

KEZIAH COFFIN

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

Illustrations by
Ellsworth Young

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SYNOPSIS.

Mrs. Keziah Coffin, supposed widow, is arranging to move from Trumet to Boston, following the death of her husband for whom she had kept house. Kyran Pepper, widower, offers marriage, and is indignantly refused. Capt. Elkanah Stone, leader of the Reformed church, offers Keziah a place as housekeeper for the new minister, and she decides to remain in Trumet. Keziah makes 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 packet into port safely through fog and storm. Ellery finds Keziah writing a letter to some one, inclosing 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 at 1 is rescued by Nat. They become friends. Ellery meets Grace while walking in the fields, and learns that she walks there every Sunday. The clergyman takes dinner Sundays with the Daniels. Annabel, the captain's daughter, exerts herself to make an impression on him. She notices with vexation that Keziah is every Sunday at a certain time. She 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 displease her guardian. Captain Daniels tells Eben about the meetings between Ellery and Grace. Eben declares he will make Grace choose between him and the preacher. Grace finds him in a faint, following the excitement of Elkanah's visit. Just before the dies Eben exacts promise from Nat and Grace that they will marry. Keziah breaks the news to Ellery and later receives a note from Grace saying she is to marry Nat, and asking him not to try to see her again. Keziah tells the story of her own marriage with a man who turned out to be a good-for-nothing, and who was reported to have been lost at sea, and of her love for Nat, whom she cannot marry because the husband is alive. Captain Nat sails for Manila to be gone two years. He says he and Grace have decided not to marry until he returns. Nat is overdue, and it is feared that he has been lost. Keziah gets a letter from her husband saying he is coming back. Grace goes on a visit to relatives of the Hammonds, a vessel flying distress signals is discovered off the coast. Ellery goes with party to board the vessel. A man is seen suffering from smallpox, the rest of the crew having deserted. He is taken to an abandoned shack on shore and Keziah and his nurse him. Before he dies it is discovered that he is Keziah's husband. Ellery left alone in a delirious condition by wandering in a delirious condition by Grace. She takes him back to the shack and sends for her. Keziah and Grace nurse Ellery, who is suffering from brain fever. The doctor and Keziah spread a report that Grace and Ellery are engaged. News comes that Nat has arrived safely in Boston. The story of the wreck of Nat's vessel comes out and a home-coming is arranged. Nat fails to appear. Keziah intercepts Nat on his homeward journey and Ellery releases Grace from her promise to him.

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued)

"What's the matter?" asked the captain.
Ellery did not answer. He read the note through and then, without a word, handed it to his friend.
The note was as follows:
"Dear John:
"I am going away, as I told you I would if he came. He is coming. Tuesday I got a letter from him. It was written at Kingston, Jamaica, almost three months ago. I can't think why I haven't got it sooner, but suppose it was given to some one to mail and forgotten. In it he said he was tired of going to sea and was coming home to me. I had money here, said, and we could get along. He had shipped aboard a brig bound for Savannah, and from there he was going to try for a berth on a Boston-bound vessel. Go I am going away and not coming back. I could not stand the disgrace and I could not see him. You and Grace won't need me any more now. Don't worry about me. I can always earn a living while I have my strength. Please don't worry. If he comes tell him I have gone you do not know where. That will be true, for you don't. I hope you will be very happy. I do hope so. Oh, John, you don't know how I hate to do this, but I must. Don't tell Nat. He would do something terrible to him if he saw, and Nat knew. Just say I have been called away and may be back some time. Perhaps I may. Love to all. Good-by. Yours truly,
"KEZIAH COFFIN."

The captain stared at the note. Then he threw it to the floor and started for the door. The minister sprang from his chair and called to him.
"Nat," he cried. "Nat! Stop! where are you going?"
"Goin'!" he growled. "Goin'! I'm goin' to find her, first of all. Then I'm comin' back to wait for him."
"But you won't have to wait. He'll never come. He's dead."
"Dead? Dead? By the everlastin'!" this has been too much for you, I ought to have known it. I'll send the doctor here right off. I can't stay myself. I've got to go. But—"

"Listen! listen to me! Ansel Coffin is dead, I tell you. I know it. I know all about it. That was what I wanted to see you about. Did Keziah tell you of the San Jose and the sailor who died of smallpox in this very building? In that room there?"
"Yes, John, you—"

"I'm not raving. It's the truth. That sailor was Ansel Coffin. I watched with him and one night, the night before he died, he spoke Keziah's name. He spoke of New Bedford and

CHAPTER XX.

