

KEZIAH COFFIN

by Joseph C. Lincoln Author of Cy Whittaker's Place Cap'n Eri, Etc. Illustrations by Ellsworth Young Copyright, 1909, by D. Appleton & Company



SYNOPSIS.

Mrs. Keziah Coffin, supposed widow, is arranging to move from Trumet to Boston, following the death of her brother, for whom she had kept house. Kyan Pepper, widower, offers marriage, and is indignantly refused. Capt. Elikanah Daniels, leader of the Regular church offers Keziah a place as housekeeper for the new minister, and she decides to remain in Trumet. Keziah takes charge of Rev. John Ellery, the new minister, and gives him advice as to his conduct toward members of the parish. Ellery causes a sensation by attending a "Come-outer" meeting. Ellery's presence is bitterly resented by Eben Hammond, leader of the meeting. Grace apostrophizes her guardian and Ellery escorts her home in the rain. Capt. Nat Hammond, Eben's son, becomes a hero by bringing the pocket into port safely through fog and storm. Ellery finds Keziah writing a letter to some one, including money in response to a demand. She curiously starts when informed of the arrival of Nat. Nat calls on Keziah, and it develops that they have been lovers since youth. Daniels remonstrates with Ellery for attending a "come-outer" meeting. Ellery is caught by the tide and is rescued by Nat. They become friends. Ellery meets Grace while walking in the fields, and learns that she walks there every Sunday.

saw him climb a high dune, jump a fence, cross another field and finally vanish in the grove of pines on the edge of the bluff by the shore. The man was John Ellery, the minister. Evidently, he had not gone home, nor had he taken the short cut. Instead he had walked downtown a long way and then turned in to cross the fields and work his way back. Annabel put down the glass and, heedless of her father's call, sat thinking. The minister had deliberately deceived her. More than that, he had gone to considerable trouble to avoid observation. Why had he done it? Had he done the same thing on other Sunday afternoons? Was there any real reason why he insisted on leaving the house regularly at four o'clock? CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

"Wasn't it fine?" he whispered. "Talk about your miracles! Godfrey's mighty! Say, Mr. Ellery, don't you ever tell a soul how it really was, will you?"

"No, of course not." "No, I know you won't. You won't tell on me and I won't tell on you. That's a trade, hey?"

The minister stopped in the middle of his step.

"What?" he said, turning. Mr. Pepper merely smiled, winked, and shut the door. John Ellery reflected much during his homeward walk.

The summer in Trumet drowsed on, as Trumet summers did in those days, when there were no borders from the city, no automobiles or telephones or "antique" collectors. The Sunday diners with the Daniels family were almost regular weekly functions now. He dodged them when he could, but he could not do so often without telling an absolute lie, and this he would not do. And, regularly, when the solemn meal was eaten, Captain Elikanah went upstairs for his nsp and the Reverend John was left alone with Annabel. Miss Daniels did her best to be entertaining, was, in fact, embarrassingly confidential and cordial. It was hard work to get away, and yet, somehow or other, at the stroke of four, the minister always said good-by and took his departure.

"What is your hurry, Mr. Ellery?" begged Annabel on one occasion when the reading of Moore's poems had been interrupted in the middle by the guest's sudden rising and reaching for his hat. "I don't see why you always go so early. It's so every time you're here. Do you call at any other house on Sunday afternoons?"

"No," was the prompt reply. "Oh, no." "Mrs. Rogers said she saw you going across the fields after you left here last Sunday. Did you go for a walk?"

"Er—er—yes, I did." "I wish you had mentioned it. I love to walk, and there are so few people that I find congenial company. Are you going for a walk now?"

"Why, no—er—not exactly." "I'm sorry. Good-by. Will you come again next Sunday? Of course you will. You know how dreadfully disappointed I—er—shall be if you don't."

"Thank you, Miss Daniels. I enjoyed the dinner very much. Good afternoon."

He hurried down the path. Annabel watched him go. Then she did an odd thing. She passed through the sitting room, entered the front hall, went up the stairs, tipped by the door of her father's room, and then up another flight to the attic. From here a steep set of steps led to the cupola on the roof. In that cupola was a spyglass.

Annabel opened a window a few inches, took the spyglass from its rack, adjusted it, laid it on the sill of the open window and knelt, the glass at her eye. The floor of the cupola was very dusty and she was wearing her newest and best gown, but she did not seem to mind.

