment.

Payment of premiums limited to ten years.

Amount of policy \$3500.00

to annual premiums of \$1568.60

Less ten annual dividends (1st to 10th year) 160.56

1408.04

Deduct total of 15 annual dividends paid in cash 10th to 25th year of policy with interest at four percent per annum 312.13

Total net cost - 1095.91 1095.61

Net gain - - - \$1404.09

This represents a profit of \$68.82 more than the money invested at 4 per cent would have made, and \$2500.00 insurance free for 25 years.

The above statement is true and correct.

HENRY J. BAUMANN.

ERMAN S. SMITH, Local Agent.

I. O. FOWLER, Special Agent.

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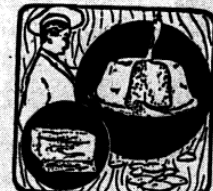
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