

KEZIAH COFFIN

by
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Author of
Cy Whittaker's Place
Cap'n Eri, Etc.
Illustrations by
Ellsworth Young
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CHAPTER I.

In Which Keziah Hears Two Proposals and the Beginning of a Third.

Trumet in a fog; a fog blown in during the night by the wind from the wide Atlantic. So wet and heavy that one might taste the salt in it. So thick that houses along the main road were but dim shapes behind its gray drapery, and only the gates and fences of the front yards were plainly in evidence to the passers-by. The beach plum and bayberry bushes on the dunes were spattered with beady drops. The pole on Cannon Hill, where the beacon was hoisted when the packet from Boston dropped anchor in the bay, was shiny and slippery. The new weathervane, a gilded whale, presented to the "Regular" church by Captain Zebediah Mayo, retired whaler, swam in a sea of cloud. The lichen-eaves of the little "Come-Outer" chapel dripped at sedate intervals. The brick walk leading to the door of Captain Elkanah Daniel's fine residence held undignified puddles in its hollows. And, through the damp stillness, the muttered growl of the surf, three miles away at the foot of the sandy bluffs by the lighthouse, sounded ominously.

Directly opposite Captain Elkanah's front gate, on the other side of the main road, stood the little story-and-a-half house, also the captain's property, which for fourteen years had been tenanted by Mrs. Keziah Coffin and her brother, Solomon Hall, the shoemaker. But Solomon had, the month before, given up his fight with debt and illness and was sleeping quietly down in Trumet's most populous center, the graveyard. And Keziah, left alone, had decided that the rent and living expenses were more than her precarious earnings as a seamstress would warrant, and, having bargained with the furniture dealer in Wellmouth for the sale of her household effects, was now busy getting them ready for the morrow—when the dealer's wagon was to call. She was going to Boston, where a distant and condescending rich relative had interested himself to the extent of finding her a place as sewing woman in a large tailoring establishment.

The fog hung like a wet blanket over the house and its small yard, where a few venerable pear trees, too conservative in their old age to venture a bud—was, though it was almost May, stood bare and forlorn. The day was dismal. The dismantled dining room, its tables and chairs pushed into a corner, and its faded Ingrain carpet partially stripped from the floor, was dismal, likewise. Considering all things, one might have expected Keziah herself to be even more dismal. But, to all outward appearances, she was not. A large portion of her thirty-nine years of life had been passed under a wet blanket, so to speak, and she had not permitted the depressing covering to shut out more sunshine than was absolutely necessary. "If you can't get cream, you might as well learn to love your sassafras of skim milk," said practical Keziah.

She was on her knees, her calico dress sleeves, patched and darned, but absolutely clean, rolled back, uncovering a pair of plump, strong arms, a saucer of tacks before her, and a tack hammer with a claw head in her hand. She was taking up the carpet. Grace Van Horne, Captain Eben Hammond's ward, who had called to see if there was anything she might do to help, was removing towels, tablecloths, and the like from the drawers in a tall "high-boy," folding them and placing them in an old and battered trunk. The pair had been discussing the subject which all Trumet had discussed for three weeks, namely, the "calling" to the pastorate of the "Regular" church of the Rev. John Ellery, the young divinity student, who was to take the place of old Parson Langley, minister in the parish for over thirty years. Discussion in the village had now reached a critical point, for the Reverend John was expected by almost any coach. In those days the days of the late fifties, the railroad down the Cape extended only as far as Sandwich; passengers made the rest of their journey by stage. Many came direct from the city by the packet, the little schooner, but Mr. Ellery had written that he should probably come on the coach.

"They say he's very nice-looking," remarked Mrs. Van Horne soberly, but with a mischievous glance under her dark lashes at Keziah. The lady addressed paused long enough to transfer several tacks from the floor to the saucer, and then made answer. "Humph!" she observed. "A good many years ago I saw a theater show up to Boston. Don't be shocked; those circumstances we hear so much tell of—the kind you can't control—have kept me from going to theaters much, even if I wanted to. But I did see this entertainment, and a fool one 'twas, too, all singin' instead of talkin'—opera, I believe they called it. Well, as I started to say, one of the leadin' folks in it was the Old Harry himself, and he was pretty good-lookin'."