Through the glass she saw the long slope of Cannon Hill, with the beacon at the top and Captain Mayo's house near it. The main road was deserted save for one figure, that of her late caller. He was mounting the hill in long strides.

She watched him gain the crest and pass over it out of sight. Then she shifted the glass so that it pointed toward the spot beyond the curve of the hill, where the top of a thick group of silver-leaved hick trees glistened the white steeple of the Regular church. If the minister went straight home she could see him. But under those silver-leaves was the beginning of the short cut across the fields where Didama had seen Mr. Ellery walking on the previous Sunday.

Slowly she moved the big end of the spyglass back along the arc it had traveled. She found a speck and watched it. It was a man, striding across the meadow land, a half mile beyond the parsonage, and hurrying in the direction of the beach. She

In Which Keziah's Troubles Multiply.

Keziah was getting worried about her parson. Not concerning his popularity with his congregation. She had long since ceased to worry about that. But what worried Mrs. Coffin was John Ellery's personal appearance and behavior. He had grown perceptibly thinner during the past month, his manner was distracted, and worst of all in the housekeeper's eyes, his appetite had fallen off. She tried all sorts of tempting dishes, but the result was discouraging.

His absent-mindedness was most acute on Sunday evenings, before prayer meeting, and after he had returned from the afternoon at Captain Elikanah's.

"Say, Mr. Ellery," she said, on one of these Sunday evenings, "do you know, it seems to me that Elikanah's meals must go to your head. You ain't in love, are you?"

The young man started, colored, and was plainly embarrassed. "In love?" he repeated. "In love, Mrs. Coffin?"

"Yes, in love. Annabel hasn't landed a male at last, has she? She's a line over the side for a long time."

The hearty laugh with which this was received settled the question of Annabel's success. Keziah was relieved.

"Well, I'm glad of that," she said. "I ain't got any grudge against Annabel, but neither have I got any against you. I'll say this, though, for a body that ain't in love you certainly stay with the Danielses a long time. You went there right after meetin' this noon and now it's seven o'clock and you've just got home. And 'twas the same last Sunday and the one before. Been there all the time, have you?"

"No," he said slowly. "Not all the time. I—I—er—went for a short walk."

Before she could inquire concerning that walk he had entered the study and closed the door after him.

Sunday was a cloudy, warm day, "muggy," so Captain Zeb described it. After the morning service Mr. Ellery, as usual, went home with Captain Daniels and Annabel. Keziah returned to the parsonage, ate a lonely dinner, and went upstairs to her own room. Her trunk was in one corner of this room and she unlocked it, taking from a compartment of the tray a rosewood writing case, inlaid with mother-of-



And She Cried Tears of Utter Loneliness and Despair.

pearl, a present from her father, who had brought it home from sea when she was a girl.

From the case she took a packet of letters and a daguerrotype. The latter was the portrait of a young man, in high-collared coat, stock and fancy waistcoat. Mrs. Coffin looked at the daguerrotype, sighed, shuddered, and laid it aside. Then she opened the packet of letters. - Selecting one from the top of the pile, she read it slowly. And, as she read, she sighed again.

She did not hear the back door of the parsonage open and close softly. Nor did she hear the cautious footsteps in the rooms below. What aroused her from reading was her own name, spoken at the foot of the stairs.

"Keziah! Keziah, are you there?" She started, sprang up, and ran out

into the hall, the letter still in her hand. "Who is it?" she asked sharply. "Mr. Ellery, is that you?"

"No," was the answer. "It's me—Nat. Are you busy, Keziah? I want to see you for a minute."

The housekeeper hurriedly thrust the letter into her waist. "I'll be right down, Nat," she answered. "I'm comin'."

He was in the sitting room when she entered. He was wearing his Sunday suit of blue and his soft hat was on the center table. She held out her hand and he shook it heartily.

Before he could speak she caught a glimpse of his face.

"What is it?" he asked. "What is the matter?"

"Well, Keziah, it's trouble enough. Dad and I had a fallin' out. We had what was next door to a real quarrel after dinner to-day. It would have been a real one if I hadn't walked off and left him. Keziah, he's dead set on my marryin' Grace. Says if I don't he'll know that I don't really care a tin nickel for him, or for his wishes, or what becomes of the girl after he's gone."

