

# 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 brother, Pepper, who was her husband's partner. She 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. "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, leader of the packet into port safely through fog and storm. Ellery finds Keziah writing a letter to some one, incensing 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 ever since attending "Come-outer" meetings. Ellery is caught by the tide and is rescued by Nat. They become friends. Ellery and Nat learn that she walks there every Sunday. The clergyman takes a dinner Sunday with the Daniels. Nat, the captain's daughter, exerts herself to make an impression on him. She comes with velvet shoes and a new dress 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. Keziah tells Eben about the meetings between Ellery and Grace. Eben declares he will make Grace choose between him and the preacher. Keziah tells him in a vain, following the excitement of Elkanah's visit. Just before he dies Eben exacts a promise from Keziah and Grace that they will marry. Keziah breaks the news to Ellery and later he 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 Nat, 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, who 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 at sea. 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 a party to board the vessel. A man is found safe from smallpox, the rest of the crew having deserted. He is taken to an abandoned shack on shore and Ellery helps nurse him. Before he dies it is discovered that he is Keziah's husband. Ellery, left alone in quarantine, is found wandering in a delirious condition by Grace. She takes him back to the shack and sends for help. 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 the vessel comes out, and a home-coming is arranged. Nat fails to appear. Keziah intercepts Nat on his homeward journey and tells him of Grace's love for Ellery. He releases Grace from her promise to him. Keziah gets a letter from her husband saying he will return soon, and not having yet heard of the identity of the smallpox victim, she leaves Trumet. Ellery tells Nat that the dead man was Keziah's husband. Nat goes to Boston, finds Keziah and brings her home.

### CHAPTER XX—(Continued.)

She hesitated. In a measure she was relieved, for she had feared the man at the door might be her husband. But she was greatly agitated and troubled. Everyone in the place was looking at her.

"Nat," she said, trying to speak firmly, "I can't see you now. I'm very busy. Please go away."

"Come!"

"I can't come. Go away. Please."

"Keziah, I'm waitin'. And I'm goin' to wait if I stay here all night. Come!"

She obeyed then. She could not have a scene there, before all these strangers. She stepped past him into the little room. He followed and closed the door.

"Nat," she said, turning to him, "why did you come? How could you be so cruel? I—"

He interrupted her, but not with words. The next moment his arms were about her and she was pressed tight against the breast of his blue jacket.

"Keziah," he whispered, "I've come to take you home. Home for good. No, stay where you are and I'll tell you all about it. Praise be to God! We're off the rocks at last. All that's left is to tow you into port, and by the everlastin', that's what I'm here for!"

When Upham came up the stairs after his long interview with "the boss," he found the door at the top closed. When he rattled the latch that door was opened by a stranger.

"Are you Mr. Hallett?" asked Captain Nat briskly.

"No, I'm not. Mr. Hallett is in his office on the first floor. But what—"

"On the main deck, hey? Well, all right; we won't trouble him. You'll do just as well; I judge you're one of the mates of this craft. You tell Mr. Hallett that this lady here has decided not to cruise with him any longer. No fault to find, you understand, but she's got a better berth. She's goin' to ship along with me. Ain't that so, Keziah?"

Keziah, pale, trembling, scarcely realizing the situation even yet, did not speak. But Captain Nat Hammond seemed to find his answer in her silence. A few minutes later, her arm in his, they descended the sunny stairs, and emerged into the sunshine together.

"That afternoon Mr. Abner Stone was washed his hands" of his poor

relation—this time, as he indignantly declared, "for good and all."

### CHAPTER XXI.

#### In Which Keziah's Parson Preaches Once More.

Time has wrought many changes in Trumet. The packet long since ceased to ply between the village and Boston, the stage has been superseded by the locomotive, the old "square-riggers," commanded by Cape Cod men, no longer sail the seas. Along the main road the houses have changed hands. Didama Rogers peers no more from her parlor window; that parlor is now profaned by the frivolous and irrelevant summer boarder. But the old residents love to talk of the days that are gone and if you happen to catch Mr. Isaac Higgins, now postmaster and a dignified member of the board of selectmen, in a reminiscent mood he will very likely tell you of the meetings of the parish committee called by its chairman, Elkanah Daniels, to oust Rev. John Ellery from the pulpit of the Regular church.