Grace laughed, even though she had been somewhat shocked. "Why, Aunt Keziah!" she exclaimed—those who knew Keziah Coffin best usually called her aunt, though real nephews and nieces she had none— "why, Aunt Keziah! What do you mean by comparing the person you just mentioned with a minister?"

"Oh, I wasn't comparin' 'em; I'll leave that for you Come-Outers to do. Don't this carpet? Some of 'em I never saw such a carpet. I do believe I'd never put 'em down down 'em down down through the center of the earth, and

let the Chinymen clinch 'em on t'other side. I haul up a chunk of the cellar floor with every one. Ah, hum!" with a sigh. "I cal'late they ain't any more anxious to leave home than I am. But, far's the minister's concerned, didn't I hear of your Uncle Eben sayin' in prayer meetin' only a fortnit or so ago that all hands who wa'n't Come-Outers were own children to Satan? Mr. Ellery must take after his father some. Surprisin', ain't it, what a family the old critter's got?"

The girl laughed again. For one brought up, since her seventh year, in the strictest of Come-Outer families, she laughed a good deal. Many Come-Outers considered it wicked to laugh. Yet Grace did it, and hers was a laugh pleasant to hear and distinctly pleasant to see.

"Aunt Keziah," she said, "why do you go away? What makes you? Is it absolutely necessary?"

"Why do I go? Why, for the same reason that the feller that was hove overboard left the ship—'cause I can't stay."

"I don't care!" The girl's dark eyes flashed indignantly. "I think it's too bad of Cap'n Elkanah to turn you out when—"

"Don't talk that way. He ain't turnin' me out. He ain't lettin' houses for his health and he'll need the money to buy his daughter's summer rig. She ain't had a new dress for a month, pretty near, and here's a young and good-lookin' parson heavin' in sight. Maybe Cap'n Elkanah would think a minister was high-toned enough even for Annabel to marry."

"He's only twenty-three, they say," remarked Grace, a trifle maliciously. "Perhaps she'll adopt him."

Annabel was the only child of Captain Elkanah Daniel's, who owned the finest house in town. She was the belle of Trumet, and had been for a good many years.

Grace smiled, but quickly grew grave. "Now, Auntie," she said, "please listen. I'm in earnest. It seems to me that you might do quite well at dressmaking here in town, if you had a little—well, ready money to help you at the start. I've got a few hundred dollars in the bank, presents from uncle, and my father's insurance money. I should love to lend it to you, and I know you would—"

"Cat's foot!" she exclaimed. "I hope I haven't got where I need to borrow money yet a while. Thank you just as much, deary, but long's I've got two hands and a mouth, I'll make the two keep t'other reasonably full, I wouldn't wonder. No, I shan't think of it, so don't say another word. No."

The negative was so decided that Grace was silenced. Her disappointment showed in her face, however, and Keziah hastened to change the subject.

"How do you know," she observed, "but what my goin' to Boston may be the best thing that ever happened to me? You can't tell. No use despairin', Annabel ain't given up hope yet; why should I? Hey? Ain't that somebody comin'?"

Her companion sprang to her feet and ran to the window. Then she broke into a smothered laugh.

"Why, it's Kyan Pepper!" she exclaimed. "He must be coming to see you, Aunt Keziah. And he's got on his very best Sunday clothes. Gracious! I must be going. I didn't know you expected callers."

Keziah dropped the tack hammer and stood up.

"Kyan!" she repeated. "What in the world is that old idiot comin' here for? To talk about the minister, I s'pose. How on earth did Lavinny ever come to let him out alone?"

Mr. Pepper, Mr. Abishai Pepper, locally called "Kyan" (Cayenne) Pepper because of his red hair and this red side whiskers, was one of Trumet's "characters," and in his case the character was weak. He was born in the village and, when a youngster, had, like every other boy of good family in the community, cherished ambitions for a seafaring life. His sister, Lavinia, ten years older than he, who, after the death of their parents, had undertaken the job of "bringing up" her brother, did not sympathize with these ambitions. Consequently, when Kyan ran away she followed him to Boston, stalked aboard the vessel where he had shipped, and collared him, literally and figuratively. One of the mates venturing to offer objection, Lavinia turned upon him and gave him a piece of her mind, to the immense delight of the crew and the loungers on the wharf. Then she returned with the warrant to Trumet.

