

# KEZIAH COFFIN

by Joseph C. Lincoln  
Author of  
Cy Whittaker's Place  
Cap'n Eri, Etc.  
Illustrations by  
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### SYNOPSIS.

Mrs. Keziah Coffin, supposed widow, is arranged 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. Elkanah 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 apologizes for 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, enclosing money in response to a demand. She is curiously startled 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 "Come-outer" meetings. Ellery is caught by the tide and is rescued by Nat. The clergyman takes dinner Sundays with the Daniels. Annabel, the captain's daughter, exerts herself to make an impression on him by the notices with vexation his desire to get away every Sunday at a certain time. She watches him through a spy glass. Nat again importunes Keziah to marry him. He says he has had a quarrel with his father, who wants him to marry Grace. Ellery asks Grace to marry him. She confesses that she loves him, but says she fears to displeasure her guardian. Elkanah Daniels tells Eben about the meetings between Ellery and Grace. Eben declares he will make Grace his bride between him and the preacher. Grace finds him in a faint, following the excitement of Elkanah's visit.

### CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"Well, doctor?" she asked anxiously. The stout, gray-haired old physician—he had practiced in Trumet for nearly thirty years—shook his head.

"Not a single chance," he whispered. "He may possibly live till morning, but I doubt if he lasts an hour. It's his heart. I've expected it at any time."

Captain Nat was standing at the door of the bedroom. His face was drawn and he had seemingly grown years older since noon.

"He's come to himself, doc," he whispered. "He don't remember how it happened or anything. And he wants you all. Why? Why, Keziah! are you here? You can come in, too. I know dad likes you and I guess. Wait a minute; I'll ask him." He stepped back into the bedroom. "Yes," he nodded, returning, "you come, too. He wants you."

The little room, Captain Eben's own, was more like a skipper's cabin than a chamber on land. In the corner stood the captain's big boots and his oilskins hung about them. His Sunday came was there also. And on the bureau was a worn, heavy Bible.

Dr. Parker brushed by the others and bent over the bed.

"Well, cap'n," he said cheerily, "how's she headed? How are you feeling now?"

The old face on the pillow smiled feebly.

"She's headed for home, I guess, doc," said Captain Eben. "Bound for home, and the harbor light broad abeam, I call late."

"Oh, no! you'll make a good many voyages yet."

"Not in this hulk, I won't, doctor. I hope I'll have a new command pretty soon. I'm trustin' in my owners and I guess they'll do the fair thing by me. Halloo, Grace, girl! Well, your old uncle's on his beam ends, ain't he?"

Grace glanced fondly at his face. When he spoke her name she shrunk back, as if she feared what he might say. But he only smiled, and with the tears streaming down her face, she bent over and kissed him.

"There! there!" he protested. "You mustn't cry. What are you cryin' about me for? I'm fit and ready for the sea. I'm goin' to sail." His eyes wandered from his son to Mrs. Coffin. For an instant he seemed puzzled. Then he said:

"Evenin', Keziah. I don't know why you're here, but—"

"I heard that Grace was alone and that you was sick, Eben. So I come right down, to help if I could."

"Thank ye. You're a good-hearted woman, Keziah, even though you ain't seen the true light yet. And you're housekeeper for that hired priest—a—"

"He paused, and a troubled look came over his face.

"What is it, dad?" asked Nat.

"I—Where's Grace? She's here, ain't she?"

"Yes, uncle, I'm here. Here I am," said the girl. His fingers groped for her hand and seized it.

"Yes, yes, you're here," murmured Captain Eben. "I—for a minute or so, I had an awful dream about you, Grace. I dreamed—Never mind. Doc, answer me this now, true and honest, man to man: Can you keep me here for just a little spell longer? Can you? Try! Ten minutes, say. Can you?"

"Of course I can. Cap'n Hammond, what are you—"

"Belay, I tell you. Yes, I guess 'twas a dream. It had to be, but 'twas so sort of real that I— How long have I been this way?"

"Oh, a little while! Now just—"

"Hush! Don't pull your hand away, Grace. No, give me yours. That's

### CHAPTER XII.

In Which Keziah Breaks the News.

It was nearly five o'clock, gray dawn of what was to be a clear, beautiful summer morning, when Keziah softly lifted the latch and entered the parsonage. All night she had been busy at the Hammond tavern. Busy with the doctor and the undertaker, who had been called from his bed by young Higgins; busy with Grace, soothing her, comforting her as best she could, and petting her as a mother might pet a stricken child. The poor girl was on the verge of prostration, and from hysterical spasms of sobs and weeping passed to stretches of silent, dry-eyed agony which were harder to witness and much more to be feared.

"It is all my fault," she repeated over and over again. "All my fault!"



"Keziah Coffin!" cried Nat Hammond. "Do you tell me to marry Grace?"

