Old Lady Number 31

By
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"The Story of Sarah"
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Etc.

SYNOPSIS.

Captain Abraham Rose and Angeline, his wife, have lost their little home through Abe's unlucky purchase of Tenafly Gold mining stock. Their household goods sold, the $100 auction money, all they have left, will place Abe in the Old Man's home, or Angy in the Old Ladies' home. Both are self-sacrificing but Abe decides: "My dear this is the fust time I've had a chance to take the wust of it."

CHAPTER II—Continued.

Under the pink rose a soft pink flush bloomed on either of the old lady's cheeks. Her eyes flashed with unconquerable pride, and her square, firm chin she held very high; for now, indeed, she was filled with terror of what "folks would say" to this home leaving, and it was a bright June afternoon, too clear for an umbrella with which to hide one's face from prying neighbors, too late in the day for a sunshade.

Angy tucked the green-black affair which served them as both under her arm and swung Abe's figured old carpetbag in her hand with the manner of one setting out on a pleasant journey. Abe, though resting heavily on his stout, crooked cane, dragged behind him Angy's little horsehair trunk upon a creaking, old, unusually large toy express wagon which he had bought at some forgotten auction long ago.

The husband and wife passed into the garden between borders of boxwood, beyond which nodded the heads of Angy's carefully tended, outdoor "children"—her roses, her snowballs, her sweet-smelling syringas, her waxlike bleeding-hearts and her shrub of bridal-wreath.

"Jest a minute," she murmured, as Abe would have hastened on to the gate. She bent her proud head and kissed with furtive, half-ashamed passion a fluffy white spray of the bridal-wreath. Now overtopping the husband's silk hat, the shrub had not come so high as his knee when they two had planted it nearly a half-century ago.

"You're mine!" Angy's heart cried out to the shrub and to every growing thing in the garden. "You're mine. I planted you, tended you, loved you into growing. You're all the children I ever had, and I'm leaving you." But the old wife did not pluck a single flower, for she could never bear to see a blossom wither in her hand, while all she said aloud was: "I'm glad 'twas Mis' Holmes that bought in the house. They say she's a great hand ter dig in the garden."

Angy's voice faltered. Abe did not answer. Something had caused a swimming before his eyes which he did not wish his wife to see; so he let fall the handle of the express wagon and, bending his slow back, plucked a sprig of "old-man." Though he could not have expressed his sentiments in words, the garden brought poignant recollections of the hopes and promises which had thrown their rose color about the young days of his marriage. His hopes had never blossomed into fulfilment. His promises to the little wife had been choked by the weeds of his own inefficiency. Worse than this, the bursting into bloom of seeds of selfish recklessness in himself was what had turned the garden of their life into an arid waste. And now, in their dry and withered old age, he and Angy were being torn up by the roots, flung as so much rubbish by the roadside.

"Mother, I be dretful sorry ter take yew away from your posies," muttered Abraham as he arose with his green sprig in his hand.

With shaking fingers, Angy sought a pin hidden beneath her basque. "Father, shall I pin yer 'old-man' in yer buttonhole?" she quavered. Then as he stooped for her to arrange the posy, she whispered: "I wouldn't care, cept fer what folks must say. Le's surry before any one sees us. I told everybody that we wa'n't a-gwine ter break up till termorrer mornin'."

Fortunately, there was a way across lots to the Old Ladies' home, an unfrequented by-path over a field and through a bit of woodland, which would bring the couple almost unobserved to a side gate.

Under ordinary circumstances Angeline would never have taken this path; for it exposed her carefully patched and newly polished shoes to scratches, her fragile, worn silk skirt and stiff, white petticoat to brambles. Moreover, the dragging of the loaded little wagon was more difficult here for Abraham. But they both preferred the narrower, rougher way to facing the curious eyes of all Shoreville now, the pitying windows of the village street.

As the couple came to the edge of the woodland, they turned with one accord and looked back for the last glimpse of the home. Blazing gold-red against the kitchen window flamed the afternoon sunlight.