Keziah was silent for a moment. Then she said slowly: "And Grace herself? How does she feel about it? Has he spoken to her?"

"I don't know. I guess likely he has. Perhaps that's why she's been so sort of mournful lately. But never mind whether he has or not; I won't do it and I told him so. I got red hot in a jiffy. I was ungrateful and stubborn and all sorts of things. And I, bein' a Hammond, with some of the Hammond balkiness in me, I set my foot down as hard as I could. And we had it until—until—well, until I saw him stagger and tremble so that I actually got scared and feared he was goin' to keel over where he stood. You 'now why I can't marry her, nor anyone else in this round world but you."

"Nat, I can't marry you." "I know, I know. You're always sayin' that. But you don't mean it. You can't mean it. Why, you and me have been picked out for each other by the Almighty, Keziah. I swear I believe just that. We went together when we were boy and girl, to parties and such. We was promised when I first went to sea. If it hadn't been for that fool row we had—and 'twas all my fault and I know it—you never would have left that da—that miserable Anse Coffin come near you. I'm goin' to have you. Coffin is dead these ten years. When I heard he was drowned off there in Singapore, all I could say was, 'Serve him right!' And I say it now. I come home then more determined to get you. Say yes, and let's be happy. Do!"

"I'd like to, Nat. I only wish I could. But 'twouldn't be any use. I can't do it."

He strode toward the table and snatched his hat from the table and turned to the door. Turning, he looked at her.

"All right," he said chokingly. "All right. Good-by."

His steps sounded on the oiled floor of the kitchen. Then the back door slammed. He was gone.

Keziah started, as if the slam of the door had been an electric shock. And she cried, tears of utter loneliness and despair.

The clouds thickened as the afternoon passed. There came a knock at the dining-room door.

Keziah sprang from her chair, smoothed her hair, hastily wiped her eyes and went to admit the visitor, whoever he or she might be. She was glad of the shadows, they prevented her face from being seen too plainly.

"Good afternoon," she said, opening the door. "Oh! It's you, is it?"

"Yes," admitted Abihalh Pepper, standing on the stone step, and shifting uneasily from one foot to the other. "Yes, Keziah, it's—it's me, thank you. I only wanted to see Mr. Ellery."

"He's out. Good day."

"I wanted to ask his advice about somethin'. It's a secret. Only him and me know about it. Good-by. I'll find Mr. Ellery."

"Oh, the minister ain't at the Danielses, not as late's this, he ain't. I know where he is. I know where he goes Sunday afternoons—and why he goes, too. Mr. Ellery and me's good friends. We understand each other."

"Look here, Kyan Pepper! What are you talkin' about?"

"I just said I knew where Mr. Ellery goes every Sunday afternoon. He don't know anybody knows, but I do. That's all there is to it. I ain't tell. So—"

"Tell? Do you mean there's somethin' Mr. Ellery wouldn't want told? Don't you dare—I will see Laviny!"

"No, no, no, no. 'Tain't nothin' much. I just know where he goes after he leaves Elikanah's and who he goes to meet. I—er—Lordy! I hadn't ought to say that! I—er—Keziah Coffin, don't you ever tell I told you. I've said more'n I meant to. If it comes out there'd be the biggest row in the church there ever was. And I'd be responsible! I would! I'd have to go on the witness stand and then Laviny would find out how I— Oh, oh, oh! what shall I do?"

"What is it?" she persisted. "What would bring on the row in the church? Who does Mr. Ellery meet? Out with it! What do you mean?"

"I mean that the minister meets that Van Horne girl every Sunday afternoon after he leaves Elikanah's. There, now! It's out, and I don't give a darn if they hang me for it."

Keziah turned white. She seized Mr. Pepper by the lapel of his Sunday coat and shook him.

"Grace Van Horne!" she cried. "Mr. Ellery meets Grace Van Horne on Sunday afternoons? Where?"

"Down in them pines back of Peter's pasture on the edge of the

bank over the beach. He's meetin' there every Sunday for the last six weeks—longer, for what I know. I've watched 'm. I ain't lyin'! It's so. I'll bet you anything they're there now, walkin' up and down and talkin'. What would I want to lie for? You come with me this minute and I'll show 'em to you."