In Which Mr. Stone Washes His Hands.
Mr. Abner Stone, of Stone & Barker, marine outfitters and ship chandlers, with a place of business on Commercial street in Boston, and a bank account which commanded respect throughout the city, was feeling rather irritable and out of sorts. Poor relations are always a nuisance. Mr. Stone had "washed his hands" of his cousin, Keziah Coffin, or thought he had. After her brother Solomon died she had written to him, asking him to find her a position of some kind in Boston. "I don't want money, I don't want charity," wrote Keziah. "What I want is work. Can you get it for me, Abner? I write because father used to tell of what you said to him about gratitude and how you would never rest until you had done something in return for what he did for you."

Captain Ben Hall's kindness was the one thing Mr. Stone forgot when he said no one had ever helped him. He disliked to be reminded of it. It was a long while ago and the captain was dead. However, being reminded, he had called upon a friend in the tailoring line and had obtained for Keziah the place of sewing woman. She decided to become housekeeper at the Trumet parsonage and so notified him. Then he washed his hands of her.

But now he was compelled to soil them again. Keziah had appeared at his office, without warning, and demanded that he find her a position. "Demanded" was the proper word. Certainly she had not begged. She seemed to feel that her demand was right and proper, and his acceding to it the least he could do.

"What a fine place you've got here, Abner!" she said, inspecting the office and store. "I declare it's finer than the one you had when you first went into business, afore you failed. I wish father could have lived to see it. He'd have realized that his judgment was good, even though his investment wasn't."

Captain Hall had invested largely in that first business, the one which failed. Mr. Stone changed the subject. Later in the day he again sought his friend, the tailor, and Keziah was installed in the loft of the latter's Washington street shop, beside the other women and girls who sewed and sewed from seven in the morning until six at night. Mr. Stone had left her there and come away, feeling that an unpleasant matter was disposed of. He had made some inquiries as to where she intended staying, even added a half-hearted invitation to dinner that evening at his home. But she declined.

"No, thank you, Abner," she said. "I'm goin' to find a boardin' place and I'd just as soon nobody knew where I was for the present. And there's one thing I want to ask you: don't tell a soul I am here. Not a soul. If anyone should come askin' for me, don't give 'em any satisfaction. I'll tell you why some day, perhaps. I can't now."

This was what troubled Mr. Stone as he sat in his office. Why should this woman wish to have her whereabouts kept a secret? There was a reason for this, of course. Was it a respectable reason, or the other kind? If the latter, his own name might be associated with the scandal. He wished, for the fiftieth time, that there were no poor relations.

A boy came into the office. "There is some one here to see you, Mr. Stone," he said.
"Who is it?"
"I don't know, sir. Looks like a seafaring man, a sea captain. I should say—but he won't give his name. Says it's important and nobody but you'll do."

"Humph! All right. Tell him to wait. I'll be out in a minute."
Sea captains and ship owners were Stone & Barker's best customers. The senior partner emerged from the office with a smile on his face.
"Ah!" he said, extending his hand. "Glad to see you, Captain—er—"

"Hammond," replied the visitor. "Same to you, Mr. Stone."
"Fine weather for this time of year."
"Fine enough, Mr. Stone."
"Well, Captain Hammond, what can we do for you? Going to sail soon?"
"Not right away. Just made port, less'n a week ago. Home looks good to me, for a spell, anyhow."

"So? Yes, I have no doubt. Let me see—where is your home, captain? I should remember, of course, but—"

"Don't know why you should. This is my first trip in your latitude, I guess. My home's at Trumet."

"Trumet?" Mr. Stone's tone changed.
"Yes, Trumet, down on the Cape. Ever been there? We think it's about as good a place as there is."
"Hu-um! Trumet? Well, Captain Hammond, you wished to see me, I understand."
"Yes. Fact is, Mr. Stone, I want to ask you where I can find Mrs. Keziah Coffin. She's a relation of yours, I b'lieve, and she's come to Boston lately. Only yesterday or the day afore. Can you tell me where she is?"
"Why do you wish to see her?"
"Oh, for reasons, personal ones. She's a friend of mine."
"I see. No, captain, I can't tell you where she is. Good morning."
Captain Nat was greatly disappointed.