"Look a' that!" Angy cried eagerly, as one who beholds a promise in the skies. "Jest see, father, we couldn't 'a' made out that winder this fur at all ef the sun hadn't struck it jest so. I declar' it seems almost as ef we could see the rocker, tew. It's tew bad, Abe, that we had ter let yer old rocker go. D' yew remember—?" she laid her hand on his arm, and lifted her gaze, growing clouded and wistful, to his face. "When we bought the chair, we thought mebbe some day I'd be rocking a leetle baby in it. 'Twas then, yew ricollec', we sorter got in the habit of callin' each other 'father' an' 'mother.' I wonder ef the young 'uns had come—"

"Le's hurry," interrupted Abe, almost gruffly. "Le's hurry."

They stumbled forward with bowed heads in silence, until of a sudden they were startled by a surprised hail of recognition, and looked up to find themselves confronted by a bent and gray old man, a village character, a harmless, slightly demented public charge known as "Ishmael" or "Captain Rover."

"Whar yew goin', Cap'n Rose?"

The old couple had drawn back at the sight of the gentle vagabond, and Angy clutched at her husband's arm, her heart contracting at the thought that he, too, had become a pauper.

"I'm a-takin' my wife ter jine the old ladies over thar ter the hum," Abe answered, and would have passed on, shrinking from the sight of himself as reflected in poor Ishmael.

But the "innocent" placed himself in their path.

"Yew ain't a-goin' ter jine 'em tew?" he bantered.

Abe forced a laugh to his lips in response.

"No, no; I'm goin' over ter Yaphank ter board on the county."

Again the couple would have passed on, their faces flushed, their eyes lowered, had not Ishmael flung out one hand to detain them while he plunged the other hurriedly into his pocket.

"Here." He drew out a meager handful of nickels and pennies, his vacant smile grown wistful. "Here, take it, Cap'n Rose. It's all I got. I can't count it myself, but yew can. Don't yew think it's enough ter set yew up in business, so yew won't have ter go ter the poorhouse? The poorhouse is a bad place. I was there last winter. I don't like the poorhouse."

He rambled on of the poorhouse. Angy, panting for breath, one hand against the smothering pain at her heart, was trying, with the other, to drag "father" along. "Father" was shaking his head at Ishmael, at the proffered nickels and pennies—shaking his head and choking. At length he found his voice, and was able to smile at his would-be benefactor with even the ghost of a twinkle in his eye.

"Much obliged, Cap'n Rover; but yew keep yer money for terbacc'. I ain't so high-toned as yew. I'll take real comfort at the poorhouse. S'long; thank yer. S'long."

Ishmael went on his way muttering to himself, unhappily jingling his rejected alms; while Angy and Abe resumed their journey.

As they came to the gate of the Old Ladies' home Angy seized hold of her husband's arm, and looking up into his face pleaded earnestly:

"Father, let's take the hunderd dollars fer a fambly tombstun an' go ter the poorhouse tergether!"

He shook her off almost roughly and lifted the latch of the gate.

"Folks 'd say we was crazy, mother."

There was no one in sight as he dragged in the express cart and laid down the handle. Before him was a long, clean-swept path ending apparently in a mass of shrubbery; to the left was a field of sweet corn reaching to the hedge; to the right a strong and sturdy growth of pole lima beans; and just within the entrance, beneath the sweeping plumes of a weeping willow tree, was a shabby but inviting green bench.

Abe's glance wandered from the bench to his wife's face. Angy could not lift her eyes to him; with bowed head she was latching and unlatching the gate through which he must pass. He looked at the sun and thoughtfully made reckon of the time. There were still two hours before he could take the train which—

"Let's go set deown a spell afore—" he faltered—"afore we say good-by."

She made no answer. She told herself over and over that she must—simply must—stop that "all-of-a-tremble" feeling which was going on inside of her. She stepped from the gate to the bench blindly, with Abe's hand on her arm, though, still blindly, with exaggerated care she placed his carpetbag on the grass beside her.

He laid down his cane, took off his high hat and wiped his brow. He looked at her anxiously. Still she could not lift her blurred eyes, nor could she check her trembling.

Seeing how she shook, he passed his arm around her shoulder. He murmured something—what, neither he nor she knew—but the love of his youth spoke in the murmur, and again fell the silence.

Angy's eyes cleared. She struggled to speak, aghast at the thought that life itself might be done before ever they could have one hour together again; but no words came. So much—so much to say! She reached out her hand to where his rested upon his knee. Their fingers gripped, and each felt a sense of dreary cheer to know that the touch was speaking what the tongue could not utter.

