

Old Lady Number 31

By LOUISE FORSLUND

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

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CHAPTER XVI—Continued.

The keeper went into the office with a somewhat hurried "Good-night," and soon Abe found himself alone again, the light in the kitchen beyond, no sound in the room save that of the booming of the surf, the rattling of the windows, and now and again the fall of a clinker in the stove.

The old man was surprised to find that he could not fall back into that blissful slumber again. Not sleeping, he had to think. He thought and thought—sober night thoughts—while the oysters "laid like a log in his stomach" and the coffee seemed to stir his brain to greater activity.

"Suppose," said the intoxicated brain, "another big storm should swoop down upon you and the bay should break up, and you and Samuel should be imprisoned on the beach for two or three months with a handful of men-folks!"

"Moo! Moo!" roared the breakers on the shore. "Serve you right for finding fault with the sisters!"

Come to think of it, if he had not been so ungracious of Miss Abigail's concern for him, he would now be in possession of a hop pillow to lull him back to sleep. Well, he had made his bed, and he would have to lie on it, although it was a hard old carpet-covered lounge. Having no hop pillow, he would count sheep—

One sheep going over the fence, two sheep, three—How tired he was! How his bones ached! It's no use talking, you can't make an old dog do the tricks of his puppy days. What an idiot he had been to climb that practice-mast! If he had fallen and broken his leg?

Four sheep. Maybe he was too old for gallivanting, after all. Maybe he was too old for anything except just to be "mollycoddled" by thoughtful old ladies. Now, be honest with yourself, Abe. Did you enjoy yourself today—no, yesterday? Did you? Well, yes and—no! Now, if Anny had been along!

Anny! That was why he could not go to sleep! He had forgotten to kiss her good-by! Wonder if she had noticed it? Wonder if she had missed him more on account of that neglect? Pah! What nonsense! Anny knew he wasn't on hand at kissin', and it was apt to give him rheumatism to bend down so far as her sweet old mouth.

He turned to the wall at the side of the narrow lounge, to the emptiness where her pillow should be. "Good-night, mother," he muttered huskily. Mother did not answer for the first time in nights beyond the counting. Mother would not be there to answer for at least six nights to come. A week, thought this old man, as the other old man had reflected a few hours before, is a long time when one has passed his threescore years and ten, and with each day sees the shadows growing longer.

Abraham put out his hard time-shrunken hand and touched in thought his wife's pillow, as if to persuade himself that she was really there in her place beside him. He remembered when first he had actually touched her pillow to convince himself that she was really there, too awed and too happy to believe that his youth's dream had come true; and he remembered now how his gentle, strong hand had crept along the linen until it cupped itself around her cheek; and he had felt the cheek grow hot with blushes in the darkness. She had not been "mother" then; she had been "dearest!" Would she think that he was growing childish if he should call her "dearest" now?

Smiling to himself, he concluded that he would try the effect of the tender term when he reached home again. He drew his hand back, whispering once more, "Good-night, mother." Then he fancied he could hear her say in her soft, reassuring tone, "Good-night, father." Father turned his back on the empty wall, praying with a sudden rush of passionate love that when the last call should come for him, it would be after he had said "Good-night, mother," to Anny and after she had said "Good-night, father," to him, and that they might wake somewhere, somehow, together with God, saying, "Good-morning, mother," "Good-morning, father!" And "Fair is the day!"

CHAPTER XVII.

The Deserter.

At dawn the station was wide awake and everybody out of bed. Samuel crept downstairs in his stocking feet, his boots in his hand, his eyes heavy with sleeplessness, and his wig awry. He shivered as he drew close to the fire, and asked in one breath for a prescription for chilblains and where might Abe be. Abe's lounge was empty and his blankets neatly folded upon it.

The sunrise patrol from the east, who had just returned, made reply that he had met Captain Abe walking along the surf to get up an appetite for his griddlecakes and salt pork. Samuel sat down suddenly on the lounge and opened his mouth.

