

Old Lady Number 31

By LOUISE FORSLUND

Author of "The Story of Sarah" "The Ship of Dreams" Etc.

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SYNOPSIS.

Captain Abraham Rose and Angelina, his wife, have lost their little home through the unwise purchase of a...

CHAPTER X—Continued.

"I told you I never could stand it here amongst all these dratted women-folks," Abe would declare. "It's all your fault that I didn't go to the poor-house in peace."

"I notice you didn't raise no objections until yew'd lived here a year," Angy would retort; but ignoring this remark, he would go on:

"It's 'Brother Abe' this an' 'Brother Abe' that, as if I had thirty wives a-pesterin' me instid of one. I can't kill a fly but it's 'Brother Abe, lemme bury him fer yew.' Do yer all think I be a baby?" demanded the old gentleman with glaring eye.

It took very little to exhaust Angy's ability for this style of repartee, and she would rejoin with tender but mistaken efforts to soothe and comfort him:

"Thar, thar, father! Don't git excited now. Seems ter me ye're a leetle bit feverish. Ef only yew'd take this here tansy tea."

Abraham would give one exasperated glance at the tin cup and mutter into the depths of his beard:

"Tansy tea an' old women! Old women an' tansy tea! Tansy tea be durned!"

Abe failed perceptibly during the summer, grew feebler as the autumn winds blew in, and by November he took to his bed and the physician of the home, a little whiffet of a pompous idiot, was called to attend him.

The doctor, determined at the start to make a severe case of the old man's affliction in order that he might have the greater glory in the end, he it good or bad, looked very grave over Abraham's tongue and pulse, prescribed medicine for every half hour, and laid especial stress upon the necessity of keeping the patient in bed.

"Humbug!" growled the secretly terrified invalid, and in an excess of bravado took his black silk necktie from where it hung on the bedpost and tied it in a bow-knot around the collar of his pink-striped nightshirt, so that he would be in proper shape to receive any of the sisters. Then he lay very still, his eyes closed, as they came tip-toeing in and out. Their tongues were on gentle tiptoe too, although not so gentle but that he could hear them advising: One, a "good, stiff mustard plaster;" one, an "onion poultice;" another, a "Spanish blister;" while Aunt Nancy stopped short of nothing less than "old-fashioned bleeding."

Abraham lay very still and wondered if they meant to kill him. He was probably going to die anyhow, so why torment him. Only when he was dead, he hoped that they would think more kindly of him. And so surrounded yet alone, the old man fought his secret terror until mercifully he went to sleep.

When he awoke there were the sisters again; and day after day they spent their combined efforts in keeping him on his back and forcing him to take his medicine, the only appreciable good resulting therefrom being the fact that with his tax upon their devotion the old ladies came once more to regard Abe as the most precious possession of the Home.

"What ef he should die?" they whispered among themselves, repentant enough of their late condemnation of him and already desolate at the thought of his leaving this little haven with them for the "great haven" over there; and the whisper reaching the sickroom, Abe's fever would rise, while he could never lift his lashes except to

see the specter of helpless old age on one side of the bed and death upon the other.

"What's the matter with me?" he demanded of the doctor, as one who would say: "Pooh! pooh! You're a humbug! What do you mean by keeping me in bed?" Yet the old man was trembling with that inner fear. The physician, a feminine kind of a bearded creature himself, took Abe's hand in his—an engaging trick he had with the old ladies.

"Now, my friend, do not distress yourself. Of course, you are a very sick man; I cannot deceive you as to that; but during my professional career, I have seen some remarkable cases of recovery and—"

"But what's the matter with me?" broke in Abe, by this time fairly white with fear. The doctor had assured him that all his organs were sound, so he could only conclude that he must have one of those unusual diseases such as Miss Abigail was reading about in the paper yesterday. Maybe, although his legs were so thin today, he was on the verge of an attack of elephantiasis!

"What's the matter with me?" he repeated, his eyes growing wilder and wilder.

What the doctor really replied would be difficult to tell; but out of the confusion of his technicalities Abe caught the words, "nerves" and "hysteria."