Time passed swiftly. The silent hour sped on. The young blades of corn gossiped gently along the field. Above, the branches of the willow swished and swayed to the rhythm of the soft south wind.

"How still, how still it is!" whispered the breeze.

"Rest, rest, rest!" was the lullaby swish of the willow.

The old wife nestled closer to Abraham until her head touched his shoulder. He laid his cheek against her hair and the carefully preserved old bonnet. Involuntarily she raised her hand, trained by the years of pinching economy, to lift the fragile rose into a safer position. He smiled at her action; then his arm closed about her spasmodically and he swallowed a lump in his throat.

The afternoon was waning. Gradually over the turmoil of their hearts stole the garden's June-time spirit of drowsy repose.

They leaned even closer to each other. The gray of the old man's hair mingled with the gray beneath Angeline's little bonnet. Slowly his eyes closed. Then even as Angy wondered who would watch over the slumbers of his worn old age in the poorhouse, she, too, fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

The Candidate.

The butcher's boy brought the tidings of the auction sale in at the kitchen door of the Old Ladies' home even while Angy and Abe were lingering over their posies, and the inmates of the home were waiting to receive the old wife with the greater sympathy and the deeper spirit of welcome from the fact that two of the twenty-nine members had known her from girlhood, away back in the boarding-school days.

"Yop," said the boy, with one eye upon the stout matron, who was critically examining the meat that he had brought. "Yop, the auction's over, an' Cap'n Rose, he— Don't that cut suit you, Miss Abigail? You won't find a better, nicer, tenderer and more juicier piece of shoulder this side of New York. Take it back, did you say? All right, ma'am, all right!" His face assumed a look of resignation: these old ladies made his life a martyrdom. He used to tell the "fellers" that he spent one-half his time carrying orders back and forth from the Old Ladies' home. But now, in spite of his meekness of manner, he did not intend to take this cut back. So with Machiavellian skill he hastened on with his gossip.

"Yop, an' they only riz one hundred dollars an' two cents—one hundred dollars an' a postage-stamp. I guess it's all up with the cap'n an' the Old Men's. I don't see 'em hangin' out no 'Welcome' sign on the strength of that."

"You're a horrid, heartless little boy!" burst forth Miss Abigail, and, flinging the disputed meat on the table, she sank down into the chair, completely overcome by sorrow and indignation. "You'll be old yerself some day," she sobbed, not noticing that he was stealthily edging toward the door, one eye on her, one on tomorrow's pot roast. "I tell yew, Tommy," regaining her accustomed confiding amiability, as she lifted the corner of her apron to wipe her eyes, "Miss Ellie will feel some kind o' bad, tew. Yer know me an' her an' Angy all went ter school tergether, although Miss Ellie is so much younger'n the rest o' us that we call her the baby. Here! Where—"

But he was gone. Sighing heavily, the matron put the meat in the icebox, and then made her slow, lumbering way into the front hall, or community room, where the sisters were gathered in a body to await the new arrival.

"Waal, say!" she supplemented, after she had finished telling her pitiably brief story, "thar's trouble ernough to go around, hain't thar?"

Aunt Nancy Smith, who never believed in wearing her heart on her sleeve, sniffed and thumped her cane on the floor.

"You young folks," she affirmed, herself having seen ninety-nine winters, while Abigail had known but a paltry sixty-five, "yew allers go an' cut yer pity on the skew-gee. I don't see nothin' to bawl an' beller erbout. I say that any man what can't take kere o' himself, not ter mention his wife, should orter go ter the poorhouse."

But the matriarch's voice quavered even more than usual, and as she finished she hastily bent down and felt in her deep skirt pocket for her snuff-box.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Legal View.

A Cleveland attorney took the Mediterranean trip a month ago. It was his first time across the water, and he stated on his return that he would have had a perfectly glorious time but for the silly questions asked him by customs officials. It was on the pier at New York that his woes came to a climax. The officer looked up in amazement. "Open your trunk, please," commanded the custom-house officer. "Have you anything in there but personal property?" he continued. "What do you mean by personal property?" countered the lawyer. "For heaven's sake, don't you know what personal property is?" "I thought I did," answered the attorney. "And I can assure you that there is no real estate in my trunk."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Profound Consular Advice.