"Didn't he have enough exercise yist'day, for marcy's sake! Put'nigh killed me. I was that tired las' night I couldn't sleep a wink. I declar, ef 'twan't fer that fool newspaper a-comin' out t'night I'd go home ter-day. Yer a-gwine across, hain't yer, Havens?"

Havens laughed in response. Samuel glowered at him.

"I want home comforts back," he vowed sullenly. "The beach hain't what it used ter be. Goin' on a picnic with Abe Rose is like settin' yer teeth into a cast-iron stove lid covered with a thin layer o' puddin'. I'm a-goin' home."

The keeper assured him that no one would attempt to detain him if he found the station uncomfortable, and that if he preferred to leave Abraham behind the whole force would take pleasure in entertaining the more active old man.

"That old feller bates a phonograph," affirmed the Irishman. "It's good ter hear that he'll be left anyhow for comp'ny with this storm a-comin' up."

Samuel rushed to the window, for upstairs the panes had been too frosty for him to see out. A storm coming up? The beach did look gray and desolate, dun-colored in the dull light of the early day, with the winter-killed grass and the stunted green growth of cedar and holly and pine only making splashes of darkness under a gray sky which was filled with scurrying clouds. The wind, too, had risen during the night, and the increased roar of the surf was telling of foul weather at sea.

A storm threatening! And the pleasant prospect of being shut in at the beach with the cast-iron Abraham and these husky life-savers for the remainder of the winter! No doubt Abe would insist upon helping the men with the double duties imposed by thick weather, and drag Samuel out on patrol.

"When dew yew start, Havens?" demanded Samuel in shaking tones. "Le's get off afore Abe gits back an' tries ter hold me. He seems ter be so plagued stuck on the life over here, he'll think I must be tew."

But, though Havens had to wait for the return of the man who had gone off duty yesterday morning, still Abe had not put in an appearance when Samuel and the life saver trudged down the trail through the woods of the bay. As he stepped into the scooter Samuel's conscience at last began to prick him.

"Yew sure the men will look arter the old fellow well an' not let him over-dew?"

But the whizz of the flight had already begun and the scooter's nose was set toward Twin Coves, her sail skimming swiftly with the ring of the steel against the ice over the shining surface of the bay.

"Law, yes," Samuel eased his conscience; "of course they will. They couldn't hurt him, anyhow. I never seen anybody take so kindly ter harden' as that air Abe."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Samuel's Welcome.

The shore at Twin Coves was a somewhat lonely spot, owing to stretches of marshland and a sweep of pine wood that reached almost to the edge of the water.

Samuel, however, having indicated that he wished to be landed at the foot of a path through the pines, found himself on the home shore scarcely ten minutes after he had left Bleak Hill—Havens already speeding toward his home some miles to the eastward, the bay seemingly deserted except for his sail, a high wind blowing, and the snow beginning to fall in scattered flakes.

Samuel picked up his grip, trudged through the heavy sand of the narrow beach, and entered the sweet-smelling pine wood. He was stiff with cold after the rough, swift voyage; his feet alone were hot—burning hot with chilblains. Away down in his heart he was uneasy lest some harm should come to Abe and the old man be caught in the approaching storm on the beach. But, oh, wasn't he glad to be home!

His house was still half a mile away; but he was once more on good, solid, dry land.

"I'll tell Blossy haow that air Abe Rose behaved," he reassured himself, when he pictured his wife's astonished and perhaps reproachful greeting, "an' then she won't wonder that I had ter quit him an' come back."

He recollected that Anny would be there, and hoped fervently that she might not prove so strenuous a charge as Abraham. Moreover, he hoped that she would not so absorb Blossy's attention as to preclude a wifely ministering to his aching feet and the application of "St. Jerushy He" to his lame and sore back.

The torture of the feet and back made walking harder, too, than he had believed possible with the prospect of relief so near. As he limped along he was forced to pause every now and again and set down the carpetbag, sometimes to rub his back, sometimes to seat himself on a stump and nurse for a few moments one of those demon-possessed feet. Could he have made any progress at all if he had not known that at home, no matter if there was company, there would at least be no Abe Rose to keep him going, to spur him on to unwelcome

action, to force him to prove himself out of sheer self-respect the equal, if not the superior, in masculine strength?

