

THE EVENING NEWS.

Monday, October 16, 1901.

A NIGHT'S ADVENTURE OF THE OHIO RIVER—AN INCIDENT OF THE FLOOD OF 1900.

BY MISS MARTHA M. THOMAS.

[CONTINUED.]

The girl had been brought to depend on herself, and she had both resolution and courage. Running to the bed she shook Will. "Get up, Will, get up! The river is all around the house! The boy sat up, rubbed his eyes stupidly, then sank back again. "Get up, Will, do get up! Don't you hear? The river is coming in the house!" She shook him again. "Dress quickly, and don't wake baby." She already had her own shoes on, and was fastening up her dress. There was the same creaking noise, and the house shook. Will comprehended at last, and while putting on his clothes ran to the window. "What are we to do?" he asked, in a fright. "If father was only here!" "We must go up to the loft, and wait until father comes," she answered. Taking the baby in her arms, she climbed the stairway, and laid it on her own bed, wrapping it up warmly. When she came down again, Will, who had been looking out, stood with the tears running down his face. "Where is father?" On Sally, where is father? I am so afraid he has been drowned he has not come home." She hugged the tender-hearted boy close. "No, Will, no; father is safe; he will only be troubled about us." She considered her own rescue, and then said, "He will get a boat and come."

Finding the water was covering the floor, they carried to the loft all the articles they could move, not forgetting some bread and a crock of milk for the baby. They then took refuge there themselves. While they were thus engaged, they frequently heard the house quiver. It was cold. They had a light, but no fire. So, wrapped in comforters, they held each other close, not daring to go to bed. They crouched near one of the windows, of which there were two in the loft, one looking back on the hills, the other in front on the river.

Their father did not come. It was not a dark night, and they could see that the water spread over the meadows almost to the hills. The barns and all the out-houses stood surrounded. They could hear the geese gabble in alarm, and the ducks quack, for they had been driven from their shelter.

It was a strange sight, and one well calculated to fill them with fear. They spoke little as they sat huddled together, except to say, "What is that?" as the creaking noise they had heard grew louder. Will, who had always been delicate, was a dependent, loving, sympathetic boy, whose bravery was shown in bearing—he was uncomplaining, but sympathetic. Sally, who had often kept the house for her mother when her mother was ill, and cooked her father's meals, and even done the washing, was sturdy and a little rough to others, but to Will she was always tender. Now her heart ached for the lad she held in her arms.

The little wooden clock on the mantel-shelf struck two, and a moment after there was a great noise, as of something tearing away—fencing and jerking, and the house swayed to and fro, and, as if struck with something, went down one side, and up the other. With a smothered exclamation, the children covered up their heads and clung close to each other. A violent motion was followed by a calm. They looked up. There was a tearing and pushing along the sides of the house, a violent thump, the window-panes rattled as if broken, and fell, and the opening was darkened by branches of trees. A moment more, and all was quiet again. They were still. Presently Sally stood up and said, "We are moving. Will, the house is moving!" She ran to the front window and looked out. They were almost on the broad Ohio. Alone, without help, in this old house, they were moving down the surging stream.

With a wild scream Sally sprang across the floor, and looked out at the back window. She saw the barn, and the woodhouse, and the tops of the fences, with chickens roosting on them. Great trees which had been uprooted, and in whose branches logs and other debris had caught, were away where the house had stood, apparently pinned by something remaining there. Even as she gazed, the distance between them and those familiar objects increased, and she knew they were on the broad, swift current of the river, helpless.

The boy saw the terror in her face, and, clinging close to her, he looked up, and said, softly, as a big tear streamed from under her lid, and fell upon his upturned cheek, "Don't cry, Sally; God will help us." The girl, always more given to depend on herself than to seek higher aid, clasped him, and relieved herself by a loud burst of sobbing. Awakened by the noise, the baby cried, and had to be taken up and fed; this took the attention of the children for some moments from themselves and their situation, which they could not fully realize. The raft of trees and driftwood coming against the old house already swayed in the water, had forced it from its foundation and swept it out into the open river, bearing it past the great trees on the bank, the tops of which had broken the windows, and torn off some of the weather-boarding from the side.

Somewhat herself again, Sally laid the baby down, and, drawing Will with her, crept to the window. Crouching, they looked out. Just then the piece of candle flared up, sank again in the socket, flickered, and went out. It will soon be morning," the boy said, in answer to Sally's clasp, as they were left in darkness.

"Then the people will see us, and come and take us away," was her reply.

To be continued.

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