"I'll never forget," says Mr. Higgins, "that parish committee meeting if I live a thousand years. I, and two or three other young shavers, was hid in the little room off the vestry—the room where they kept the dishes they used for church suppers—and we heard the whole business. Of course nobody knew that Nat was goin' to marry Keziah then, but they did know that he wasn't goin' to marry Grace Van Horne, and had given her up to the minister of his own accord. So Daniels's guns were spiked and he didn't have no chance at all. However, you'd never have guessed it to look at him. He marched into that meetin' and up to the platform as stiff and dignified as if he'd swallowed a peck of starch. He called the meetin' to order—twas a full one, for all hands and the cook was there—and then got up to speak.

"He opened fire right off. He raked John Ellery fore and aft. The parson, he said, had disgraced the society and his sacred profession and should be hoisted overboard immediate.

"Three or four sung out 'Question' and 'Vote.' But Elkanah held up his hand.

"Gentlemen," says he, 'before I ask for the vote I want to say just one word. I've worshipped in this meetin' house ever since I was a child. I was christened in it; my father worshipped here afore me; I've presided over the meetin' of this body for years. But I tell you now that if you vote to keep that rascally hypocrite in your pulpit I shall resign from the committee and from the society. It'll be like cuttin' off my right hand, but I shall do it. Are you ready for the vote? Those in favor of retaining the present minister of this parish will rise. Those opposed will remain seated."

"Every man on the floor stood up. Daniels himself was the only one that stayed settin' down.

"It is a vote," says he, white as a sheet, and his voice trembling. "Gentlemen, I bid you good day."

"He took up his hat and cane, give one look around the vestry, as if he were sayin' good-by to it, and marched down the aisle as straight and starchy as he'd come into it. Only when he reached the door, he put up one hand as if he was steadyin' himself. There was precious few in that



"Keziah," He Whisped, "I've Come to Take You Home."

vestry that liked Elkanah Daniels, but I'm bettin' high there wasn't a one who didn't feel sorry for him then."

Captain Daniels and his daughter moved to Boston that summer. They never came back to Trumet to live. Annabel remained single until after her father's death; then she married a man very much younger and poorer than she was. It was remarked by acquaintances of the couple that the difference in age became less and less apparent as their married life continued.

On a Sunday morning, a few weeks after the committee meeting, the Regular church was crowded. John Ellery was to preach his first sermon

since the San Jose came ashore. Every member of the congregation was present. Even Mrs. Prince, feeble but garrulous, was there. Galus Winslow, having delivered his brood of children at the church door, made a special trip in his carryall to fetch the old lady. Captain Zebedeo and Mrs. Mayo beamed from their pew. Dr. Parker and his wife smiled at them across the aisle. Didama Roger's new bonnet was a work of art and her neck threatened to twist itself off as she turned to see each one who came in.

Lavinia Pepper sailed to the front. She was dressed in a new black alpaca which rustled so very much like silk that nearsighted people might have been deceived by it. With her was a man, apparently suffering from strangulation because of the height and tightness of his collar. "It's Caleb Pratt, from Sandwich," whispered Didama. "Thankful Payne's relation, you know. Have you heard what folks are sayin'? I guess it's true, because— Look at Kyan! you'd think he was goin' to his own funeral."

There was a stir at the door. All heads swung in that direction—all but Mr. Pepper's, that is. The minister and Grace were coming up the aisle and behind them came Captain Nat Hammond and Keziah Coffin. Nat was smiling and self-possessed. Never before in his life had he entered the Regular meeting house as a worshiper, but he seemed to be bearing the ordeal bravely. It was Grace's first visit to the church, also, and she was plainly embarrassed to be stared at by eighty-odd pairs of eyes, and to catch whispered comments from the stargers' tongues, is likely to embarrass one.

