

Old Lady Number

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By LOUISE FORSSLUND

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

Copyright by The Century Co. CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

"Ah, yew young rascal!" cried Samuel. "Yew're the feller that eat up all my winter cabbages."

At this uncanny reading of his mind Mr. Cottontail darted off into the woods again to seek out his mate and inform her that their guilt had been discovered.

Finally, Samuel came to the break in the woodland, an open field of rye, green as springtime grass, and his own exquisitely neat abode beckoning across the gray rail fence to him.

How pretty Blossy's geraniums looked in the sitting-room windows! Even at this distance, too, he could see that she had not forgotten to water his pet abutilon and begonias. How welcome in the midst of this flurry of snow—how welcome to his eye was that smoke coming out of the chimneys! All the distress of his trip away from home seemed worth while now for the joy of coming back.

Before he had taken down the fence-rail and turned into the path which led to his back door, he was straining his ears for the sound of Blossy's voice gossiping with Angy. Not hearing it, he hurried the faster.

The kitchen door was locked. The key was not under the mat; it was not in the safe on the porch, behind the stone pickle-pot. He tried the door again, and then peered in at the window.

Not even the cat could be discerned. The kitchen was set in order, the breakfast dishes put away, and there was no sign of any baking or preparations for dinner.

He knocked, knocked loudly. No answer. He went to a side door, to the front entrance, and found the whole house locked, and no key to be discovered. It was still early in the morning, earlier than Blossy would have been likely to set out upon an errand or to spend the day; and then, too, she was not one to risk her health in such chilly, damp weather, with every sign of a heavy storm.

Samuel became alarmed. He called sharply, "Blossy!" No answer. "Mis' Rose!" No answer. "Ezra!" And still no sound in reply.

His alarm increased. He went to the barn; that was locked and Ezra nowhere in sight. By standing on tiptoe, however, and peeping through a crack in the boards, he found that his horse and the two-seated surrey were missing.

"Waal, I never," grumbled Samuel, conscious once more of all his physical discomforts. "The minute my back's turned, they go a-gallivantin'. I bet yer," he added after a moment's thought, "I bet yer it's that air Angy Rose. She's got ter git an' gad every second same as Abe, an' my poor wife has been drug along with her."

There was nothing left for him to do but seek refuge in his shop and await their return. Like nearly every other bayman, he had a one-room shanty, which he called the "shop," and where he played at building boats, and weaving nets, and making oars and tongs.

This structure stood to the north of the house, and fortunately had an old, discarded kitchen stove in it. There, if the wanderers had not taken that key also, he could build a fire, and stretch out before it on a bundle of sail-cloth.

He gave a start of surprise, however, as he approached the place; for surely that was smoke coming out of the chimney!

Ezra must have gone out with the horse, and Blossy must be entertaining Angy in some outlandish way demanded by the idiosyncrasies of the Rose temperament.

Samuel flung open the door, and strode in; but only to pause on the threshold, struck dumb. Blossy was not there, Angy was not there, nor anyone belonging to the household. But sitting on that very bundle of canvas, stretching his lean hands over the stove, with Samuel's cat on his lap, was the "Old Hoss"—Abraham Rose!

CHAPTER XIX.

Exchanging the Olive-Branch. The cat jumped off Abe's lap, running to Samuel with a mew of recognition. Abe turned his head, and made a startled ejaculation.

"Sam'l Darby," he said stubbornly, "ef yew've come tew drag me back to that air beach, yew're wastin' time. I won't go!"

Samuel closed the door and hung his damp coat and cap over a suit of old oilskins. He came to the fire, taking off his mittens and blowing on his fingers, the suspicious and condemnatory tail of his eye on Abraham.

"Haow'd yew git here?" he burst forth. "What yew bin an' done with my wife, an' my horse, an' my man,

an' my kerridge? Haow'd yew git here? What'd yew come fer? When'd yew git here?"

"What'd yew come fer?" retorted Abe with some spirit. "Haow'd yew git here?"