Abe had led him that chase over at the station, Samuel was convinced, "a-purpose" to punish him for having so soundly berated him when he lay abed. That was all the thanks you ever got for doing things for "some folks."

Samuel hobbled onward, his brow knit with angry resentment. Did ever a half-mile seem so long, and had he actually been only twenty-three hours from home and Blossy? Oh, oh! his back and his feet! Oh, the weight of that bag! How much he needed sleep! How good it would be to have Blossy tuck him under the covers, and give him a hot lemonade with a stick of ginger in it!

If only he had hold of Abe Rose now to tell him his opinion of him! Well, he reflected, you have to summer and winter with a person before you can know them. This one December day and night with Abe had been equal to the revelations of a dozen seasons. The next time Samuel tried to do good to anybody more than sixty-five, he'd know it. The next time he was persuaded into leaving his wife for over night, he'd know that, too. Various manuals for the young husband, which he had consulted, to the contrary notwithstanding, the place for a married man was at home.

Samuel sat down on a fallen tree which marked the half-way point between his place and the bay. The last half of the journey would seem shorter, and, at the end, there would be Blossy smiling a welcome, for he never doubted but that Blossy would be glad to see him. She thought a good deal of him, nor had she been especially anxious for that week of separation.

His face smoothed its troubled frowns into a look of shining anticipation—the look that Samuel's face had worn when first he ushered Blossy into his tidy little home and murmured huskily:

"Mie' Darby, you're master o' the vessel now; I'm jest fo'castle hand."

Forgetting all his aches, his pains, his resentments, Samuel took a peppermint lozenge out of his pocket, rolled it under his tongue, and walked on. Presently, as he saw the light of the clearing through the trees, he broke into a run—an old man's trot—thus proving conclusively that his worry of lumbago and chilblains had been merely a wrongly diagnosed case of homesickness.

He grinned as he pictured Abe's dismay on returning to the station to find him gone. Still, he reflected, maybe Abe would have a better time alone with the young fellows; he had grown so plagued young himself all of a sudden. Samuel surely need not worry about him.

More and more good-natured grew Samuel's face, until a sociable rabbit, peeping at him from behind a bush, decided to run a race with the old gentleman, and hopped fearlessly out into the open.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MADE UP OF SMALL THINGS

Even the Most Insignificant Words and Acts May Be Productive of Joy or the Reverse.

A wild bird's song is a little thing—lost in the deeps of a frowning sky. And yet as it falls on a listening ear and leaves its message of melody, earth's green seems brighter and life is sweeter, all through an autumn day.

The coo of a babe is a little thing—meaningless sound from a vacant mind.

But 'tis the only sound that all nations heed; the one clear language all races know.

A mother's love is a little thing—too soon, alas, forgot.

But it typifies to blind humankind the love and trust and hope divine that bear with patience calm and sweet the wilful wrongs in these lives of ours.

A passing smile is a little thing—lost in a world of toil and care.

And yet the soul with gloom oppressed and the life grown wearied with burdens hard will happier be in the after-glow of a smile that is warmly kind.

A kindly word is a little thing—a breath that goes and a sound that dies.

But the heart that gives and the heart that hears may know that it sings and sings and sings till at last it blends with the wild bird's song, and the coo of babes in what men call the celestial choir.—Utica Saturday Globe.

Recovered Napoleon's "Loot." Perugia, who stole the Mona Lisa, is not the first who for patriotic reasons has despoiled the Louvre—the great picture gallery of Paris, which acquired the majority of its treasures by "patriotic" plundering. In 1815, after the fall of Napoleon, the allied powers of Europe gave orders that the art treasures carried off by the conqueror should be restored to their original owners. Fifteen states sent commissioners to Paris to claim their property, and more than 2,000 pictures were taken from the Louvre, together with almost innumerable statues, ornaments, knickknacks, and so forth. The gallery was left with only 270 pictures and had to be closed for a while until the vacant spaces could be filled by gift or purchase.