I killed him! I killed him, Aunt Keziah! What shall I do? Oh, why couldn't I have died instead? It would have been so much better, better for everybody."

Dr. Parker was very anxious.

"She must rest," he told Mrs. Coffin. "She must, or her brain will give way. I'm going to give her something to make her sleep and you must get her to take it."

So Keziah tried and, at last, Grace did take the drug. In a little while she was sleeping, uneasily and with moans and sobbings, but sleeping, nevertheless.

"Hush! it's your turn, Keziah," said the doctor. "You go home now and

rest, yourself. We don't need you any more just now. Now you go home. You've had a hard night, like the rest of us."

How hard he had no idea. And Keziah, as she wearily entered the parsonage, realized that the morning would be perhaps the hardest of all. For upon her rested the responsibility of seeing that the minister's secret was kept. And she, and no other, must break the news to him.

The dining room was dark and gloomy. She lighted the lamp. Then she heard a door open and Ellery's voice, as he called down the stairs.

"Who is it?" he demanded. "Mrs. Coffin?"

She was startled. "Yes," she said softly, after a moment. "Yes, Mr. Ellery, it's me."

"It's morning," said the minister. "Are you sick? Has anything happened?"

"Yes," she answered slowly, "something has happened. Are you dressed? Could you come down?"

He replied that he would be down in a moment. When he came he found her standing by the table waiting for him. The look of her face in the lamplight shocked him.

"What is it? You look as if you had been through some dreadful experience."

Her heart went out to him. She held out both her hands.

"You poor boy," she cried, "I'm trying to tell you one of the hardest things a body can tell. Yes, some one is dead, but that ain't all. Eben Hammond, poor soul, is out of his troubles and gone."

"Eben Hammond? Captain Eben? Dead? Why, why?"

"Yes, Eben's gone. He was took down sudden and died about ten o'clock last night. I was there and—"

"Captain Eben dead? Why, he was as well as— She said— Oh, I must go! I must go at once!"

He was on his way to the door, but she held it shut.

"No," she said gravely, "you mustn't go. John—you won't mind me callin' you John. I'm old enough, pretty nigh, to be your mother, and I've come to feel almost as if I was. John, you've got to stay here with me. You can't go to that house. You can't go to her."

"Mrs. Coffin, what are you saying? Do you know— Have you—"

"Yes, I know all about it. I know about the meetin' in the pines and all. Oh, why didn't you trust me and tell me? If you had, all would have been so much better!"

He looked at her in utter amazement. The blood rushed to his face.

"You know that?" he whispered.

"Yes, I know."

"Did she tell—"

"No, nobody told. That is, only a little. I got a hint and I suspicioned something afore. The rest I saw with my own eyes."

He was now white, but his jaw shot forward and his teeth closed.

"If you do know," he said, "you must realize that my place is with her. Now, when she is in trouble—"

"It ain't the congregation, John," she said. "Nor Trumet, nor your ministry. That means more'n you think it does, now; but it ain't that. You mustn't go to her because—well, because she don't want you to."

"Doesn't want me? I know better." He laughed in supreme scorn.

"She doesn't want you, John. She wouldn't see you if you went. She would send you away again, sure, sartin sure. She would. And if you didn't go when she sent you, you wouldn't be the man I hope you are. John, you mustn't see Grace again. She ain't yours. She belongs to some one else."

"John, Grace Van Horne is goin' to marry Cap'n Nat Hammond. There! that's the livin' truth."

She led him over to the rocking chair and gently forced him into it. He obeyed, although with no apparent realization of what he was doing. Still with her hand on his shoulder she went on speaking. She told him of her visit to the Hammond tavern, saying nothing of Mr. Pepper's call nor of her own experience in the grove. She told of Captain Eben's seizure, of what the doctor said, and of the old Come-Outer's return to consciousness. Then she described the scene in the sick room and how Nat and Grace had plighted troth. He listened, at first stunned and stolid, then with growing impatience.

"So you see," she said, "it's settled; they're engaged, and Dr. Parker will tell everybody of the engagement this very mornin'. It wadn't any great surprise to me. Those who have been brought up together; 'twas the natural thing that was almost bound to happen. Eben's heart was set on it for years. And she'll have a good husband, John, that I know. And she'll do her best to make him happy. He's a good man and—"

"But I know—"

"Do you suppose she would come to you if she knew it would be your ruin?"

He hesitated. The last time they met, ages before—no, only the previous afternoon—she had told him it was his happiness and his future only that she thought of. He choked and drew his hand across his eyes.

"Mrs. Coffin," he said, "you tell me it will be her ruin. You tell me so. You say she doesn't want me. I tell you that the only thing that will keep me from her is hearing that from her own lips. When she tells me to leave her I will, and not before."