That was Kyan's sole venture, so far as sailing was concerned, but he ran away again when he was twenty-five. This time he returned with his own accord, bringing a wife with him, one Evelyn Gott of Ostable. Evelyn could talk a bit herself, and her first interview with Lavinia ended with the latter's leaving the house in a rage, swearing never to set foot in it again. This oath she broke the day of her sister-in-law's funeral. Then she appeared, after the ceremony, her baggage on the wagon with her. The bearded one, who was sitting on the front stoop of his dwelling with, so people say, a most resigned expression on his meek countenance, looked up and saw her.

"My land! Lavinny," he exclaimed, turning pale. "Where'd you come from?"

"Never mind where I come from," observed his sister promptly. "You just be thankful I've come. If ever a body needed some one to take care of 'em, it's you. You can tote my things right in," she added, turning to her grinning driver, "and you, 'Bishy, go right in with 'em. The idea of your settin' outside takin' it easy when your poor wife ain't been buried more'n an hour!"

"But—but—Lavinny," protested poor Kyan, speaking the truth unwittingly. "I couldn't take it easy afore she was buried, could I?"

"Go right in," was the answer. "March!"

Abishai marched, and had marched under his sister's orders ever since. She kept house for him, and did it well, but her one fear was that some female might again capture him, and she watched him with an eagle eye. He was the town assessor and tax collector, but when he visited dwellings containing single women or widows, Lavinia always accompanied him, "to help him in his figgerin'," she said.

Consequently, when he appeared, unchaperoned, on the walk leading to the side door of the Coffin homestead, Keziah and her friend were surprised.

"He's dressed to kill," whispered Grace, at the window. "Even his tall hat; and in this fog! I do believe he's comin' courtin', Aunt Keziah."

Mr. Pepper entered diffidently.

"I—I—" he began. "Well, the fact is, I came out by myself. You see, Lavinny's gone up to Sarah B.'s to talk church doin's. I—I—well, I kind of wanted to speak with you about somethin', Keziah, so—Oh! I didn't see you, Grace. Good mornin'."

He didn't seem overjoyed to see Miss Van Horne, as it was. In fact, he reddened perceptibly and backed toward the door. The girl, her eyes twinkling, took up her jacket and hat.

"Oh! I'm not going to stop, Mr. Pepper," she said. "I was only helpin' Aunt Keziah a little, that's all. I must run on now."

"Run on—nonsense!" declared Keziah decisively. "You're goin' to stay right here and help us get that stove pipe down. And 'Bishy'll help, too. Won't you, 'Bishy?"

The stovepipe was attached to the "air-tight" in the dining room. It—the pipe—rose perpendicularly for a few feet and then extended horizontally, over the high-boy, until it entered the wall. Kyan looked at it and then at his "Sunday clothes."

"Why, I'd be glad to, of course," he declared with dubious enthusiasm. "But I don't know's I'll have time. Perhaps I'd better come later and do it. Lavinny, she—"

"Oh, Lavinny can spare you for a few minutes, I guess; especially as she don't know you're out. Better take your coat off, hadn't you? Grace, fetch one of those chairs for Ky—for 'Bishy to stand on."

Grace obediently brought the chair. It happened to be the one with a rickety leg, but its owner was helping the reluctant Abishai remove the long-tailed blue coat which had been his wedding garment and had adorned his person on occasions of ceremony ever since. She did not notice the chair.

"It's real good of you to offer to help," she said. "Grace and I didn't hardly start to try it alone. That pipe's been up so long that I wouldn't wonder if 'twas chock-full of soot. If you're careful, though, I don't believe you'll get any on you. Never mind the floor; I'm goin' to wash that before I leave."

book in her bureau, but you could get it from her. I own my house. I'm a man of good character. You're poor, but I don't let that stand in the way. Anyhow, you're a first-rate housekeeper. And I really do think an awful lot of you."