"None o' yer durn business." A glimmer of the old twinkle came back into Abe's eye, and he began to chuckle.

"I guess we might as waal toll the truth, Sam'l. We both tried to be so all-fired young yesterday that we got played out, an' concluded unanemous that the best place fer a A No. 1 spree was ter hum."

Samuel gave a weak smile, and drawing up a stool took the cat upon his knee.

"Yen," he confessed grudgingly, "I found out fer one that I hain't no spring lamb."

"Ner me, nuther," Abe's old lips trembled. "I had eyester-stew an' drunk coffee in the middle o' the night; then the four-o'clock patrol wakes me up ag'in. 'Here, be a sport,' they says, an' sticks a piece o' hot mince pie under my nose. Then I was so oneasy I couldn't sleep. Daybreak I got up, an' went fer a walk ter limber up my belt, an' I sorter wandered over ter the bay side, an' not a mite out I see tew men with one o' them big fishin'-scotters a-haulin' in their net. An' I walked a ways out on the ice, a-signalin' with my bandana han'kercher; an' arter a time they seen me. 'T was Cap'n Ely from Injun Head an' his boy. Haow them young 'uns dew grow! Las' time I see that kid, he wa'n't knee-high tew a grasshopper."

"Waal, I says tew 'em, I says: 'Want ter drop a passenger at Twin Coves?' 'Yes, yes,' they says. 'Jump in.' An' so, Sam'l, I graduated from yer school o' hardenin' on top a ton o' squirem fish, more or less. I thought 'I'd come an' git Angy,' he ended with a sigh, 'an' yer hired man'd drive us back ter Shoreville; but that wa'n't nobody hum but a mewin' cat, an' the only place I could git inter was this here shop. Wonder whar the gals has gone?"

No mention of the alarm that he must by this time have caused at the station. No consciousness of having committed any breach against the laws of hospitality. But there was that in the old man's face, in his worn and wistful look, which curbed Samuel's tongue and made him understand that as a little child misses his mother so Abe had missed Angy, and as a little homesick child comes running back to the place he knows best so Abe was hastening back to the shelter he had scorned.

So, with an effort, Samuel held his peace, merely resolving that as soon as he could get to a telephone he would inform their late hosts of Abe's safety.

There was no direct way of telephoning; but a message could be sent to the Quogue station, and from there forwarded to Bleak Hill.

"I've had my lesson," said Abe. "The place fer old folks is with old folks."

"But"—Samuel recovered his authoritative manner—"the place fer an old man ain't with old hens. Naow, Abe, ef yew think yew kin behave yerself an' not climb the flagpole or jump over the roof, I want yer to stay right here, yew an' Angy both, an' spend yer week out. Yes, yes," as Abe would have thanked him. "I take it," plunging his hand into his pocket, "yew ain't stowed away nothin' since that mince pie; but I can't offer yer nothin' to eat till Blossy gets back an' opens up the house, 'cept these here peppermints. They're fine; try 'em."

With one of those freakish turns of the weather that takes the conceit out of all weather-prophets, the snow had now ceased to fall, the sun was struggling out of the clouds, and the wind was swinging around to the west.

Neither of the old men could longer fret about their wives being caught in a heavy snow; but, nevertheless, their anxiety concerning the whereabouts of the women did not cease, and the homesickness which Abe felt for Angy, and Samuel for Blossy, rather increased than diminished as one sat on the roll of canvas and the other crouched on his stool, and both hugged the fire, and both felt very old, and very lame, and very tired and sore.

Toward noontime they heard the welcome sound of wheels, and on rushing to the door saw Ezra driving alone to the barn. He did not note their appearance in the doorway of the shop; but they could see from the look on his face that nothing had gone amiss.

Samuel heard the shutting of the kitchen door, and knew that Blossy was at home, and a strange shyness submerged of a sudden his eagerness to see her.

What would she say to this unexpected return? Would she laugh at him, or be disappointed?

