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# The Advocate

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THE ILLUSTRATED FEATURE SECTION—JANUARY 16, 1932 BLUE RIBBON FICTION IS FOUND EVERY WEEK IN THE FEATURE SECTION

## RIVER JUSTICE

A Farm Boy and His Girl Sweetheart Find Love When Old Man River Helps.



There was a terrific explosion in the midst of the mob which shook the countryside. Everyone was thrown to the ground and ten feet of water rushed in upon them.

**Old Eph Daniels is Dead. His Body Lies on the Ground in Front of the Spot where Charred and Smoking Logs Show that His Cottage Once Stood. He Gave His Own Life for His Friends. But Still the Hungry Mob Longs for Blood. They Seek Young Jeb Williams, who, with Emily, Had Sought Refuge in a Dynamiter's Shanty on the Levee. The Mob Approaches, but Old Man River Helps Save their Lives.**

By EDWARD T. TAYLOR

Young Jeb Williams pulled his old gray horse up at Uncle Eph Daniels' gate: "H'lo unc' Eph, how is y'all a-gittin' 'long?" he called cheerily.

Old Eph pulled himself up from the comfortable "lean-to" in the shade of the big oak tree, where he had been peacefully smoking his cob pipe, and painfully made his way to the gate: "Fair to middlin', sah," he replied. "My rheumatism's benn a-botherin' me a mite, but dat's allus de case in de spring we'en de rains is flushin'."

"We is been havin' plenty rain, dis spring. You know de gov'ment men is thinkin' maybe dere'll be another flood lak twus two years back," Jeb remarked by way of conversation.

Eph's interest kindled considerably at this last remark. There came to his mind a vision of the horrors attending that last flood. He remembered the days when they had been

marooned on a strip of land scarcely a hundred yards across not knowing at what hour this one remaining support might give way and catapult them into the murky waters of the raging river.

There came to his mind a poignant memory of his beloved Mariah, who had stuck by him to the last, only to be struck down by the terrible wave of influenza which came in the wake of the receding river, leaving only his daughter, Emily, to comfort him in old age. And thinking of these things he felt a premonition of impending disaster creeping over him.

If he could but have translated his feeling of approaching danger into reality, he would have perceived that at this moment a sinister menace was moving slowly toward them, and was all but upon them, ready to engulf them in a maze of circumstances from which there was no escape, and send them all rushing to meet their God.

This menace was not the river, swollen as it was from five weeks of continuous rain, but was rather a

wave of humanity, the back-wash of a civilization of hypocrites, who sought to delude themselves into a feeling of superiority by availing themselves of every passing opportunity to oppress the weaker people with whom circumstances deemed they should live, never catching sight of the fact that they, themselves could rise no higher or be no more in the scheme of the universe than they were as long as there were among them, humans who were denied the privileges and rights accorded to even their dogs.

But Eph was not thinking of these dangers just then. He was thinking of the new, but old menace presented by the rising river—the ever threatening nemesis of the farmers who staked their hopes on the fertile, but treacherous lands bordering the lower Mississippi.

"Lawdy mercy, Jeb, what'll we do ef dat ole ribber swamps us agin?" he asked nervously.

"De gov'ment men say dey got a plan ter keep hit 'fron' floodin' us ef

dey sees dat de levee is goin' ter break, but dey won't tell me nothin' 'bout hit," Jeb assured him. "Dey been putterin' 'bout down here whah ah had mah cotton las' year and keeps dey tools in mah cotton shed. Dey's got 'bout fifty cases o' dynamite down dere in de shed, and I'se feared ter go near dat ole shack."

Uncle Eph appeared satisfied with what Jeb told him. In his simple, child-like way, he thought of the "gov'ment" as being next to God, and readily imagined that if "they" said they would protect the river farmers from the flood, it would be done if the whole river had to be blown to smithereens to do so.

The conversation readily turned to the one central interest of both men, Emily. She was as dear to Jeb as she was to Eph, for only the week before she had answered "yes" to his oft repeated entreaty for her hand in marriage and he was justly, the happiest as well as the luckiest man in the county, for Emily was well worth the efforts of any man.

To be sure, it was the magic of her charms which, without her connivance, however, was bringing a hasty judgment down upon the heads of her dearest possessions at this moment.

Emily Daniels was the sort of a girl a man would look at but once. He couldn't get his eyes off after the first look, and his next impulse would be to take her into his arms and whisper sweet nothings in her ears.

Her luxuriant black unbobbed hair, which hung over her shoulders, accentuated the baby effect simulated by lips that might have been the models for Cupid's own. Her dark

brown skin as soft as a baby's, made a perfect background for eyes that resembled amber moons reflected in a sea of crystal.

Her body, though not yet matured, seemed the very essence of loveliness, from deep-set, well-built shoulders to trim ankles and feet, dainty enough for a queen. The rigors of farm work had only given her a figure that queens might envy.

Jeb, whose affection Emily returned measure-for-measure, was all that any farm maiden could desire. Black in color, his rather too broad face was more than compensated by a physique of which a champion athlete would have been proud, and when he smiled, two rows of pearly white teeth glistened behind his beaming countenance like perfectly matched gems from the famed pearl beds of the South Sea Isles.

Like Emily, he had received no more than a sixth grade education, but was possessed with an extra portion of what is commonly called "mother-wit" in the South. It was this trait of foresight and intuition which had caused him to reason that the flood waters would not return the two previous years, and to gamble on his reasoning by planting his cotton on a strip of the vast expanse of waste land, some miles below the settlement in which he lived.

This land was fertile beyond parison, but was in the very eye of the levee and the danger of it was so great that only a few men, like Jeb, dared to gamble with caprice, and they usually lost.

But Jeb's luck had held two consecutive years, and