"She'll tell you, John; she'll tell you. And I know Grace. She's made up her mind and won't change it. But I do ask you this: I ask you not to go now. Wait a little while, do. I left her asleep, worn out by what she's been through and under the effects of the doctor's sleepin' medicine. He said

she must rest or be as afraid her brain would give out. For her sake, then, wait a little. Then, if you don't hear from her, maybe I can arrange a meetin' place where you can see her without anyone's knowin' it. I'll try. But do wait a little while, for her sake, won't you?"

At last he was listening and hesitating.

"Won't you?" begged Keziah.

"Yes," he answered slowly. "TH wait. I'll wait until noon, somehow, if I can. I'll try. But not a minute later. Not one. You don't know what you're talking about, Mrs. Coffin."

"Yes, I do. I know well. And I thank you for her sake."

But he did not have to wait until noon. At six o'clock, through the dew-soaked grass of the yard, came the Higgins boy. For the first time in his short life he had been awake all night and he moved slowly.

The housekeeper opened the door. He held up an envelope, clutched in a grimy hand.

"It's for you, Mrs. Keziah," he said. "Grace she sent it. There ain't no answer."

Mrs. Coffin closed the door and tore open the envelope. Within was another addressed, in Grace's handwriting, to Mr. Ellery. The housekeeper entered the study, handed it to him and turned away.

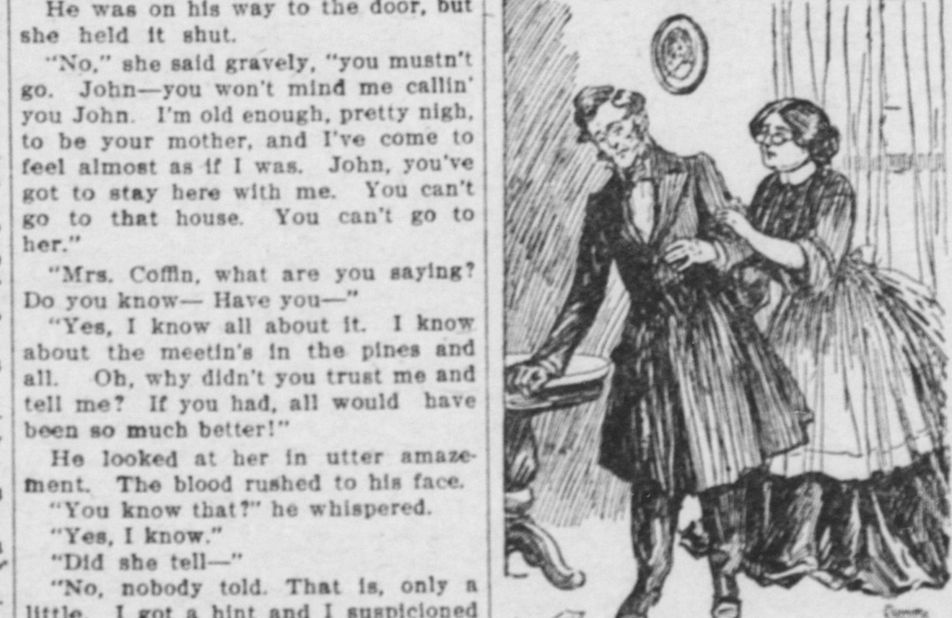
"Dear John," wrote Grace. "I presume Aunt Keziah has told you of uncle's death and of my promise to Nat. It is true. I am going to marry him. I am sure this is right and for the best. Our friendship was a mistake and you must not see me again. Please don't try."

"GRACE VAN HORNE."

Beneath was another paragraph.

"Don't worry about me. I shall be happy, I am sure. And I shall hope that you may be. I shall pray for that."

The note fell to the floor with a



"John, What Are You Going to Do?"

rustle that sounded loud in the stillness. Then Keziah heard the minister's step. She turned. He was moving slowly across the room.

"John, what are you goin' to do?"

He shook his head. "I don't know," he said. "Go away somewhere, first of all, I guess. Go somewhere—and try to live it down. I can't, of course, but I must try."

She put out her hand. "I know it'll be hard," she said, "stayin' here. I mean. But your duty to others—"

"Don't you think we've heard enough about duty to others? How about my duty to myself?"

"I guess that's the last thing we ought to think about in the world, if we do try to be fair and square. Your church thinks a heap of you, John. They build on you. You've done more in the little while you've been here than Mr. Langley did in his last fifteen years."

"You've never been asked to sit quietly by and see the one you love more than all the world marry some one else."

"How do you know I ain't? How do you know I ain't don't just that now?"

"Mrs. Coffin!"