Limiting His Credulity. "Do you believe that George Washington chopped the cherry tree?" "Yes," replied Mr. Groucher; "I'm willing to believe anything they tell me about American politics, provided they don't put it in a party platform."

TRUE VALUE OF WOOD LOT NOT REALIZED



Wood Lot Composed Mostly of Young White Oak in Excellent Condition—There is Thrifty Growth and Plenty of Young Trees Starting to Renew the Stand.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Most farmers already own wood lots; every farmer ought to own one. Yet the wood lot is frequently not a paying proposition financially, and is almost never as profitable as it should be. Why? Simply because the farmer does not realize its true value. As a result he neglects to care for the trees during their life, and is at a disadvantage when it comes to selling them. Any effort to improve present conditions must, therefore, take these two facts into consideration.

The essential point for every farmer to recognize, is that the trees in his wood lot are just as much a farm crop as are his corn, oats, hay, or other products. Moreover, they have many advantages over other crops—they require comparatively little care and labor; they can be harvested during the winter when other work is slack; there are no storage charges on the crop because trees can be left standing without deterioration an indefinite time until they can be sold profitably or used to advantage on the farms; and they furnish protection to buildings, to cattle, and to crops, from wind, drought and frost.

Unquestionably, then, the wood lot deserves better than the present neglect, or often worse, to which it is now subjected. No farmer would think for a moment of burning over a crop of young wheat. Yet that is just what many do with their crop of young trees. Nor is the damage confined to the young growth; even the larger trees, though seldom destroyed outright, are weakened so that eventually they will fall a prey to insects, fungi, or wind; furthermore, the fertility of the soil is greatly lessened by fires. Every fire that runs through a wood lot is a direct source of loss to the owner. The absolute exclusion of fire is, therefore, the first and most important step in the rational management of the wood lot.

Closely connected with this is the exclusion of stock, which do much damage in destroying and retarding young growth, particularly of broad-leaved trees, and in packing down the soil and exposing the roots of trees.

Finally, the farmer should select the trees to be cut in such a way as to improve rather than impair the wood lot. Too often the reverse has been the case and the wood lot has deteriorated steadily through the removal of the best trees, leaving the less valuable species and poorer individuals to take possession of the ground. No knowledge of technical forestry is necessary to enable the farmer to recognize the trees which are defective, crooked, unusually branched, or of undesirable species; or to realize that the cutting of these

ties, mine timbers, lumber, etc.), are in greatest demand in the locality? What species of trees are best adapted for each? In what sizes should the material be cut? By what unit of measure (cord, lineal foot, board foot, piece, etc.) should they be sold? What price should they bring on the basis of their value to the purchaser? These are samples of the questions that every farmer should be able to answer to his own satisfaction before attempting to dispose of his wood lot products. Even then he may be at a disadvantage when dealing singly with a purchaser who is more experienced in such matters and may have more or less control over the local market. Co-operation among wood lot owners in the disposal of their timber is consequently as necessary as in the disposal of their fruit, vegetables, or grains, and is frequently the only way in which they can secure its full value.

Above all, the secret of success in handling the wood lot, lies in the recognition of the fact that trees are a



Cattle Browsing on Young Oak and Hickory Stumps From the Wood Lot of the Year Before—If Cattle Were Kept Out, These Sprouts Could Get a Start and Stand Could Be Quickly Renewed.

distinctive farm crop. When this is once thoroughly understood and the same attention is paid to their production and marketing as to other crops, the wood lot may confidently be expected to become one of the most profitable portions of the farm.

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

In some cases the orchardist ought to employ a disinterested person to do his packing.

Line the fruit basket with burlap, two or three thicknesses, to prevent bruising and scratching.

It tries a man's eyes and his honesty as well to see all the worm holes when packing his apples.

The high-headed tree is easier to cultivate, but the low-headed tree makes the fruit picking easier.

The bushel box is a favorite with the average family, because it suits them better than a barrel at one time.