Mrs. Coffin stepped no farther in the direction of the kitchen. Instead, she strode toward the rickety chair and its occupant. Kyan grasped the pipe with both hands.

"You poor—miserable—impudent—began the lady.

"Why, Keziah, don't you want to?" He spoke as if the possibility of a refusal had never entered his mind. "I cal'lated you'd be glad. You wouldn't have to go away then, nor— My soul and body! some one's knockin' at the door! And this dummed pipe's fetched loose!"

The last sentence was a smothered shriek. Keziah heeded not. Neither did she heed the knock at the door. Her hands were opening and closing convulsively.

"Be glad!" she repeated. "Glad to marry a good-for-nothin' sand-peep like you!"

"Get down off that chair!"

you! You sassy— Get down off that chair and out of this house! Get down this minute!"

"I can't! This stovepipe's loose, I tell you. Be reasonable, Keziah. Do—do you touch me! I'll fall if you do. Pl-ase-e, Keziah!— O Lordy! I knew it. Lavinny!"

The door opened. On the threshold, arms akimbo and lips set tight, stood Lavinia Pepper. Her brother's knees gave way; in their collapse they struck the chair back; the rickety leg wobbled. Kyan grasped at the pipe to save himself and, the next moment, chair, sections of stovepipe, and Mr. Pepper disappeared with a mighty crash behind the high-boy. A cloud of soot arose and obscured the view.

Keziah, too indignant even to laugh, glared at the wreck. In the doorway of the kitchen Grace Van Horne, hammer in hand, leaned against the jamb, her handkerchief at her mouth and tears in her eyes. Lavinia, majestic and rigid, dominated the scene. From behind the high-boy came coughs, sneezes and emphatic ejaculations.

Miss Pepper was the first to speak. "Abishai Pepper," she commanded, "come out of that this minute."

Conflict With Self.

Let no enemy from without be feared; conquer thine own self and the whole world is conquered. What can any temper from without, whether the devil or the devil's minister, do against thee? Whosoever sets the hope of gain before thee to seduce thee; let him find no covetousness in thee; and what can he who would tempt thee by gain effect? Whereas, if covetousness be found in thee, thou takest fire at the sight of gain, and art taken by the bait of this corrupt food. But if we find no covetousness in thee, the trap remains spread in vain. Thou dost not see the devil, but the object that engageth thee thou dost see. Get the mastery then over that of which thou art sensible within. Fight valiantly, for he who hath regenerated thee is thy Judge; he hath arranged the lists, he is making ready the crown.—Saint Augustine.

History of the Pipes.

The history of the development of pipes is fascinating and forms an important part in the history of censures. It is believed that the pipe antedates the use of narcotic herbs, such as tobacco, although the importance of smoke appears to have been chiefly, if not wholly, due to its supposed medicinal properties. The offering of incense made by the Aztecs to the Spanish conquerors resembles in many respects the familiar peace pipe customs of the American Indians, and the pipes themselves are similar to those found everywhere between southern Mexico and Canada. The custom of smoking probably did not originate through the enjoyment of the taste of the smoke, but arose in connection with the development of the fire cult in which it had a sacred significance.

Hero En Route.

Lucien Young of the navy has a good many medals of various kinds awarded him for notable services. There was a dinner in San Francisco one night, and Lucien attended in full dress uniform, wearing his medals proudly displayed on his chest.

He rose to speak. After the applause had died away a man sitting in the rear of the hall shouted: "Lucien, where are you checked for?"—Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post.

ONE OF GLORIOUS WAR'S GRIMMEST ASPECTS



This photograph, just received from the Balkans, shows a field hospital of the Servians during the battle of Vronia, and the wounded soldiers being brought in for treatment.

RELIC FOUND IN INN

Ancient Bible Discovered in Building at Columbus, Ohio.

Records Birth of Nine Children of Its Owner, Mary, Wife of Christobal Meyer—Is Dated Philadelphia, 1790.