"Mother, yew hear that?" he cried. "I got nervous hysterics. I told yer somethin' would happen ter me a-comin' to this here place. All them old woman's diseases is ketchin'. Why on 'rth didn't yer let me go to the poor-house?"

He fell back on the pillow and drew the bedclothes up to his ears, while Angy followed the doctor out into the hall to receive, as Abe supposed, a more detailed description of his malady. He felt too weak, however, to question Angy when she returned, and stubbornly kept his eyes closed until he heard Mrs. Homan tiptoe into the room to announce in hushed tones that Blossy and Samuel Darby were below, and Samuel wanted to know if he might see the invalid.

Then Abe threw off the covers in a hurry and sat up. "Sam! Darby?" he asked, the strength coming back into his voice. "A man! Nary a woman ner a doctor! Yes—yes, show him up!"

Angy nodded in response to Mrs. Homan's glance of inquiry; for had not the doctor told her that it would not hasten the end to humor the patient in any reasonable whim? And she also consented to withdraw when Abe informed her that he wished to be left alone with his visitor, as it was so long since he had been face to face with a man "an' no petticoat a-hangin' round the corner."

"Naow, be keerful, Cap'n Darby," the little mother-wife cautioned at the door, "be yer keerful. Don't stay tew long an' don't rile him up, fer he's dretful excited, Abe is."

CHAPTER XI.

Mental Treatment.

Little Samuel Darby paused at the foot of the bed and stared at Abe without saying a word, while Abe fixed his dim, distressed eyes on his visitor with a dumb appeal for assistance. Samuel looked a very different man from the old bachelor who used to come a-wooing every six months at the Home. Either marriage had brought him a new growth of hair, or else Blossy had selected a new wig for him—a modest, close, iron-gray which fitted his poll to perfection. Marriage or Blossy had also overcome in Samuel that tendency to hang his head "to starb'd"; and now he lifted his bright eyes with the manner of one who would say:

"See! I'm king of myself and my household! Behold what one woman has done for me!" And in turn Abe's unstrung vigor and feeble dependence cried out as loudly: "I haven't a leg left to stand on. Behold what too much woman has done for me!"

"Ain't yew a-goin' ter shake hands?" inquired Abraham at last, wondering at the long silence and the incomprehensible stare, his fears accentuated by this seeming indication of a supreme and hopeless pit. "Ain't yew a-goin' ter shake hands? Er be yew afraid of ketchin' it, tew?"

For a moment longer Samuel continued to stare, then of a sudden he roared, "Git up!"

"Huh?" queried Abe, not believing his own ears. "Why, Cap'n Sam'l, don't yew know that I'm a doomed man? I got the 'nervous hysterics.'"

"Yew got the pit!" retorted Captain Darby contemptuously, and trotting quickly around to the side of the bed, he seized Abe by the shoulders and began to drag him out upon the floor, crying again, "Git up!"

The sick man could account for this remarkable behavior in no way except by concluding that his old captain had gone into senile dementia—oh, cruel, cruel afflictions that life brings to old folks when life is almost done! Well, thought Abe, he would rather be sick and die in his right mind than go crazy. He began to whimper, whereupon Samuel threw him back upon his pillows in disgust.

"Cryin'! Oh, I swan, he's cryin'!" Darby gave a short laugh pregnant with scorn. "Abe Rose, dew yew know what ails yew?" he demanded, fixing his eyes fiercely upon the invalid. "Dew yew know what'll happen tew yew if yew don't git out o' this bed an' this here house? Either yer beard'll fall out an' yew'll dwindle down ter the size o' a baby or yew'll turn into a downright old woman—Aunt Abraham!—won't that sound nice? Or yew'll die or yew'll go crazy. Git out er bed!"

The patient shook his head and sank back, closing his eyes, more exhausted

than ever. And he himself had heard Angy warn this man in a whisper not to "rile him up!" Remorselessly went on the rejuvenated Darby:

"Hain't a-goin' ter git up, heh? Yew old mollycoddler! Yew baby! Old Lady 31! Kiffy calf! But I hain't a-blamin' yew; ef I had lived in this here place a year an' a half, I'd be stark, starin' mad! Leetle tootse-wootse! Git up!"

