
Siler City News.

| OLD MARK'S STRATAGEM |
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| By H. M. Egbert |


It had always irritated the wealthy
farmer's wife that her cousin, the wife
of neer-o-well Frank Smith, should
have oftered a home to their mutual
uncle, Mark Evans.
uncle, Mark Evans
Mark Evans had owned a prosperous
farm of his own a f fer years before,
but when his wife died the old man of
but when his wife died the old man of
eithty was unable to keep it up. At
eighty-two his niece, Mrs. Adams, fear-eighty-two his niece, , Mrs. Adams, fear-
ing that the derpeciating property
would leave her only a trivial legacy,
persuaded the old man to sell out persuaded the old man to sell outf.
"Pay the money over to me and
Phil," she sald, and well take care of
you for the rest of your days," you for the rest of your days."
The old man did so, but the farm
realized less than a thousand dollars. The old man did so, but the farm
realized less than a thousand dollars.
The Adams family was furious. "If T'd known the old skinfint
wann't worth more than that, 1 diave have
seen myself swished before I'd have
 He used to be rich," sald his wife
"However, he won't last long."
But he did last. Old Mark nour
thed and But he did last. Old Mark four.
Ished amazingy., and at eighty-four
he was as vigorous as many a man
of halt his age. In, valin his niece he was as vigorous as many a man
of halt his age. In, valn his nifece
watched for signs of breakdown.
"We can't go on feeding the useless
old cus forever," muntered her hus.
band. "If it wasn't for what the old cuss forever." muttered her hus-
band. "If it wasn't for what the
neighbors would say, Tr turn him us fair."
Old Mark heard that. He had re
signed himself without complatit t
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 "My ilece Lucy Smith wants me to
spend a week with her." he announce
the next day. "Guess ril pay her a visi
"Guess you'll pay
sneered Phill Adams.
However, Lucy had pald the fare,
and the old man duly departed. The week's stay had extended to a year, ored guest.
"Yes, I wish you Joy of him," re-
peated Mrs. Adams, who had gone to pay her cousin a visit. "Eats his head
off, don't he?".
"He has a good appetite," admitted "He has a good appetite," admitte
Lucy. "We like to see uncle eat." Lacy. "We like to see uncle eat." I
"Humph! Well, It's more than I
do," answered her cousin. "And don't you think we're going to take him
back after the way he's acted to us, "Trank and I have offered Uncle
Mark a home for the rest of his days," answered Lucy quietly.
That was true, and the old man was
welcome. No longer living upon
grudging charity, he sat at the table
with his relatives. The best tedren wh his reatives. The best bedroon,
in the house had heen offered him.
However, Old Mark would not take that, but, he was certainly more com
fortably accommodated than before. One thing had always distressed
Lucy. Old Mark insisted on golng out It might seem that a man of elghty-
four Is incapable of active labor. But
Old Mark, though he had not been able to keen up his farm, had by no
means lost his muvelar activity. As
labor was scare in the neighborhood.
the farmers. inceredulious at first when

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"He mnst be making a mint of
money, Lucy," sald lier lusband jocu-
larly,
It's all coming to Frank and you,",
Old Mirlk would say, when they re-
proached him. "I got to do some-
thing to earn my keep, seeng as as
Niece. Jane has got my farm and ree
got nothing to poy you with."."
"But it isnn't necessary to pay a
"But it isn't necessary to pay a
penny, uncee," Lucy woutd say, half
crying. "People will think we make
yeut