It is generally true that self-pollinated fruit is not as large or vigorous as fruit from crossed-fertilized blossoms on the same tree.

The unsightly trees with rotted and split crotches to be seen everywhere might have been saved had they been pruned to form a central stem.

Never leave a sharp fork, that is, a branch which extends at right angles out from the trunk. Such forks generally split down sooner or later and destroy the entire tree.

The ground dries out more quickly under a high-headed tree and more fruit is blown off by the wind. When you find cross branches rubbing each other cut one of them out.

Some fruit commission men who have a very particular trade are learning that they can get more for apples packed in barrels without heads than when packed in the usual way, and pressed down tightly.

THE CHARM OF MOTHERHOOD

Enhanced By Perfect Physical Health.

The experience of Motherhood is a trying one to most women and marks distinctly an epoch in their lives. Not one woman in a hundred is prepared or understands how to properly care for herself. Of course nearly every woman nowadays has medical treatment at such times, but many approach the experience with an organism unfitted for the trial of strength, and when it is over her system has received a shock from which it is hard to recover. Following right upon this comes the nervous strain of caring for the child, and a distinct change in the mother results.

There is nothing more charming than a happy and healthy mother of children, and indeed child-birth under the right conditions need be no hazard to health or beauty. The unexplainable thing is that, with all the evidence of shattered nerves and broken health resulting from an unprepared condition, and with ample time in which to prepare, women will persist in going blindly to the trial.

Every woman at this time should rely upon Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, a most valuable tonic and invigorator of the female organism.

In many homes once childless there are now children because of the fact that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound makes women normal, healthy and strong.



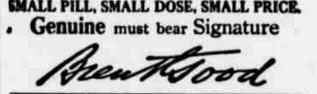
If you want special advice write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (confidential) Lynn, Mass. Your letter will be opened, read and answered by a woman and held in strict confidence.

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Cures Constipation, Indigestion, Sick Headache, and Distress After Eating. SMALL PILL, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE. Genuine must bear Signature.



Greek Meets Greek. The two oldest inhabitants were very ignorant, neither of them being able even to tell the time of day. A friend of Uncle Ben's gave him a watch, of which he was very proud. One day, before the crowd at the corner store, old Pete, being slightly jealous of such wealth and wishing to embarrass his rival, said: "Say, Ben, what time have you got?" The other old fellow drew out his watch and turned its face toward his inquisitor. "There she be!" he exclaimed.

Pete was almost at a loss, but he made a magnificent effort and retorted: "Blame if she ain't!"—Everybody's Magazine.

Money for Christmas. Selling guaranteed wear-proof hostery to friends & neighbors. Big Xmas business. Wear-Proof Mills, 3200 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.—Adv.

Had None. "That girl likes to look on the bright side of things." "That must be the reason she jilted Bonehead."

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The Right Way. "How did he overcome that labor trouble in his place?" "By his capital management."

It's a fine thing to make good resolutions, but quite another thing to make good.

A Home-Made Poison

Uric acid, unknown in the days of a simple, natural, out-of-door life, is a modern poison created inside the human body by a combination of meat-eating, overwork, worry and lack of rest. Backache or irregular urination is the first protest of weak kidneys. When the kidneys fail behind in filtering out the excess uric acid, there is danger of gravel, dropsy or Bright's disease. Doan's Kidney Pills strengthen weak kidneys, but if the diet is reduced, excesses stopped, and fresh air, exercise and sleep increased, the medicine acts more quickly. Doan's Kidney Pills have a world-wide reputation as a reliable kidney tonic.

A Nebraska Case

"Berry Pictures Told a Story." B. V. Anderson, Pierce, Neb., says: "My back ached so badly I couldn't rest and to stoop or stand up straight sent sharp twinges through me. At times I had pain from my hips down to my feet. I got very nervous and my health was gradually breaking down. When I read about Doan's Kidney Pills I began taking them and they brought the best results, fixing me up in good shape. Doan's Kidney Pills can't be equaled in curing kidney trouble."

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