"Yew go fast," he urged Abe, "an' tell my wife that I've got the chilblains an' lumbago so bad I can't hardly git tew the house, an' I had ter come hum fer my 'St. Jerushy Ile' an' her receipt fer frosted feet."

CHAPTER XX.

The Fatted Calf.

Abe had no such qualms as Samuel. He wanted to see Angy that minute, and he did not care if she did know why he had returned.

He fairly ran to the back door under the grape arbor, so that Samuel, observing his gait, was seized with a fear that he might be that young Abe of the Beach, during his visit, after all.

Abraham rushed into the kitchen without stopping to knock. "I'm back, mother," he cried, as if that were all the joyful explanation needed.

She was struggling with the strings of her bonnet before the looking-glass which adorned Blossy's parlor-kitchen.

She turned to him with a little cry, and he saw that her face had changed marvelously—grown young, grown glad, grown soft and fresh with a new excited spirit of jubilant thanksgiving.

"Oh, father! Were n't yew s'prised tew git the telephone? I knowed yew'd come a-flyin' back."

Blossy appeared from the room beyond, and slipped past them, knowing intuitively where she would find her lord and master; but neither of them observed her entrance or her exit.

"Angy clung to Abe, and Abe held her close. What had happened to her, the undemonstrative old wife? What made her so happy, and yet tremble so? Why did she cry, wetting his cheek with her tears, when she was so palpably glad? Why had she telephoned for him, unless she, too, had missed him as he had missed her?"

Recalling his memories of last night, the memories of that long-ago honey-moon-time, he murmured into his gray beard. "Dearest!"

She did not seem to think he was growing childish. She was not even surprised. At last she said, half between sobbing and laughing:

"Oh, Abe, ain't God been good to us? Ain't it jist bewtiful to be rich? Rich!" she cried. "Rich!"

Abe sat down suddenly, and covered his face with his hands. In a flash he understood, and he could not let even Angy see him in the light of the revelation.

"The minin' stock!" he muttered; and then low to himself, in an awed whisper: "Tenafly Gold! The minin' stock!"

After a while he recovered himself sufficiently to explain that he had not received the telephone message, and therefore knew nothing.

"Did I git a offer, mother?" "A offer of fifteen dollars a share. The letter come last night fer yew, an' I—"

"Fifteen dollars a share!" He was astounded. "An' we've got five thousand shares! Fifteen dollars, an' I paid ninety cents! Angy, ef ever I ketch yew fishin' yer winter bunnit out of a charity barrel ag'in, I'll— Fifteen dollars!"

"But that ain't the best of it," interrupted Angy. "I couldn't sleep a wink, an' Blossy says not ter send word tew yew, 'cus mebbe 't was a joke, an' to wait till mornin' an' go see Sam'l's lawyer down ter Injun Head. That's whar we've jest come from, an' we telephoned ter Quogue station from thar. An' the lawyer at fust he didn't 'pear tew think yer much of it; but Blossy, she got him ter call up some broker feller in 'York, an' 'Gee whizz!' he says, turnin' 'round all excited from the phone. 'Tenafly Gold is sellin' fer twenty dollars on the curb right this minute!' An' he says, says he: 'Yew git yer husband, an' bring that air stock over this arternoon; an', says he, 'I'll realize on it fer yer termorrer mornin'.'"

Abe stared at his wife, at her shining silk dress with its darns and careful patches, at her rough, worn hands, and at the much mended lace over her slender wrists.

"That mine was closed down 18 years ago; they must 'a' opened it up ag'in," he spoke dully, as one stunned. Then with a sudden burst of energy, his eyes still on his wife's figure: "Mother, that dress o' yourn is a disgrace fer the wife of a financier. Yew better git a new silk fer yerself an' Miss Abigail, tew, fust thing. Her Sunday one hain't nothin' extry."

"But yer old beaver, Abe!" Angy protested. "It looks as ef it come out o' the ark!"