"John Ellery, you listen to me. You think I'm a homely old woman, probably, set in my ways as an eight-day clock. I guess I look like it and act like it. But I ain't so awful old on the edge of forty, that's all. And when I was your age I wadn't so awful homely, either. I had fellers aplenty hangin' round and I could have married any one of a dozen. This ain't boastin'; land knows I'm fur from that. I was brought up in this town and even when I was a girl at school there was only one boy I cared two straws about. He and I went to picnics together and to parties and everywhere. Folks used to laugh and say we was keepin' company, even then."

"Well, when I was eighteen, after father died, I went up to New Bedford to work in a store there. Wanted to earn my own way. And this young feller I'm tellin' you about went away to sea, but every time he come home from a voyage he come to see me and things went on that way till we was promised to each other. The engagement wadn't announced, but 'twas so, just the same. We'd have been married in another year. And then we quarreled."

"'Twas a fool quarrel, same as that kind generally are. As much my fault as his and as much his as mine, I call late. Anyhow, we was both proud, or thought we was, and neither would give in. And he says to me, 'You'll be sorry after I'm gone. You'll wish me back, then.' And says I, beln' a fool, 'I guess not. There's other fish in the sea.' He sallied and I did wish him back, but I wouldn't write fast and neither would he. And then come another man."

She paused, hesitated, and then continued.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## JAPS PROTEST TO UNCLE SAM

### They Object to Proposed Legislation in California.

### DELICATE QUESTION RAISED.

### Considers the Contemplated Law Prohibiting Alien Ownership of Land As Being Aimed Against the Japanese.

Washington.—The Japanese government has lodged formal protest with the State Department against the proposed enactment by the State of California of what it considers anti-Japanese legislation, the measure prohibiting the alien ownership of land in California.

It was learned here that this protest was made nearly a fortnight ago. Secretary Bryan and Viscount Chinda, the Japanese ambassador, were closeted at the State Department in a private conference, the subject of which neither would discuss.

It is known that Secretary Bryan is giving close attention to this delicate subject, studying carefully the history of the negotiations that took place between Secretary Root and Baron Takahira in the Roosevelt administration, when a severe strain was placed upon the relations between America and Japan by the attempt of the California authorities to exclude Japanese children from the public schools.

The next step may be a communication from the Secretary of the State to the Governor of California calling his attention to the international questions involved in the proposed action of the legislature.

### MISS ROOSEVELT A BRIDE.

Daughter Of Former President Will Spend Honeymoon in Europe.

Oyster Bay, N. Y.—Miss Ethel Roosevelt, daughter of Theodore Roosevelt, was married in Christ Episcopal Church here to Dr. Richard Derby, of New York. Two hundred close friends and relatives of the bride and bridegroom saw the ceremony.

Rev. Dr. George E. Talmadge, pastor of the local church, assisted by Rev. Dr. Cotton Smith, of Washington, and Rev. Dr. Endicott Peabody, of Groton, Mass., performed the ceremony.

The bride's attendants were the Misses Helen Coster, Josephine Osborn, Margaret Tucker, Mary Derby and Cornelia Langdon. The bridegroom's brother, Roger A. Dreby, was best man.

While Colonel and Mrs. Roosevelt have declined to say anything about the presents received by Miss Roosevelt, it is known that she has received many beautiful and costly gifts from friends of the family and those who have been and are now prominent in the public life of the country.

### WITH MILITARY HONORS.

Morgan's Body Transferred To Limer France At Havre.

Havre, France.—The body of the late J. Pierpont Morgan arrived here from Rome and was transferred to the liner France for transportation to New York. Military honors were accorded during the transfer of the body from the train to the steamer. A battalion of infantry formed an escort, headed by the regimental band, which played Chopin's Funeral March. The regimental flags draped with mourning emblems were carried behind the coffin. A mortuary chapel was arranged on board the France for the reception of the coffin. It was hung with black velvet fringed with gold.

### C. F. WARWICK DIES.

Was Mayor Of Philadelphia From 1895 To 1899.

Philadelphia.—Charles F. Warwick, mayor of Philadelphia from 1895 to 1899, died at his home here after an illness of several years. He was four times elected city solicitor of Philadelphia and was a brilliant campaign orator, having accompanied James G. Blaine on some of his campaign tours. Mr. Warwick was 63 years old.

### M'ADOO PUTS FOOT DOWN.

Starts Campaign Of Economy In Traveling Allowances.

Washington.—With a sharp cut in government revenues in sight through tariff revision, Secretary McAdoo has begun a campaign of economy, "at home" but his foot down upon expensive traveling of officials at government expense.

### FORMER COUNCILMAN FINED.

Was Connected With Atlantic City Graft Charges.

Mays Landing, N. J.—Former Councilman James M. Lane and William Malla, of Atlantic City, who pleaded guilty to conspiracy in connection with the "concrete" boardwalk fraud exposure some time ago, were fined \$500 each by Justice Kalisch, of the Supreme Court.

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Oct. 1, 1909.