| "I tell 'em that I'm doing it agains your wishes. But it's all coming <br> That sounded well enough, but no body had seen any of Mark's mon The postuistress stated that the man had bought money orders recent ly. But to whom money? To a bank? <br> "Pshaw, Lucy, let the old fello have his way." sald Frank. "If malies him happy, and he feels les under an obligation to us it do him any harm." <br> "But Pm eighty-five next month and I ain't going, to do a stltch work after $\begin{aligned} & \text { rm eighty-fve," sald Mark; } \\ & \text { chưckling. }\end{aligned}$ <br> Indeed. <br> the farmer and his wite less time fo meditation than formerly.- The seaso had been poor. the crops had not ened-It was the wet summer of $a$ years ago; finally, the priee of cor of the "nee'er-dowell". Trank smitr had long excited the derision of hit relatives. |
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 can go to the poorhouse."
"You certainly will not go to the
poorhouse so long as I "can work," aid Frank.
At last the farm was advertised for
ale. Nobody was surprised, but sevेfamily, were very pleased.
And the thought he could feed an extra useless mouth," sneered Philit.
"It seves that woman right," said
his wife, "for trying to reproach us
 trample them into the dust. And $\mathbf{r d}$
lile to know what they'll do with old
Mark then," "'rm going to bid for it", answered
Philip sirewdy. "If it goes for song,
The day of the sale arrived. Frank and Lucy, very subdued, but bravely
meeting the fnquisitive gaze of the nelghbors, sat by the auctioneer. They had decided not to run a away, but
hold up their heads to the last.
"What bids for this "What bids for this property?
snapped the auctioneer. "FIfty acres of frst-class farming land-"
"Ho- Ho!" roared a volce from
among the audience. It was Phllip
 an orchard with fruit trees in bearing. chicken hotues and two hundred hens.
What bids? ber
the the az
the ree
fers?
"Fi" headed cety cerk st back to the laild was try
"siz hundrod," said Adams.
"Seven "Seven," sald the clerk.
"S̃even Afty." grumbled Adams. hundred dollars, prite ap to twely
clerk Eubsided. Frank wated ched ch
Ih
 as he wrestled, wer
fourfeen hundred.
"At "At fourteen hundred," sald the auc-
tioneer, nodding to Phillip. "Golnggoing - .".
"Fiften !" snapped Old Mark, stan ng up as asryly as a young man.
"Eh?" grunted the auctionee Where's your money?"
Old Mark advanced Old Mark advanced to the auction
er's desk and slapped down an to mous wallet choking with bills. The
auctioneer peered inside. He ssw several hundreds.
"He can't bid-
"He can't bid-he's
ed Phulf wrathifully.
Phere wrathifully.
"Thine ain't no age umit," said the
uctioneer. "Any higher "It tener. "Any heo higher offer?"
by what I ther, and istan
by man I teke the farm, shouted Pbilit, in a rage. 1 ane farm,
"At fifteen. Going-gone! It Yurs," sald the auc
"One-third cash and-
"I'll pait the "I'll pay ye the whole fifteen hundred," It was done. Mark nwned the farm and Lucy and Frank found themselves
one on each side of him in the open one on each side of him in the open,
Round them gathered a curlous crowd,
heluding Jane and Phillp Adams. Ituationg wane and Phillp Adams. The
Hush ! Old Mark wastens increadible Hush! Old Mark was speaking.
You see, my dears, you were kind
hought I hadn't no money, but, there
was my life insurance, which I t took out fifty years ago last Wednesday
Four thousand dollars it were, and when I sold the farm, but I got a littl Wednesday, and $I^{\prime}$, but still got a tidy
sum over. It's my farm now, and to and Lucy are going to works it till 1
die, and then it goes to your."
He turned toward the
"But I don't play no farorites," he
"ide "You and Jane is welcome to be my guests whenierer you want to
only, of course, seefing as I gave $\begin{aligned} & \text { g } \\ & \text { my other farm, this one'll be Lucys. }\end{aligned}$

The Mad Book Why doesn't somebody write a Mad
Book, dedicated "to all the pie who have lost thetr tempers peo
don't know where to find them"? on't know where to find them
A few suggested chapters: A few suggested chapters:
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To have a conductor abuse you be To have a conductor
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To have a cros $\begin{aligned} & \text { voice on the tele } \\ & \text { phone tell you to "Butt off the line." }\end{aligned}$ phone tell you to "Butt off the line.",
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Thursday, September


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