"Hold on there, just a minute," he begged. "This is important, you understand, Mr. Stone. I'm mighty anxious to find Kez—Mrs. Coffin. We thought, some of her friends and I, that most likely you'd know where she was. Can't you give us any help at all? Hasn't she been here?"
"Good morning, Captain Hammond. You must excuse me, I'm busy."
He went into the office and closed the door. Captain Nat rubbed his forehead desperately. He had been almost sure that Abner Stone would put him on Keziah's track. Grace had thought so, too. She remembered what the housekeeper had told concerning her Boston cousin and how the latter had found employment for her when she contemplated leaving Trumet, after her brother's death. Grace believed that Keziah would go to him at once.

Nat walked to the door and stood there, trying to think what to do next. A smart young person, wearing a conspicuous suit of clothes, aided and abetted by a vivid waistcoat and a pair of youthful but promising side whiskers, came briskly along the sidewalk and stopped in front of him.
"Well, sir?" observed this person, with cheerful condescension. "Anything I can do for you?"
Captain Nat turned his gaze upon the side whiskers and the waistcoat.
"Hey?" he queried.
"I say, is there anything I can do for you?"

The captain shook his head.
"No-oo," he drawled dryly. "I'm afraid not, son. I admit that don't seem scarcely possible, but I am afraid it's so."
"Looking for something in our line, was you?"
"Well, I don't know. What might be on your line—clothes?"
The bewiskered one drew himself up. "I am connected with Stone & Barker," he said sharply. "And, seeing you standing in our doorway, I thought possibly—"

"Yes, yes. Beg your pardon, I'm sure. No, I don't want to buy anything. I come to see Mr. Stone on a personal matter."
"He's busy, I suppose."
"So he says."
The young man smiled with serene satisfaction. "I'm not surprised," he observed complacently. "We are a busy house, Mr.—er—"

"Hammond's my name. Are you Mr. Barker?"
"No-o, my name is Prince."
"So? Silent partner in the firm, hey?"
"No-o, not exactly." Mr. Prince was slightly embarrassed. "No, I am a salesman—at present. Was the matter you wished to see Mr. Stone about a very private one?"
"Middlin'."

"Well, I asked because Mr. Stone is a busy man and we like to save him all the—the—"

"Trouble you can, hey? That's nice of you, you must save him a lot, Mr. Barker—King was it?"
"No, Prince."
"Sure and sartin', Prince, of course."

"I know 'twas connected with the royal family. Well, Mr. Prince, I'm afraid even you can't help me nor him out this time. I'm lookin' up a friend of mine, a widow lady from down the Cape. She's a relation of Mr. Stone's, and she's come to Boston during the last day or so. I thought likely he might know where she was, that's all. That would be a little out of your latitude, hey?"
"I don't know. Her name wasn't Coffin, was it?"
Captain Nat started. "It certainly was," he answered eagerly. "How'd you know that?"
Mr. Prince's complacency was superb. "Oh," he answered with condescension. "Mr. Stone trusts me with a good many of his personal affairs."

"I should think likely he would. But about Mrs. Coffin? You was goin' to say?"

"She is with James Hallett & Co., the tailors, on Washington street. Mr. Stone found a place for her there, I believe. I—er—superintended the carrying of her valise and—What?"
"Nothin', nothin'! Hum! Hallett & Co., tailors? What number Washington street did you say?"
Mr. Prince gave the number.
"Thank you a lot," said Captain Nat, with fervor. "Good-by, Mr. Prince. Hope the next time I come you'll be in the firm. Good day, sir."
"Good day. Nothing else I can do? And you won't wait for Mr. Stone? Very good. Is there any message for him that you would like to leave?"
"Hey?" Nat had started to go, but now he paused and turned. There was a grim twinkle in his eye. "Message?" he repeated. "Why, ye-es, I don't know but there is. You just give Mr. Stone Cap'n Hammond's compliments and tell him I'm lookin' forward to interviewin' him some time. Just tell him that, will you?"
"I'll tell him. Glad to have met you, Captain Hammond."

In the workshop of Hallett & Co., Keziah sat sewing busily. The window near her was closed, stuff rack, and through the dingy panes she could see only roofs and chimneys. The other women and girls near her chatted and laughed, but she was silent. She did not feel like talking, certainly not like laughing. The garment she was at work on was a coat, a wedding coat, so the foreman had told her, with a smile; therefore she must be very particular. The narrow stairway leading up to the workshop ended in a little boxed-in room where the finished garments were hung to await the final pressing. From behind the closed door of this room came the sound of voices, apparently in heated argument. One of these voices was that of Larry, the errand boy. Larry was speaking shrilly and with emphasis. The other voice was lower in key and the words were inaudible.