The American commercial representative abroad should say what he means. We have just been reading a consular report from the Uganda district, Africa, which informs us that "human beings acquire the sleeping sickness from biting flies." If this is really a fact, the obvious advice is: Substitute beetles or roaches. Don't bite flies; swat them!—Judge.

MAKING CORNED BEEF

RECIPE THAT IS RECOMMENDED BY AN EXPERT.

Meat From Fat Animals Better Than Than From Poor—Proportion of Salt Is a Highly Important Matter.

The pieces commonly used for corning are the plate, rump, cross ribs and brisket, or in other words the cheaper cuts of meat. The loin, ribs and other fancy cuts are more often used fresh, and since there is more or less waste of nutrients in corning, this is well. The pieces for corning should be cut into convenient-sized joints, say, five or six inches square. It should be the aim to cut them all about the same thickness so that they will make an even layer in the barrel.

Meat from fat animals makes choicer corned beef than that from poor animals. When the meat is thoroughly cooled it should be corned as soon as possible, as any decay in the meat is likely to spoil the brine during the corning process. Under no circumstances should the meat be brined while it is frozen.

Weigh out the meat and allow eight pounds of salt to each 100 pounds; sprinkle a layer of salt one-quarter of an inch in depth over the bottom of the barrel; pack in as closely as possible the cuts of meat, making a layer five or six inches in thickness; then put on a layer of salt, following that with another layer of meat; repeat until the meat and salt have all been packed in the barrel, care being used to reserve salt enough for a good layer over the top. After the package has stood over-night, add for every 100 pounds of meat, four pounds of sugar, two ounces of baking soda and four ounces of saltpeter dissolved in a gallon of tepid water. Three gallons more water should be sufficient to cover this quantity. In case more or less than 100 pounds of meat is to be corned, make the brine in the proportion given. A loose board cover, weighted down with a heavy stone or piece of iron, should be put on the meat to keep all of it under the brine. In case any should project, rust would start and the brine would spoil in a short time.

It is not necessary to boil the brine except in warm weather. If the meat has been corned during the winter and must be kept into the summer season, it would be well to watch the brine closely during the spring, as it is more likely to spoil at that time than at any other season. If the brine appears to be ropy or does not drip freely from the finger when immersed and lifted, it should be turned off and new brine added, after carefully washing the meat. The sugar or molasses in the brine has a tendency to ferment, and, unless the brine is kept in a cool place, there is sometimes trouble from this source. The meat should be kept in the brine twenty-eight to forty days to secure thorough corning.—Andrew Boss, Agriculturist, University Farm, St. Paul.

German Pot Roast.

Boil slowly in salted water enough to cover it, a piece of lean beef weighing about three pounds. In the water with the beef boil a small carrot, one onion, two slices of turnip and a leaf or two of cabbage until they are tender. Remove the vegetables and let the meat simmer until all the water has cooked away, allowing the meat to brown well, turning it frequently. Then chop half a cupful of fat salt pork finely and add to it a cupful of flour and milk to make a batter as for pancakes. Roll the roast around in the batter and return it to the kettle. Pour a little water in the bottom of the kettle and place in a hot oven to brown the crust well. Serve with a gravy made from the liquid remaining in the kettle when the roast is done.—Mother's Magazine.

Sugar Cookies.

Two pounds sugar, one cupful butter, one egg, one cupful clabbered cream, one teaspoonful soda, one teaspoonful vanilla extract, one teaspoonful lemon extract, one teaspoonful baking powder; flour to roll soft. Mix as for cake, beating soda into the cream and sprinkle sugar over the top and bake in very slow oven. If the dough is allowed to stand 15 to 20 minutes before being rolled and the board and rolling pin are well floured they can be handled much softer than would be imagined and a better cooky will result.

German Hamburg Steak.

Take one pound of hamburg steak, half a loaf of stale bread which has been soaked in hot water and the water pressed out, two cold boiled potatoes which have been run through the meat chopper, one small minced onion, salt and pepper and two eggs. Mix all together, shake into small round cakes and fry in hot fat.—Mother's Magazine.

Ironing Towels.

Many persons iron towels, fold them and put away before they are thoroughly dry. This is an error and sometimes leads to results not expected. In their damp condition there is a mold which forms on them, one variety of which is very injurious to the skin.

Tomato Short Cake.