Abe had opened his eyes and was once more staring at the other, his mind slowly coming to the light of the realization that Samuel might be more sane than himself.

"That's what I told Angy all along," he ventured. "I told her, I says, says I, 'Humbug! Foolishness! Yere a-makin' a reg'lar baby of me. Why, I says, 'what's the difference between me an' these here women-folks except that I wear a beard an' smoke a pipe?'"

"Then why don't yew git up?" demanded the inexorable Samuel. "Git up an' fool 'em; or, gosh all hemlock! they'll be measurin' yew fer yer coffin next week. When I come inter the hall, what dew yew think these here sisters o' yourn was a-discussin'? They was a-arguin' the p'int as to whether they'd bury yew in a shroud or yer Sunday suit."

Abraham put one foot out of bed. Samuel took hold of his arm and with this assistance the old man managed to get up entirely and stand, though shaking as if with the palsy, upon the floor.

"Feel pooty good, don't yew?" demanded Samuel, but with less severity.

"A leetle soft, a leetle soft," muttered the other. "Gimme my cane. Thar, ef one o' them women comes in the door I'll—I'll—" Abraham raised his stick and shook it at the innocent air. "Whar's my pipe? Mis' Homan, she went an' hid it last week."

After some searching, Samuel found the pipe in Abe's hatbox underneath the old man's beaver, and produced from his own pocket a package of tobacco, whereupon the two sat down for a quiet smoke, Samuel chuckling to himself every now and again, Abe modestly seeking from time to time to cover his bare legs with the skirt of his pink-striped nightgown, not daring to reach for a blanket lest Samuel should call him names again. With the very first puff of his pipe, the light had come back into the invalid's eyes; with the second, the ashen hue completely left his cheek; and when he had pulled the tenth time on the pipe, Abe was ready to laugh at the sisters, the whole world, and even himself.

"Hy-gy, but it's splendid to feel like a man ag'in!"

The witch of Hawthorne's story never gazed more fondly at her "Feather-top" than Samuel now gazed at Abraham pulling away on his pipe; but he determined that Abraham's fate should not be as poor "Feather-top's." Abe must remain a man.

"Naow look a-her, Abe," he began after a while, laying his hand on the other's knee, "dew yew know that yew come put' nigh gittin' swamped in the big breakers? Ef I hadn't come along an' throwed out the life-line, yew—"

"Sam'l," interrupted the new Abraham, not without a touch of asperity, "whar yew been these six months? A-leavin' me ter die of apron strings an' doctors! Of course I didn't 'spect nuthin' o' yew when yew was jist a bachelor, an' we'd sort o' lost sight er each other fer many a year, but arter yew got connected with the Hum by marriage sorter—"

"Connected with the Hum by marriage!" broke in Samuel with a snort of indignant protest. "Me!" Words failed him. He stared at Abe with burning eyes, but Abe only insisted sullenly:

"Whar yew an' Blossy been all this time?"

"Dew yew mean ter tell me, Abe Rose, that yew didn't know that Aunt Nancy forbid Blossy the house 'cause she didn't go an' ask her permission ter git spliced? Oh, I forgot," he added. "Yew'd gone upstairs ter take a nap that day we come back from the minister's."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Pittsburgh Cleanup.

The glad tidings have gone forth that for the first time in history Pittsburgh has a regularly organized squad of policemen whose duty it is to protect women from insults, to scour the streets for loafers, to scan the moving-picture shows, patrol the parks and maintain a generally vigilant eye for "mashers." If this squad is gifted with the ordinary sense of sight it will find work to do at the start right in the midst of the business center. It can start in on Fifth avenue and Smithfield street at most any hour of the day or evening, and before reaching Market street can gather up a patrol wagon load of the most obnoxious characters that infest the city.—Pittsburgh Post.

Darwin's Regret.

If I had to live my life over again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once a every week, for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept alive through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.—Charles Darwin

Hoarseness Relieved.