"Bliss Pepper," she said slowly and fiercely, shaking her finger in his face, "you go straight home and stay there. Don't you breathe a word to a livin' soul of what you say you've seen. Don't even think of it, or—dream it. If you do I'll—I'll march straight to Laviny and tell her that you asked me to marry you. I will, as sure as you're shakin' in front of me this minute. Now you swear to me to keep still. Swear!"

"How—how'll I swear?" begged Kyan. "What do you say when you swear? I'll say it, Keziah! I'll say anything! I'll—"

"All right. Then mind you remember. Now clear out quick. I want to think. I must think. Go! Get out of my sight!"

Kyan went, glad to escape, but frightened to the soul of him. Keziah watched him until he turned from the main road into the lighthouse lane. Then, certain that he really was going straight home, she re-entered the parsonage and sat down on the nearest chair. For ten minutes she sat there, striving to grasp the situation. Then she arose and, putting on her bonnet and shawl, locked the dining-room door and went out through the kitchen.

She was going to the pine grove by the shore, going to find out for herself if Kyan's astonishing story was true.

The pines were a deep green blotch against the cloudy sky and the gloomy waters of the bay. She skirted the outlying clumps of bayberry and beach plum bushes and entered the grove.

Then she heard low voices. As she crouched at the edge of the grove, two figures passed slowly across the clearing, along the bush bordered path and into the shrubbery beyond. John Ellery



Rising to Peep Over the Bushes at the Minister and Grace.

ery was walking with Grace Van Horne. He was holding her hand in his and they were talking very earnestly.

Keziah did not follow. What would have been the use? This was not the time to speak. She knew now and she knew, also, that the responsibility was hers. She must go home at once, so home to be alone and to think. She tiptoed back through the grove and across the fields.

Yet if she had waited, she might have seen something else which would have been, at least, interesting. She had scarcely reached the outer edge of the grove when another figure passed stealthily along that narrow path by the bluff edge. A female figure treading very carefully, rising to peep over the bushes at the minister and Grace. The figure of Miss Annabel Daniels, the "belle" of Trumet. And Annabel's face was not pleasant to look upon.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Homesickness Spoils Photographs. Aunt Maria thought, and so did her relatives in the big city, that the photographer was unparadonably discourteous. For three successive days he refused to take Aunt Maria's photograph. On the fourth day he told why.

"In justice to her," he said, "I do not want to take her pictures now. She is too homesick. Most out-of-town people want to be photographed while in the city. If they are longing for home I put them off with one excuse or another until the homesickness wears off."

"If you want your aunt's pictures to turn out well, just hunt up some one from her home town who happens to be visiting here at present and bring him here so she will meet him unexpectedly. The meeting will put sparkle and animation into her face, and neither she nor I will be disappointed with the photographs."

Guided by Wireless. The latest and most wonderful use to which wireless apparatus has been put is set forth in a paragraph from Berlin, Germany. According to the newspaper report experiments have been going on for some time with a rudderless, crewless motor boat on Lake Wannee which have proved remarkably successful. The inventor of this crewless boat is a school teacher named Christian Wirth. In trying out his invention the boat was towed out two miles in the lake and by means of his wireless apparatus all the boat's movements were directed. The boat threaded its way unerringly through numerous craft without the slightest accident.

COMMERCIAL

Weekly Review of Trade and Market Reports.

R. G. Dun Co.'s Weekly Trade Review says: "Owing to the largely increased demand for seasonal merchandise, business for the week showed a decided change for the better, and both jobbers and manufacturing concerns were well supplied with orders. Favorable weather conditions also had a material effect upon retail distribution in lines of men's and women's wearing apparel for spring, which moved freely. Prospects in the ready-made clothing industry appear favorable, manufacturers having received orders from many new sources, in addition to business derived from their regular customers, and limitations point to a substantial increase in the volume of sales for the current season. Collections are about as good as usual at this season, and values are very firm."

Bradstreet's Review states: "Retail trade in Easter goods is quite brisk, being stimulated by mild weather. With spring shipments going forward briskly, new business coming in of good proportions, and house trade assuming increased activity, jobbers as a rule are busy. Wholesale milliners are exceptionally busy, spring bookings being of liberal volume and running ahead of a year ago. Like conditions exist in dry goods, notions and footwear."