Cover large layers of split shortcrust with cream of tomato sauce or prepare unstrained tomatoes the same as for sauce and serve over the crust.

OLD-STYLE WEDDING CAKE

The Kind That Is Thick With Fruit—The Paper Lining Keeps It From Burning.

Fruit for this should be prepared in advance as follows: Six cupfuls of currants, washed, dried and picked. Three cupfuls sultana raisins, three cupfuls of citron, cut in fine strips, one-half cupful candied lemon peel, two cupfuls of almonds blanched and cut in shreds. In a warm bowl mix four cupfuls of butter and four cupfuls of sugar, granulated or confectioner's, beat these together until very light. Break ten eggs into another bowl, do not beat them.

Cover a waiter with a big sheet of paper; sift four pints of flour over this, add the fruit and the following spices: Two teaspoonfuls each of nutmeg, mace and cinnamon, one tablespoonful each of cloves and allspice. Mix these together and stand aside ready for use. Have ready in a little pitcher one-half pint best brandy. Select a deep cake tin and grease with butter, line it inside with white paper and on the outside and bottom with four or five thicknesses of very thick wrapping paper, which you must tie on. Have your oven hot and the fire banked so it will not burn out quickly. Now beat the butter and sugar once more, add the eggs two at a time, beating the mixture after each addition. When the eggs are all used, turn in the flour and fruit with brandy, mix thoroughly, pour into the prepared cake tin, cover with several thicknesses of brown paper and bake eight hours keeping the oven steady and clear.

Remove from the oven and allow it to stand on tin sheet until quite cold. Ice with a thin coat of white icing top and sides and stand in a cool oven to dry, then give it a second coat of thick icing and ornament according to fancy. An icing made of white of egg, a few drops of cold water and confectioner's sugar is the best for the thick icing.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Four Hints That Will Be Found Well Worth While Pasting In Your Scrap Book.

Not a crumb of bread should be wasted! Hard crusts can be dried in the oven and turned into brown bread-crumbs. Stale pieces soaked with boiling water and a little milk make excellent bread pudding.

To Keep the Fire.—When you have finished with the kitchen fire for cooking purposes take some fine coal dust, put it in a strong brown paper bag, damp it and put it on the top of the fire. The latter will burn slowly for hours.

To Keep the Yolks Fresh.—Yolks of eggs can be kept fresh for many days. Put about three tablespoonfuls of water into a basin, drop in the yolks and leave in a cool place.

The Cook Book.—A small piece of glass placed over a cookery book when lying open on the table keeps it open and enables the cook to read the recipe without handling the book with sticky fingers. A glass from a photo frame or small picture would do.

How to Keep Your Cake.

Cakes that contain a great deal of fruit and spice or nuts develop a fine flavor as they are kept—in fact, a nut cake is not at its best for at least a week after baking, and a cake that contains much fruit and spice is better when it is at least a month old.

If you pack a cake fresh from the oven in brown sugar, it will keep fresh almost as long as you wish—for two months, or even more.

Another plan is to take a cake still warm from the oven, and ice it lightly with any simple, quickly made icing just scraped over the surface; or brush it over with a heavy sugar sirup, then set it in the cake box with a jelly glass or other small vessel half filled with water, or two or three green apples cut into halves or quarters. The water or the moisture of the apples keeps the cake from becoming dry.—Youth's Companion.

Delicious Oyster Salad.

Take one quart of very small oysters, one pint of celery, two tablespoonfuls of French salad dressing and one cup of mayonnaise. Parboil the oysters in their own liquor, remove from the fire and allow them to stand in the liquor until cold. Drain and add the French salad dressing. When ready to serve combine the celery and the oysters, add the mayonnaise and garnish with curled celery.

Deviled Onions.

Mince six cold boiled onions fine, make a thick sauce of one teaspoonful flour, one tablespoonful butter and two-thirds of a cupful of milk. To this add the minced onion and finely mashed yolks of two hard-boiled eggs, one teaspoonful chopped parsley and a seasoning of salt and paprika. Butter scallop shells, fill with the mixture, sprinkle with bread crumbs and brown.

Grandmother's Indian Pudding.

Scald one cupful of sweet milk and stir into this enough corn meal to make stiff, about like bread. Add one cupful of molasses and let the mixture come to a boil. Salt well and spice with ginger and cinnamon. Bake two and one-half to three hours. Two cupfuls of quartered sweet apples added is an improvement.