"Last Sunday yew said it looked splendid," his tone was absent-minded again. He seemed almost to ramble in his speech. "We must see that Ishmael gets fixed up comfortable in the Old Men's home; yew remember haow we broke up housekeepin'. An' we must do somethin' handsome fer the Darbys, tew. Ef it hadn't been fer Sam'l, I might be dead naow, an' never know nothin' 'erbout this here streak o' luck. Tenafly Gold," he continued to mutter. "They must 'a' struck a new lead. An' folks said I was a fool tew invest."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Bad Art.

John Sloan, the famous etcher and painter, condemned at the Bellevue-Stratford in Philadelphia a lascivious painting, on the ground that such paintings create ignoble thoughts.

"It is called 'The Temptation of St. Anthony,'" said Mr. Sloan. "Its creator heard the other day that Slash, the critic, had been to see it. So he hurried to the gallery and asked: 'What did Slash say when he saw my picture, 'The Temptation of St. Anthony,' boys?"

"He said, 'the attendants chorused amid roars of vulgar laughter—'he said that it was the first time he ever wished he was a saint.'"

Wronged.

Representative Henry told at a tea in Waco an international alliance story.

"The fair young daughter of the billionaire"—such was Mr. Henry's sneering beginning—"had accepted the earl of Lacland; but her father still seemed ill at ease.

"I don't believe," the old man complained, "I don't believe that boy has sound ideas of finance."

"You are wrong, papa," the young girl answered. "Why, he stopped right in the middle of his proposal to ask how many interlocking directorates you held."

The Supreme One.

"He's never made any effort to support himself."

"Oh, yes, he has. To my certain knowledge he's proposed to every girl with money he knows."

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director Sunday School Course, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 15

JESUS AND PETER.

LESSON TEXT—Mark 14:27-31, 53, 66-72. GOLDEN TEXT—Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—I Cor. 10:12.

The record of Peter's failure is a sad story. Mark, who received his Gospel from Peter, gives it in clear outline. This suggests that Peter did not spare himself.

I. After Passover Feast, vv. 27-31. On the way to Olivet Jesus warns the disciples that all would be "offended" (caused to stumble) because of what was about to occur. Not one escaped, Matt. 26:56, Zech. 13:7. Peter, assured in his own mind, denies that this should be true of him, so confident was he of himself and of his devotion.

Over against this warning Jesus sounds the note of his resurrection, and it was chiefly in their inability to catch, or comprehend this note, that they stumbled. Particularly is this true of Peter. That Jesus could found a church on the vulgar tragedy of a criminal's death was beyond the range of his understanding. This self-confidence was the beginning of his fall. Prov. 16:18. It is pride like this which men have in their own strength, that is the chief reason why they are not saved. If they are able to care for themselves, why do they need the help of another?

Peter's Denials. Peter trusted his own heart. A man is a fool who will trust such a deceitful member, Jer. 17:9. Prov. 28:26. Peter's loud profession is answered by a definite prophecy of his utter failure, v. 30. "Before the cock shall crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Again Peter contradicts the Lord, "I will not deny thee." Peter's later denial of the person of Jesus in the judgment hall is prefaced by a denial of his master's assertions on the way thither. He had to learn wisdom and humility in the bitter school of experience. Peter is quite like us all, but he did learn and profited thereby (I Peter 5:5), which cannot be said of all of us.

II. Following Afar Off, vv. 53, 54. Peter "followed afar" into the court of the high priest's palace. We have suggested (Lesson of Nov. 1st) that zeal and affection prompted Peter, yet he was expressly forbidden and forewarned, John 13:36-38. Some one has said that the development of Peter's weakness began in the garden when he ceased to pray. That courtyard and his brazier of coals was a dangerous place for any disciple of the Lord. The servants and soldiers of the powers against Christ were congregated about that first. It is never safe to warm oneself at the enemies' fire though we see it constantly being done, Matt. 6:13; Ps. 1:1.