"No, sir, you can't," declared Larry. "You can't, I tell you. The boss don't let nobody in there and—Hold on! Hold on!"
The other voice made a short but evidently earnest answer. Larry again expostulated. The workers looked up from their sewing. The door opened and Larry appeared, flushed and excited.
"Where's Mr. Upham?" he demanded. "Mr. Upham?"
Upham was the foreman of the workshop. At the moment he was downstairs in conversation with the head of the house. A half dozen gave this information.
"What's the matter? Who is it?" asked several.

"I don't know who 'tis. It's a man and he's crazy, I think. I told him he couldn't come in here, but he just keeps a-comin'. He wants to see somebody named Coffin and there ain't no Coffins here."
Keziah's nearest neighbor leaned toward her.
"I guess it's somebody to see you," she said. "Your name is Coffin, ain't it?"
"No, no. That is, it can't be anybody to see me. I don't want to see anybody. Tell him so, whoever it is. I can't see anybody. I—Nat!"
"Keziah," he said, "come here. I want you. I'll tell you why in a minute. Come!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

NEED OF CARPETS FOR ROADS
English Expert Recommends Use of an "Elastic Skin" on the Highways.
A lecture was recently delivered by a member of the board before the Royal Institute of London on "The Road—Past, Present and Future," according to Consular and Trade Reports. The lecturer said the problem was to find the best mode by which a road should be constructed so that its surface would not be broken by traffic, so that the transit might be easier for both passengers and goods, a road which would form neither puddle holes nor exude mud from vehicles and create no dust when the weather was dry.
One thing was universally recognized, that the road of the future should be a truly bound road in which, whatever kind of stone was used, the stone should be held together so that it would form a crust. The lecturer suggested that what he called a carpet or an elastic skin should be adopted as the covering.
The carpet, he thought, should be made of bituminous material mixed with sand and placed on the roads in various thicknesses, according to the nature of the traffic. It should go on in liquid form, solidifying quickly, but always remaining resilient and compressible, and so integrating with the crust of the surface below.
The advantage of such a carpet, it was said, would be to permanently protect the crust, and, just as a carpet on the floor softens the step, so would this carpet for the roads silence the noise and reduce the shock of rolling vehicles. It was admitted that the original cost of a road so laid would be more than that of a mud bound road, but spreading the cost over a series of years it would probably not be so great, since the crust of the road itself would not have to be renewed.

Polish Woman Barrister.
Mile. Miropolsky is the best known of the women barristers of France. She is of Polish origin, but was born in Paris. She took her degree in philosophy at the age of 18, was admitted to the bar five years ago, and won her first case, before she was twenty-one. Children's courts and the divorce court she considers as suitable fields for the woman advocate, and she has specialized in cases affecting women.

COMMERCIAL

Weekly Review of Trade and Market Reports.

Dun's review says:
"There is still some abatement of activity, due chiefly to anticipated tariff changes, but the volume of transactions in all the leading branches of trade and industry is very large. Conservatism is naturally more pronounced in the industrial and financial East, while in the agricultural West and South there is a marked feeling of confidence, based upon the splendid crop conditions and the enormous export trade, much of which means large returns to producers in those sections."

Bradstreet's says:
"Trade currents indicate the existence of relatively satisfactory conditions, though the reports still are interspersed with evidence of more or less irregularity in final distribution. Conservatism is being practiced as to future trade pending prospective tariff changes and it is probable that the volume of business in the Northwest section that has heretofore been especially active, has tapered off a little, but slackness in one or another zone has been counterbalanced by improved movements in other places."
"Wheat, including flour, exports from the United States and Canada for the week are the largest since October, 1902, aggregating 7,011,479 bushels, against 4,927,513 bushels this week last year."

Wholesale Markets

NEW YORK—Wheat—Spot firm; No. 2 red nominal; No. 1 Northern Duluth, \$1.10 a float.
Corn—Spot steady; exports, 63½ nominal f o b afloat.
Butter—Creamery, firsts, 28c; seconds, 27@27½c.
Cheese—Steady and unchanged, receipts, 2,011 boxes.
Eggs—Steady; receipts, 32,823 cases; fresh-gathered, dirties, No. 2, 17@17½c.
Live Poultry—Chickens, Southern, 31c; fowls, 17c; turkeys, 12½c. Dresser firm; fresh-killed Western fowls, 17@19½c; frozen turkeys, 15@26c.
Potatoes—Steady; Maine, in bulk, \$3.25; State and Western, in bulk, \$1.75@2.12.