To Save Tumblers.

If a knife is placed under a tumbler, boiling milk or water can be put in without danger of breaking the glass.

CORSETS OF STEEL

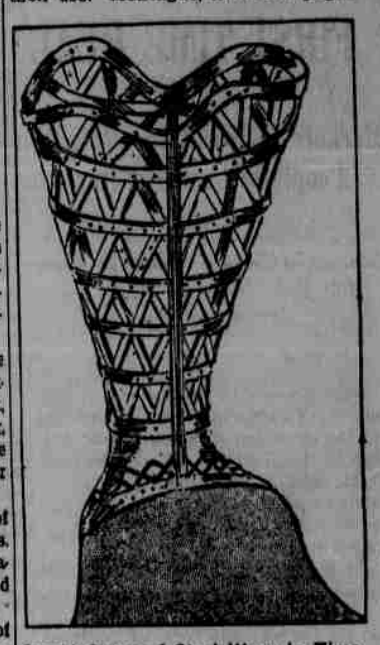
Cheerfully Worn by Women of the Middle Ages.

As is the Case Sometimes Today, Their Thought Was "Anything for the Fashionable Figure"—Instruments of Torture.

Greek and Roman women knew a device for compressing their waists which was, in some ways, an equivalent of the modern corset. Old Homer tells of Juno "wearing a girdle with a hundred fringes," and those who would doubt that these girdles were pulled as tightly as stays may read in Terence, the great Roman writer of comedies, a description of a belle as "not being a young girl like one of our own, whose mother compels her to tighten her body so that she may have a small waist."

The rest of Europe, receiving this style from the Romans, proceeded as the centuries went by to turn it into a veritable instrument of torture. There were corsets of stiff, unyielding leather, cramping the torso into rigidity. And, worse still, fashion finally dictated a corset of metal. Some examples are to be seen in the Musee Carnavalet in Paris. One is made of iron cross-bars securely riveted together. Others were forged out of two sheets of metal with holes punched to make them lighter.

In the fifteenth century Spain became mistress of the world and set its fashions. Then came into vogue the Spanish basquine, a long, tight corset made of strong linen and fastened to a busk of wood or metal. The menace to health supplied by these monstrosities caused Henry III of France issuing an edict prohibiting their use. Montague, frank old pagan



Corset Cover of Steel Worn in Time of Catherine de Medici.

that he was, could not forbear a word of admiration at the way in which the women voluntarily endured in order to be in fashion. "In order to make their bodies Spanish," he wrote, "what hells will women not suffer!"

Two centuries ago a writer of the times upon dress, told of seeing at the Italian opera a singer "whose waist was painful to look at, for the lower part of her figure appeared like the monstrous appendage of a wasp, united to her body by a slender ligament." Even in the nineteenth century there was a Parisian actress in the music halls of London with a waist so tiny that spectators are said to have been in constant expectation that she would snap in two.

At Ninety Walks Ten Miles a Day.

Fourteen years ago two doctors of Binghamton, N. Y., told William W. Hemingway that he hadn't more than a year to live. Since that time he has attended the funerals of both, and now has passed his ninetieth birthday.

"I just made up my mind to fool 'em," he says. "I started walking. The first few months I walked nearly two miles a day. Now, unless the weather is bad, I seldom go less than ten miles, and have often walked as much as twenty."

Doctors sometimes stop Mr. Hemingway on the street and urge him not to overdo his exercise.

"I don't know when to stop," he confesses. "I get up in the summer usually at four o'clock. Cold weather keeps me in bed half an hour longer."

Twins.

"I don't like to see warring armies call too persistently on Providence. It savors of arrogance and self-righteousness. Providence may take revenge."

The speaker was Bishop Lincoln L. Miles of Duluth. He went on:

"There was once a young couple that expected a visit from the stork. The husband was anxious that the stork bring a girl; the wife was anxious for a boy. Being very religious, both besought Providence morning, noon and night to grant his or her desire.

"And Providence heard. Providence granted both prayers."

Clever.

"Bliggins is a clever story teller."

"Why, he has been telling the same story for years!"

"Yes. But he keeps you listening. Every now and then he manages to think up another, beginning and make you believe it's going to be a new one."