III. "I Know Not This Man," vv. 66-72. While at the fire, a serving maid looking at Peter said, "Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus." Immediately and without any seeming hesitancy Peter denied, and declared his ignorance both of the man and of understanding what she said. Peter did not sympathize with what was being done to Jesus, but at heart he was not brave enough to separate himself from the enemies of Jesus thereby to draw upon himself some sort of censure or condemnation. Thus conforming to the world about him made it easy for Peter to utter his first note of denial. Having done so he passed on into the porch and heard the first crowing of the cock. The apparent contradiction between Mark and the other writers over the question of the number of malds seems to be solved by John 18:25, where reference is made to several who spoke at the same time. Doubtless the words of the first maid are reinforced by those of another on the second occasion; they both brought an accusation against him.

Speech Betrayed Peter. This second maid addressing the unlocking spectators said, "This is one of them," and again Peter denies the accusation. He had escaped one predicament only to be plunged into another and perhaps more dangerous one. To deny afresh seemed to be the only way of escape, James 4:4; I Cor. 15:32 R. V. A few words of a serving maid filled Peter with dismay but a second denial did not deliver him from his predicament. After a little those standing with him declared he must be one of the followers of Jesus, for his speech betrayed him to be a Galilean. Then Peter touched the bottom, for he accompanies his denial with curses.

From his high and exalted state of mind, his high hopes as to Jesus, he sees himself a traitor and Jesus about to be crushed by the hand of man. Peter was passionately devoted to Jesus and had felt that he could go with him to the limit. Once before at Caesarea-Philippi Peter had been warned. He had been mystified by what Jesus said about the cross and had protested. He had high and noble aspirations but they carried him beyond the limits of his permission into danger and defeat.

There is always the gravest danger in ambition that is not controlled.

PITCHFORK BULL TO RESCUE A GORED BOY

Mad Beast in Furious Fight for Half an Hour Before He Is Conquered.

Harrisburg, Pa.—While trying to tie a bull in the barn of the Motter farm, about a mile and a half back of Highspire, Eugene Book, fifteen years old, was gored severely when the animal attacked him. Peter Jacobs, a farmer, also was injured when the animal turned upon him, as he was trying to rescue Book.

With blood streaming from wounds on his chest and arms, the farmer, with several farm hands, battled with the bull for half an hour before it could be caught and tied in the barn.

Young Book was taken to the office of W. B. Kirkpatrick, in Highspire, where it was found that a hole about three inches deep had been gored in



Attacked the Big Animal.

his neck, and that he had suffered lacerations and bruises. He was taken to the Harrisburg hospital, where he underwent an operation.

When Book, who is employed by Jacobs, went to the barn to feed the stock, he noticed the bull was at large in the stable, and he tried to catch him. As soon as he opened the door the bull rushed at him and knocked him down. Before Jacobs could get him away the animal had sunk its horns into the youth's neck and had injured him probably internally. The animal then turned upon the farmer and before he could get away inflicted several deep lacerations about his chest, arms and legs.

Grabbing pitchforks, Jacobs and several other farmhands attacked the big animal.

BEAT HIS WIFE WITH MICE

Pittsburgh Woman Claims Spouse Has Art of "Refined Cruelty" Down to a Science.

Pittsburgh, Pa.—Declaring that her husband, Alexander Reed, even though he is a mute, has the art of administering "refined cruelty" down to a science, Mary Esther Reed of Crafton, a fashionable suburb of this city, the other day brought suit for divorce.

The allegations of the aggrieved woman were among the most extraordinary ever heard in the local courts. One of Reed's cruel practices was to "cuss" his wife frequently and in such a manner as to unnerve her. His method of "cussing," according to Mrs. Reed, was to make funny little squeaks with his mouth, which she well knew how to interpret.

Another species of refined torture was to chase her about the house and beat her with dead mice, of which he always appeared to have an inexhaustible supply. This latter form of cruelty was altogether too much for Mrs. Reed's nerves and she frequently collapsed from fright.

