

she, "and 'twas tied near to the fence where the river was overflowed, and I was playing house on it, and then the next thing I knew it was broke loose and floating off again. And papa'll be awful sorry to lose the bridge, too, 'cause he said it was worth six bits."

"Well, he shall have the bridge again if he'll come after it," said Sam, "but he shall have his little girl first."

Sam had hardly noticed where his heavy prize was causing him to drift to, and when he looked ahead he saw he was a half-mile below his lookout place and opposite a portion of the bank which was overflowed, To tow the bridge against the current would be an impossibility, so Sam pulled toward the shore with all his might, desirous of tying the bridge to some one of the trees on the bank. But the trees when he reached them, proved to be all large sycamores or cottonwoods, about which Sam could not easily put his arms and rope.

Suddenly, while making a violent effort to throw the end of a rope around one of the trees, his boat careened so much that both the occupants were thrown into the water. The child screamed, but Sam seized her in an instant, and was delighted to find that the water was only waist-deep. But in the mean time the bridge and boat were both moving away with the current, and, as is always the case with drift in a freshet, moving toward the centre of the river.

"This is a bad fix to be in," remarked Sam, holding the child above water, "but I'll wade to where there's dry ground, and then we'll find some house where we can dry ourselves."

But Sam did not find it easy to reach dry ground. Behind him the top of a small canebrake showed above water, indicating that the ground there was lower than that on which he stood. He moved cautiously down stream, but was stopped by what seemed to be a small ditch or hollow running at right angles with the river, then he retraced his steps and moved toward the little point beyond which he always established his lookout, but a thicket of young cottonwoods, eight or ten feet high, barred his way.

"I'll tell you what we'll have to do," said he: "I'll stand in front of the trees and put you up on my shoulders, and

we'll hail the first flat-boat that comes along. There's been two gone by already this morning, and there will be plenty more."

"Let's climb a tree," suggested the child, "and then you won't be in the water I can climb as good as brother Ben."

Sam looked about him; probably the weight of a healthy child, even so small as this one, was a severe tax upon his feeble body already chilled by the water.

"There's no trees small enough to climb," said he. "'Twould take two men to reach around any one of them."

"Then let's holloa," said the little girl. "That's the way folks do when they want the ferryman to come over."

"That's a first-rate notion," exclaimed Sam, and he at once delivered several vigorous and prolonged howls. Then the little girl gave vent to some shrill shrieks, but no one answered. Sam began to tremble and bend under the weight of the child, and the child perceiving his uneasiness, exclaimed:

"I wish the water wasn't so deep, so I could stand up in it, and not hurt you."

"Oh, you don't hurt," said he, "Can you sing?"

"Oh, yes—lots of things," answered the child, promptly. "What do you like the best—'Tommy Green' or 'Happy Land'?"

"Well, whichever is liveliest," replied Sam, shifting the child to the other shoulder, while she sang "Tommy Green" with the best spirit a soaked child could command.

"That sounds che-ery," said Sam.

"Why, how funny you talk!" said she; "what makes you say things so shaky like?"

"Oh, I just felt cold for a minute," replied Sam, very hastily. "Wouldn't it be nice if we could warm the water somehow?"

"To think of warming all the water in a big river!" said she; "how funny!"

"'Tis nonsensical, isn't it?" Sam admitted. "Well, 'twould be nice if somebody was making soap, and we were standing by the fire, wouldn't it? What was the biggest fire you ever saw?"

"'Twas old Bretzger's barn," said she, promptly. "It burned way up to the sky, and made my face warm way off on the fence, as far as from here across the river,"