When a small child is suffering from hoarseness, try the relief of the juice of a lemon on sugar. The lemon should be baked like an apple and the child should be given a little of the thickened and warm juice squeezed over a lump of sugar.

SHELTER FOR BIRDS

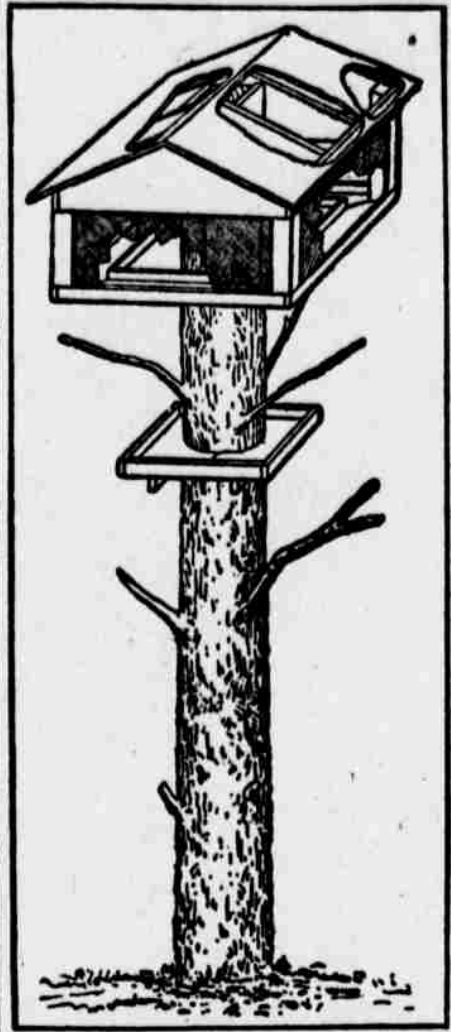
Particularly Desirable Where Edible Material Is Scarce.

Designs of Two Houses Given in Bulletin Issued by Agricultural Department—Importance of Protecting the Milk Cans.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

The farmer who will build a food shelter and furnish an abundance of food in it will find that many birds of value to him as insect-destroyers, will haunt his premises. This is particularly true when there is a scarcity of bird food in the vicinity. The United States department of agriculture in a recently published bulletin on bird houses has offered designs for shelters that will protect food in all kinds of weather.

To induce birds to enter a food shelter baits are first placed in a conspicuous



Food Shelter for Attachment to Post—Roof Cut Away to Show Construction—Sides Made of Glass; Size of Panes 8 by 10 inches.

ous place outside and the birds are led by degrees to enter the inclosure. Such food as suet, seeds, or cracked nuts will prove attractive as bait.

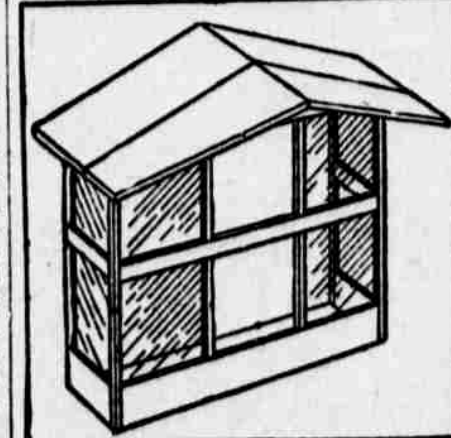
Two designs are given in the bulletin for adequate food shelters. The first may be attached to a tree, the other may be placed on top of a post or tree stub. The sides are made of glass. There is no bottom to either of these structures.

Besides protecting food, such a shelter will provide a place where one interested in birds can watch them conveniently.

If the farmer has neither the time nor inclination to make a shelter but still desires to attract valuable birds by putting out food, the next best thing is to fasten the bait to trunks or branches of trees or scatter it on the ground in sheltered places.

Desirable birds may be attracted by other means than food, particularly in summer. On warm days they appreciate fresh water for drinking and bathing. A shallow pool of varying depth, if only a foot across, becomes a center of attraction for all the birds in the vicinity, and it may be made with little effort and material. Only a small amount of cement is required, or, if that be lacking, a pan with stones in it, set in the ground will be equally serviceable.