The mental torture inflicted upon her was responsible for a severe breaking down of her health, from which she has not yet recovered, averred Mrs. Reed.

Reed denied his wife's charges, and especially that relating to mice. In his own language, he declared that he never "cussed," that he does not know how, and never did.

ONLY 34, BUT WEIGHS 628

Texas Man of Ponderous Bulk Has Never Had a Day of Sickness.

Kansas City, Mo.—Being the biggest man in the world has some compensations, according to M. L. Lee of Dallas, Tex., who was in Kansas City the other night. Mr. Lee divides his time between the show business and a flourishing ranch near Dallas. Needless to say the ranch is the fruit of the money he has received for exhibiting his tremendous person.

Tremendous is the word, for a gasp of astonishment followed him when he appeared on the streets. Here are his specifications: He is thirty-four years old, weighs 628 pounds and it takes a belt slightly more than eighty-four inches to encompass his waist. He says he has never known a day's illness in his life.

Your Margin of Health

is very small, indeed, when the appetite is poor, the digestion bad, the liver lazy and the bowels clogged—but don't remain that way; take

HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

today and let it help Nature restore these organs to their proper functions. Be sure to GET HOSTETTER'S

TYPHOID

is no more necessary than Smallpox. Army experience has demonstrated the most miraculous efficacy, and harmlessness, of Antityphoid Vaccination. Be vaccinated NOW by your physician, you and your family. It is more vital than house insurance. Ask your physician, druggist, or send for "Have you had Typhoid?" telling of Typhoid Vaccines, results from use, and danger from Typhoid Carriers. The Cutter Laboratory, Berkeley, Cal., Chicago, Ill. Producing Vaccines and Serums under U. S. License

SOME TERRIBLE WAR BILLS

That of the United States Government Heads the List in Point of Size.

The wars of Napoleon in 13 years cost France \$1,000,000,000, writes Wendell Phillips Dodge in Leslie's. Our Civil war expenditure of the federal government was \$3,400,000,000, nearly thirteen times as much as a year as Napoleon's. The Franco-German war cost France \$1,580,000,000, besides an added war indemnity of \$1,000,000,000. This same great war, which lasted only 190 days, cost Germany \$450,000,000 for an average fighting force of 1,250,000 men. The other big European war of the past half century, the Russo-Turkish war, cost Russia \$786,100,000, but she had two years' fighting for her money. The war in the far East cost Japan \$650,000,000 and Russia \$723,000,000, not counting lost ships. Only toward the end had either side anything like a million men in the field. Italy's little war with Turkey cost \$400,000 a day, allowing for a mere 60,000 fighting men; and the Boer war, in which England's army averaged 200,000, cost \$1,055,000,000 in two and a half years.

Gully.

The justice of the peace in a town in Ohio, in pursuance of his duties, had to hear and judge cases that were brought before him and also to perform occasional marriage ceremonies. He found it difficult to dissociate the various functions of his office.

Everything had gone smoothly until he asked one bride: "Do you take this man to be your husband?"

The bride nodded emphatically. "And you, accused," said the justice, turning to the bridegroom, "what have you to say in your defense?"

A Reformer.

"Twobble is noted for his passion-ate striving after perfection." "I must say that's a commendable trait."

"In some cases, yes, but Twobble spends all his time trying to achieve it in other people."

His Method.

"How did that writer acquire such a flowing style?" "I think he uses a fountain pen."

Superior—

"Surpassing others in greatness, goodness, extent or value of any quality."—Century Dictionary.

That's the definition, and that's why Post Toasties are called the

Superior Corn Flakes

—the surpassing, delicate Indian Corn flavour being sealed in by skillful toasting with sugar and salt.

Post Toasties

are made in clean, airy, modern factories—cooked, seasoned, rolled and toasted to crisp golden flakes—

Ready to serve direct from the package.

To secure the Superior Corn Flakes, ask for

Post Toasties

—sold by Grocers.