Yet the comments were all friendly. "I declare!" whispered Mrs. Prince, "I never see her look so pretty afore. I knew she was the best lookin' girl in this town, but I never realized she was such a beauty. Well, there's one thing sartin'—we've got the handsomest parson and parson's wife in this county, by about ten mile and four rows of apple trees. And there's the other bride that's goin' to be. I never see Keziah look so well neither."

The minister went up the stairs to the pulpit. He was still white and thin, but his eyes were bright and his voice clear. He gave the opening hymn and the service began.

They said it was the finest sermon ever preached in that church, and perhaps it was. When it was over before the benediction was pronounced, Ellery stepped out from behind the pulpit to the edge of the platform. He looked over the friendly faces upturned to his, and for an instant, it seemed that he could not trust himself to speak.

"My friends," he said, "I cannot let you go without a personal word. I owe you so much, all of you, that nothing I can say will convey to you my feeling of gratitude and love for this congregation and this church. You have stood by me all through. You trusted me and believed in me. I came to Trumet a stranger. I have found here the truest friends a man could hope to find—yes, and while I live, I shall hope to prove by the best effort that is in me my desire to repay it, even though the payment must, of necessity, be so inadequate. God bless you all—and thank you."

There was much hand shaking and congratulation and the church emptied slowly. Among the last to leave were the Peppers and Mr. Pratt. Lavinia took the minister aside.

"Mr. Ellery," she whispered, "I've— that is, Caleb and me—will probably want you to— That is, we want you to be the one—"

"Yes, Miss Pepper?"

"Oh, my sakes, you see— 'Bishy dear, come here a minute, won't you?'"

Kyan approached—the picture of desolation.

"What do you want?" he asked gruffly.

"Heavens to Betsy! Don't look so sour. A body'd think you was goin' to be hung, to look at you. 'Bishy, you tell Mr. Ellery all about it, there's a dear. He'll tell you, Mr. Ellery, and remember we count on you. Neither me nor Caleb won't have nobody else."

She seized Mr. Pratt by the arm and led him hastily away. Kyan looked after them.

"Hung?" he muttered. "I wish, by goddres mighty, I had the hangin' of some folks! I'd put a tighter collar on 'em than they've got now, I bet you!"

The minister's lips twitched. He knew what was coming. Hints of a surprising nature had been circulating about Trumet.

"What's the matter, Mr. Pepper?" he asked.

"Matter? Matter enough! You know what she's goin' to do? She's goin' to marry that!"

The last word was emphasized by a furious gesticulation toward the back of the gentleman from Sandwich.

"Who? Mr. Pratt? Is your sister, to marry him? Indeed! I congratulate them both—and you. I suppose Mr. Pratt will take his bride home to Sandwich, and you, being here alone, will be more free."

"Free?" Kyan repeated the word wrathfully. "Free! I'll be about as free as a settin' hen under a barrel, I will. Is a feller free when he's got two pickin' at him instead of one? I thought I was goin' to have a little peace and comfort; I thought that same as you, Mr. Ellery. I've had my suspicions as to her and him for some time. That day when I cal'ated I'd locked her up and come back to find she's gone buggy ridin', I thought 'twas queer. When she went to conference and left me alone I smelt a rat. When she took to letter writin'

the smell got stronger; until the last few weeks I've been airtin of the game she was up to. When Lavinia come to me and told me what she was goin' to do, was I obstinate? Did I stand on my rights as head of the family and tell her she couldn't do it? No, sir; I didn't! I was resigned. 'Bless you, Lavinia,' says I. 'When you prin' to go away? And what do you s'pose she says to me? Why, that she wasn't goin' away at all. That—that Pratt thing has sold out his shoe store up to Sandwich and is comin' here to live. Comin' to live at our house, mind you, with her and me.' 'Twill be so nice for you, 'Bishy dear,' she says, 'to have a man in the house to keep you company and look out for you when I ain't round.' God-freys mighty!"

This portion of Kyan's disclosure was surprising, if the announcement of his sister's engagement was not. "Mr. Pratt is coming to Trumet?" the minister repeated. "What for? What is he going to do here."