PHILADELPHIA—Wheat—Car lots, in export elevator, as to location, No. 2 red, \$1.01¼@1.02¼; No. 2, 98½@99¼; No. 3 red, 96½@97½c; No. 1 Northern Duluth, 95c@1.01.
Corn—Car lots, for local trade. No. 1 yellow, natural, 62½@64c; steamer yellow, natural, 62½@63c; No. 3 yellow, natural, 62@62½c.
Oats—No. 2, 44@44½c; standard white, 43½@44c; No. 3 white, 42½@43c; No. 4, 39@41c; sample, 37@38c.

BALTIMORE—Wheat—May, No. 2 red, 107½ nominal; spot, No. 2 red, 107½ nominal; July, No. 2 red, 93½ nominal.
Corn—Spot mixed, 58½ nominal. For contract, 59½c; steamer mixed, 57½c; no established grade, 56½c.
Oats—No. 2 white, 43½c; standard white, 42¾@43; No. 3 white, 41¾@42.

Rye—Western, car lots—No. 2 (export), 66@66½c; No. 3, 52@63; No. 4, 50@61. Bag lots, nearby, as to quality, 60@65c.
Hay—Timothy—No. 1, \$19@19.50; standard, \$18@18.50; No. 2, \$17@18; No. 3, \$14@15.50. Clover Mixed—Light, \$16.50@17; No. 1, \$15.50@16; No. 2, \$11@13; heavy, 12@13. Clover—No. 1, \$11@12; No. 2, \$8@10. No established grade, \$7@11. Sample grade, as to kind, quality and condition, \$7@10.

Straw—Straight Rye—No. 1, \$18@18.50; No. 2, \$17@17.50. Tangled Rye—No. 1, \$11@12; No. 2, \$10@11. Wheat—No. 1, \$8; No. 2, \$7.50@8. Oat—No. 1, \$9@10; No. 2, \$8@8.50.
Butter—Creamery, fancy, 30@30½; creamery, choice, 28@29; creamery, good, 26@27; creamery, prints, 31@32; creamery, blocks, 30@41; ladies, 25@27; Maryland and Pennsylvania rolls, 22.

Cheese—Jobbing lots, per lb, 16@17c.
Eggs—Maryland, Pennsylvania and nearby firsts, 18c; Western firsts, 18; West Virginia firsts, 18; Southern firsts, 17. Recrated and rehandled eggs ½ to 1c higher.
Live Poultry—Chickens—Old hens, heavy, 17c; do, small to medium, 17; old roosters and stags, 10@11; spring, 1¼ lbs and over, 30@32; do, 1 lb and under, 28. Ducks—White Pekings, 15c; Muscovy, 13@14; puddle, 13@14.

Live Stock

CHICAGO—Hogs—Light, \$8.40@8.65; mixed, \$8.34@8.60; heavy, \$8@8.57½; rough, \$8@8.20; pigs, \$6.50@8.35; bulk of sales, \$8.45@8.60.
Cattle—Beeves, \$7.10@9; Texas steers, \$6.75@7.70; Western steers, \$7@8.15; stockers and feeders, \$5.85@7.90; cows and heifers, \$3.85@7.90; calves, \$6.25@9.
Sheep—Native, \$5.90@6.80; Western, \$6@6.90; yearlings, \$6.40@7.50; lambs, native, \$6.50@8.70; Western, \$6.65@8.70.
KANSAS CITY, MO.—Cattle—Dressed beef and export steers, \$7.80@8.60; fair to good, \$7.25@7.75; Southern steers, \$6@7.75; Southern cows, \$4.5@7.25; bulls, \$5.75@7.50; calves, \$6.50@10.

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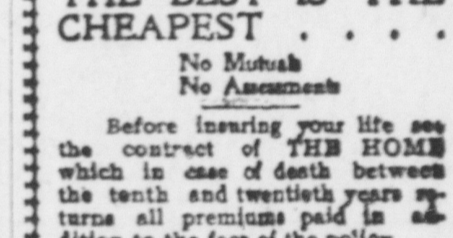
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