Cats are particularly dangerous to birds, and should not be permitted



Food Shelter for Attachment to Trunk of Tree.

near the home-made bird pool during bathing hours or go near the food shelters.

Designs for simple and elaborate bird houses that will interest all bird lovers are given in a farmers' bulletin No. 609, which the United States department of agriculture has recently issued. It is entitled "Bird Houses, and How to Build Them," and will be sent free of charge to anyone requesting it from the department.

Protection for Milk Cans.

Much milk that seems to be perfectly good when it leaves the farm, reaches the consumer in bad condition, and the United States department of agriculture is now convinced that this is frequently due to a rise in the

temperature of the milk during transportation. A series of tests that has recently been completed shows the importance of surrounding the milk cans during hot weather with some appropriate insulating material which will effectually exclude the heat.

Even when milk is to be shipped only a short distance its temperature should not be higher than 50 degrees F. At this temperature bacteria will multiply, but the increase is slow and a few hours delay will result in no serious injury. In milk above 50 degrees F. the rate of bacteria growth is much more rapid. It follows that when the milk is to be shipped a long distance it must be loaded on the cans at a temperature much less than 50 degrees F. unless some efficient means is taken to prevent the temperature rising during the journey.

Perhaps the most practical way of accomplishing this is to wrap the cans in a pair of quilt jackets, wet burlap, or some other similar material. In the course of the recent experiments milk was hauled a distance of 13 miles in an average air temperature of 82.65 degrees F., the milk being shipped at a temperature of 50 degrees F. At the end of three hours the cans that were hair-quilt jacketed showed a raise of only 5 1/2 degrees F.; those wrapped in wet burlap, a raise of 8 1/2 degrees F. Milk in cans that were left unprotected rose in the same time to a temperature of 78.5 degrees F., an increase of 28.5 degrees. This is much too high.

More elaborate methods of preserving milk during shipment by refrigeration are discussed in a professional bulletin just issued by the United States department of agriculture, which deals in a technical way with many types of refrigerating apparatus. The bulletin discusses fully the influence of time and temperature on bacteria in milk. It also contains elaborate diagrams illustrating the different methods employed in utilizing refrigeration, and the cost of operating them. This bulletin so long as the department's supply lasts will be sent free to all interested in the refrigeration of milk. Refrigeration, however, is, of course, not always possible, while any shipper can take the precaution of jacketing his milk cans.

PROFIT MADE IN CAPONIZING

Increased Value of Birds Pays Well for Time and Labor—Operation Is Not Difficult.

As a vast majority of poultry owners and growers are not professional and keep the poultry incidentally and in the main for the use of the family, it is not surprising that so few poultry owners undertake to caponize the cockerels. But if all poultry owners were aware of the increase of profit that capons pay over the ordinary poultry I think a great many more would learn how to perform the operation and caponize all the surplus males every fall.

Even if it were done only to supply the use of them on one's own table it would pay well, says a writer in an exchange. As almost all farmers themselves emasculate all their surplus boars and bull calves, and some even the male colts, it is evident that with a little more skill they can emasculate the cockerels, and in most cases can sell them for from a half more up to twice as much as the cockerels would bring in the market.

As caponizing requires a keen eye and steady hand, as well as the special tools for doing the work, it would be well for one without experience, if he can get the opportunity, to see some one who is expert at the work and then make a few trials himself.

In order to make the job easier I think it will be well to etherize or chloroform the chicken, so that it will be absolutely still. However, if one knows how to do the job and has the tools it takes but a little while, and there is no reason to believe that the suffering will be great.

CONCRETE OR CEMENT SILOS

Material Gaining Rapidly in Popularity Where Permanency Is Desired on Live Stock Farms.

The concrete and cement block construction is getting very popular in so far as silos are concerned; especially is this true where permanency is desired, such as established stock farms, etc.

In the past the high first cost of this construction has been the chief factor against its more extensive use, but this has been due to our insufficient knowledge as to the best and most economical methods in handling material.