"Keep shoe store, I s'pose likely. Lavinia says there's a good openin' for one in this town. However, he and Lavinia ain't got any mortgage on the marryn' business. Other folks can do it as well as them. What do you think of Hannah Poundberry?"

"What do I think of her? What do you mean?"

He turned away and moved sulkily toward his beckoning sister and her escort; but wheeled once more to add, in a mysterious whisper, "Don't you forget now, Mr. Ellery. Remember that question I put to you: 'What do you think of—Yes yes, Lavinia, I hear you!—of you know who?'"

That evening, at the parsonage, Keziah was clearing the table and Cap-



"She's Goin' to Marry That!"

tain Nat was helping her. A happy party of four had enjoyed the meal, John and Mrs. Coffin acting as hosts and Grace and the captain being the invited guests. Now the younger couple had gone over to the church, the bell of which was ringing for evening service.

"Hurry up, Keziah," urged Nat. "If you and me don't get decks cleared pretty soon we'll be late for meetin', and I'd hate to do that, considerin' I'm such a brand-new disciple, as you might say."

He walked to the back door of the kitchen, threw it open, and stood looking out.

"Keziah," he said, "come here a minute."

She came from the dining room and stood at his side. He put an arm about her.

"Look off there," he said, pointing with his free hand. "See that?"

The sun was just setting and all the west was gorgeous with crimson and purple and yellow. The bay was spangled with fire, the high sand bluffs along the shore looked like broken golden ingots. They were to be married in another month. It would be a double wedding, for Grace and the minister were to be married at the same time. Then Nat and his wife were to go to New York, where a new ship, just out of the builders' hands, was to be ready for him. She was a fine one, this successor to the Sea Mist. She had been building for more than a year and when Captain Hammond returned, safe and sound, and with their money in his possession, the owners decided at once that he should command the addition to their fleet. She was to sail for Liverpool and Keziah was to be a passenger.

"I can't hardly wait to get to sea," went on Nat. "Think of it! No more lonesome meals in the cabin, thinkin' about you and about home. No, sir! you and home'll be right aboard with me. Think of the fun we'll have in the foreign ports. I ain't rich enough to give you what you deserve, no where near; but I'll work hard and do my best, my girl—you see."

Keziah was looking out over the bay, her eyes brighter than the sunset. Now she turned to look up into his face.

"Rich!" she repeated, with a little catch in her voice. "Rich! there never was a woman in this world so rich as I am this minute. Or so happy, either."

THE END.

Didn't Like It.

She had great trouble with a Chinese cook, who could only be wakened by loud knocking and much calling at his door every morning. Finally she purchased an alarm clock, and setting it at the proper hour, presented it to Sam, the cook, who received the gift with a profound obeisance, and a little speech upon the generosity of Americans. The next morning, at the breakfast table, Sam appeared, and with solemn dignity returned the clock to his mistress, saying: "Me no likey; him wake me up!"—Sallie Bader, West Virginia.

## COMMERCIAL

Weekly Review of Trade and Market Reports.

Dun's Review says:

"The volume of business in nearly all branches of trade and industry continues very large, but it is mostly to meet immediate needs. Confidence is sustained by the prospect of big crops, but manufacturers and merchants still pursue a conservative policy, pending the termination of tariff uncertainty. Such recession in trade as exists is chiefly in the absence of new orders for future delivery.

"Mercantile and industrial conditions are strengthened by the absence of large stocks, and the financial situation is made more secure by the absence of excessive speculation.

"Commercial failures in the United States are 265, against 241 the corresponding week last year. Failures in Canada number 23, against 19 last year."

### Wholesale Markets

NEW YORK.—Wheat—Spot easy; No. 2 red, nominal; No. 1 Northern Duluth, 109 1/2 f o b afloat.

Corn—Spot firm; export, 65 1/2 c nominal f o b afloat.

Oats—Spot strong; standard white, 45 1/2 c; No. 2, 46; No. 3, 45; No. 4, 44; ordinary clipped white, 44 1/2 @ 45; fancy clipped white, 46.