Wholesale Markets

NEW YORK.—Wheat—Spot irregular; No. 2 red, 109 1/2 elevator and 111 f o b, afloat; No. 1 Northern Duluth, 98 f o b, afloat. Corn—Spot easy; export, 56 1/2 f o b, afloat. Butter—Creamery extras, 36@36 1/2; firsts, 35@35 1/2. Eggs—State, Pennsylvania and nearby gathered browns and mixed colors, 18 1/2@19 1/2. Live Poultry—Western chickens, 16c; fowls, 15 1/2; turkeys, 20. Dressed duck, fresh killed Western chickens, 14@15; fowls, 15@17 1/2; turkeys, 21@24.

PHILADELPHIA.—Wheat declined 1c. No. 2 red in export elevator, \$1.00 1/2 @ \$1.01 1/2. Corn—Firm; No. 2 red mixed in export elevator, 54 1/2@55c. Potatoes—Weaker; Pennsylvania, choice, per bushel, 68@73c; do, New York, per bushel, 60@63c; do, fair to good, per bushel 55@58c.

BALTIMORE.—Wheat—Spot and March 105 1/2 bid; April, 106 1/2 nominal; May, 107 1/2 nominal. Corn—Spot and March, 54 1/2@55c; April, 56 1/2. Oats—No. 2 white, 39c; standard white, 37@37 1/2; No. 3 white, 36@36 1/2; No. 4 white, 34 1/2 asked. The lighter and medium weight oats are bringing a premium over the heavier weights.

Rye—Western Rye—No. 1, 69@70c; No. 2, 65@66c; No. 3, 61@62c; No. 4, 59@60c. Bag lots, nearby, as to quality, 55@56c. Hay—Timothy—No. 1 \$18@18.50; standard, \$17@17.50. No. 2, \$16@16.50; No. 3, \$13@14.50. Clover Mixed—Light, \$15.50@16; No. 1, \$15; No. 2, \$11.50@12.50; heavy, \$12@13.50. Clover—No. 1, \$11.50@12; No. 2, \$9@10.

Straw—Straight Rye—No. 1, \$18@18.50; No. 2, \$17@17.50. Tangled Rye—No. 1, \$12.50@13; No. 2, \$10@11.50. Wheat—No. 1, \$8.50@9; No. 2, \$7.50@8.50. Oat—No. 1, \$9@10; No. 2, \$8@8.50. Butter—Creamery, fancy, 36@37; creamery, choice, 34@35; creamery, good, 32@33; creamery, prints, 36@38; creamery, blocks, 35@37; lard, 22@24; Maryland and Pennsylvania rolls, 20@22.

Cheese—Per lb, 18 1/2@19c. Egg—Maryland, Pennsylvania and nearby firsts, 17c; Western firsts, 17; West Virginia firsts, 17; Southern firsts, 16. Duck Eggs—Nearby, 34c; Southern, 31. Recrated and rehandled eggs, 1/2@1c higher.

Live Poultry—Chickens—Old hens, heavy, 17 1/2@18c; do, small to medium, 17 1/2@18; old roosters and stags, 11; young, choice, smooth, 20@21; do, rough and staggy, 12@15; winter, 2 lbs and under, 28@25. Ducks—White Pekings, 20c; muscovy, 18; puddle, 18. Turkeys—Choice hens, 24@25c; young gobblers, 22; old toms, 19; rough and poor, 10@12.

Dressed Poultry—Turkeys—Choice, 24@25c; fair to good, 22@23; old toms, 20. Chickens—Young, 20@21; mixed, 18@19; old hens, 18; old roosters, 11@12. Ducks, 20@22c. Capons—Seven lbs and over, 27@28c; medium, 20@24; small and slips, 18@20.

Live Stock

CHICAGO.—Hogs—Bulk of sales, \$8.80@8.95; light, \$8.80@9.15; mixed, \$8.60@9.05; heavy, \$8.40@8.95; rough, \$8.40@8.55; pigs, \$6.95@9. Cattle—Beefves, \$7.25@8.15; Texas steers, \$6@7.50; stockers and feeders, \$6@8.15; cows and heifers, \$3.50@8; calves, \$7.50@12. Sheep—Native, \$6.10@7; yearlings, \$7.25@8.25; native lambs, \$8@9.10.

PITTSBURGH.—Cattle—Choice, \$8.70@8.80; prime, \$8.40@8.60. Sheep—Prime wethers, \$6.85@7.25; and commons, \$3@4; lambs, \$6@9.25; veal calves, \$11@12.

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