The price of lumber has been steadily rising, while that of the good Portland cement has been decreasing, and good qualities can now be obtained at fair prices. It seems, therefore, to be generally conceded that the concrete or cement block silo will be the silo of the future.

New Winter Barley.

By crossing a four-rowed Mammoth winter barley with a two-rowed winter barley that had been artificially carried through the winter, a hardy two-rowed winter barley resulted in some foreign experiments. By the application of Mendel's law, this variety proved stable. It produced well and was a product of excellent brewing qualities.

Profitable Investment.

The apple orchard is now recognized as one of the most profitable investments on the farm, or will prove so if the necessary amount of care and attention is given to it.

IN STERLING LIVES A GIRL

Who Suffered As Many Girls Do—Tells How She Found Relief.

Sterling, Conn.—"I am a girl of 23 years and I used to faint away every month and was very weak. I was also bothered a lot with female weakness. I read your little book 'Wisdom for Women,' and I saw how others had been helped by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and decided to try it, and it has made me feel like a new girl and I am now relieved of all these troubles. I hope all young girls will get relief as I have. I never felt better in my life."—Miss BERTHA A. PELOQUIN, Box 116, Sterling, Conn.



Massena, N. Y.—"I have taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and I highly recommend it. If anyone wants to write to me I will gladly tell her about my case. I was certainly in a bad condition as my blood was all turning to water. I had pimples on my face and a bad color, and for five years I had been troubled with suppression. The doctors called it 'Anemia and Exhaustion,' and said I was all run down, but Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound brought me out all right."—Miss LAVINA MYRES, Box 74, Massena, N. Y.

Young Girls, Heed This Advice.

Girls who are troubled with painful or irregular periods, backache, headache, dragging-down sensations, fainting spells or indigestion, should immediately seek restoration to health by taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

PICKED OUT THE RIGHT TIME

Schoolboy a Good Deal More Thoughtful Than Most Youngsters We Ever Heard Of.

A popular member of a certain school board tells a good story of a certain schoolboy who enjoys the unique distinction of having attended one school for 11 years without being once absent or late. In evidence of this, the youth is the proud owner of 11 medals. When the eleventh medal was conferred the boy's mother was asked whether her son ever had any illness.

"Oh, yes," she replied. "Measles?" "Yes." "Whooping cough?" "Yes." "How is it, then, that he has been able to make so remarkable a record at school?" "Well, he generally had 'em in his holidays," was the proud mother's interesting reply.

Good Reason.

It was a very youthful class in physiology.

"Why," asked the teacher, "is it best to eat soup first when one is very hungry?"

The pupils stared at her blankly. Then Jamie enlightened them from the depths of his own experience.

"You can get it down faster," he announced.

Before going into politics equip your self with a mud guard.

LIGHT BOOZE.

Do You Drink It?

A minister's wife had quite a tussle with coffee and her experience is interesting. She says:

"During the two years of my training as a nurse, while on night duty, I became addicted to coffee drinking. Between midnight and four in the morning, when the patients were asleep, there was little to do except make the rounds, and it was quite natural that I should want a hot cup of coffee about that time. I could keep awake better."

"After three of four years of coffee drinking, I became a nervous wreck and thought that I simply could not live without my coffee. All this time I was subject to frequent bilious attacks, sometimes so severe as to keep me in bed for several days."

"After being married, Husband begged me to leave off coffee for he feared that it had already hurt me almost beyond repair, so I resolved to make an effort to release myself from the hurtful habit."

"I began taking Postum, and for a few days felt the languid, tired feeling from the lack of the coffee drug, but I liked the taste of Postum, and that answered for the breakfast beverage all right."

"Finally I began to feel clearer-headed and had steadier nerves. After a year's use of Postum I now feel like a new woman—have not had any bilious attacks since I left off coffee."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Postum comes in two forms: Regular Postum—must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages.

Instant Postum—is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water, and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. 30c and 50c tins.

The cost per cup of both kinds is about the same.

"There's a Reason" for Postum. —sold by Grocers.