Butter—Creamery extras, 28 1/2 @ 28 3/4; firsts, 27 1/2 @ 28; seconds, 26 @ 27; state dairy finest, 27 1/2 @ 28; good to prime, 26 1/2 @ 27; common to fair, 25 @ 26; process extras, 27 1/2; firsts, 26 1/2 @ 27; factory seconds, 24 1/2; packing stock No. 2, 22 1/2 @ 23; No. 3, 21 @ 22.

Cheese—Firm; receipts, 3,343 boxes. State, whole milk, fresh colored specials, 13 1/4 @ 13 3/4; do white and pale, specials, 13 1/4; do colored, average fancy, 13 1/4 @ 13 3/4; do fresh ungrades, 12 @ 13; state, whole milk, held, as to style and quality, 14 @ 17; Wisconsin, whole milk, twins, held, 15 @ 16 1/2.

Dressed Poultry—Firm; fresh killed Western fowl, 17 1/2 @ 19 1/4; turkeys, 18 @ 19.

PHILADELPHIA.—Eggs—Firm; nearby firsts f c, \$6.20 per case; nearby current receipts, f c, \$6 per case; Western extra firsts, f c, \$6.30 per case; Western firsts, f c, \$6 per case.

Dressed Poultry—Steady; fowls, Western, fancy, 19 1/2; do fair to good, 18 @ 19.

Wheat—Firm; No. 1 Northern, Duluth, 109 1/2 @ 109 3/4.

Corn—Advanced 1c; No. 2 yellow natural, 66 @ 66 1/2 c.

Oats—Advanced 1c; No. 2 white, 45 1/2 @ 46 c.

Potatoes—Firm; choice, old, per bu, 90 @ 95; fair to good, per bu, 75 @ 80 c.

BALTIMORE.—Wheat—No. 2 red spot and May, 109 1/2; July, 94 1/2 nominal.

Corn—Contract, 60 1/2 c; steamer mixed, 59 1/2; no established grade, 57 1/2.

Oats—White—No. 2, 45 @ 45 1/2 c; standard, 44 1/2; No. 3, 43 1/2 @ 44.

Rye—Western—No. 2, export, 66 @ 66 1/2 c; No. 3, 61 @ 62; No. 4, 60 @ 61.

Bag lots nearby, as to quality, 60 @ 65 c.

Hay—No. 1 timothy, \$19.50 @ 20; standard do, \$18.50 @ 19.50; No. 2 do, \$17.50 @ 18.50; No. 3 do, \$14 @ 15.50; light clover mixed, \$17 @ 17.50; No. 1 do, \$16 @ 16.50; No. 2 do, \$11 @ 13.50; heavy do, \$12.50 @ 13.50; No. 1 clover, \$11 @ 12; No. 2 do, \$8 @ 10.

Straw—No. 1 straight rye, \$19.50 @ 20; No. 2 do, \$18 @ 18.50; No. 1 tangled, \$11 @ 12; No. 2 do, \$10 @ 11; No. 1 wheat, \$8; No. 2 do, \$7.50 @ 8; No. 1 oat, \$9 @ 10; No. 2 do, \$8 @ 8.50.

Butter—Creamery, fancy, 30 @ 30 1/2; creamery, choice, 28 @ 29; creamery, good, 26 @ 27; creamery, prints, 31 @ 32; creamery, blocks, 30 @ 31; ladies, 28 @ 27; Maryland and Pennsylvania rolls, 22.

Cheese—Jobbing lots, per lb, 16 @ 17 c.

Eggs—Maryland, Pennsylvania and nearby firsts, 19 1/2 c; Western firsts, 19 1/2; West Virginia firsts, 19 1/2; Southern firsts, 18 1/2. Recrated and re-handled eggs 1/2 to 1c higher.

Live Poultry—Chickens, old hens, 17 1/2; old roosters and stags, 10 @ 11; spring, 1 to 1 1/2 lbs and over, 30 @ 31; do, 1 to 1 1/2 lbs and under, 28 Ducks—White Pekins, 15c; do, Muscovy, 13 @ 14; puddle, 13 @ 14.

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