Columbus, Ohio.—An interesting historic record has been found in the ruins of the old Franklin building, High and Cherry streets, site of Columbus' first public inn, but now in process of demolition under orders of the state fire marshal, who regarded the structure a menace to occupants. The relic was found by W. H. Lever of 276 South Wall street, under the crumbling wood of the first floor. It was an old bible, containing the Psalms of David "in meter."

It declares itself to be "the version approved by the church of Scotland," and was printed by William Young, bookseller, 52 Second street, the corner of Chestnut street, in Philadelphia. Underneath this statement is the date "1790," showing the work to have been printed 122 years ago. It is yellow with age.

Evidently it was the property of Mary Farmer, the daughter of William and Jane Farmer, who was born in 1738, according to the carefully written family records it contains. Records of the births of nine children follow. They were the offspring of Christobal and Mary Meyer, early settlers and pioneers. These family data read in part as follows:

"Elizabeth Meyer was born on Monday, December the 25th, in the year of our Lord 1801.

"Mary Meyer was born on the third day of December in the year of our Lord 1803."

The records continue to show the birth of Nancy Meyer in 1805, William Meyer in 1798, John in 1794, Andrew in 1796, Charles in 1807, Samuel in 1809 and Deborah in 1812.

On the title page appears the following: "Bible and Psalms of David in Metre, translated and diligently compared with the original text and former translations." In spite of its age the relic is easily legible and is well preserved. Its historic interest makes it a valuable find. The old Franklin building, which preserved the relic beneath its timbers for more than a century, was not only the first hotel in Columbus, but also the most portentous frame building erected in this part of the country. Before its construction practically all Columbus structures and abodes were made of logs.

Some months ago the deputies of the state fire marshal inspected the building and found it to be so badly worn with age that it constituted a menace to any occupants. It was ordered destroyed, but the orders were for a time resisted owing to the historic character of the building. Recently the state officials were obeyed and the building wrecked.

SLOPE CAVES; TRAIN IS LOST

Ten Wagons Sucked Into Chasm, but Mule Saves Driver From Death.

Shamokin, Pa.—John Stenchock and Wallie Burns had a thrilling escape from death as they were completing a shift at the Nathie colliery. They started from the No. 2 slope with three mules attached to ten wagons. Stenchock rode the leading mule, while his companion sat on the third animal. A cave-in from underground working occurred.

Hearing the ground break Stenchock looked back and saw the ten wagons disappear with the rear mule struggling to retain its footing. Stenchock whipped his mule into a gallop as the rear mule was sucked into the chasm. Burns slid over the animal's head, and, grabbing the traces of the second mule, was pulled clear of the cave-in.

BIRD DOGS GOOD SLEUTHS

Taken on Trains and Allowed to Smell Suitcases—Locate Any Contraband Game Aboard.

NEW MUSEUM FOR CLEVELAND

Miniature Model Shown of Structure to Go Up in Wade Park, in Ohio City.

Cleveland, O.—City officials and museum trustees were recently shown a miniature plaster of paris model of the new Cleveland Museum of Art, which will be built in the northeast part of Wade park. Work will be started at once and completion is looked for within two years.

Trustees of the will of John Huntington and Horace Kelley, each of whom left property to be turned into a fund for the erection of the building, are co-operating with a committee of city officials. The building proper will be 300 feet long and 150 feet wide, with a forecourt, formal garden and lagoon facing the main entrance.

As soon as the building is finished, thousands of works of art in private collections and many owned by the city will be placed in the upper floor, which will be devoted to galleries for statuary, paintings and collections of various kinds. The ground floor will be devoted to a lecture room and a space for extensive library and study and work rooms. The roof of the galleries of the second floor will be almost entirely of glass. The interior of the building and the octagonal rotunda will be of gray canyon sandstone. The material for the outside has not been selected.

TO CUT \$500,000 FORTUNE

Giving of Half a Million to Grandchildren of Winans Will Reduce All Bequests.

Baltimore, Md.—Following the settlement by which the executors of the estate of Prince De Bearn \$500,000, the Orphan's court has allowed \$25,000 as counsel fee to be divided between Maurice Leon, attorney for Prince De Bearn, the guardian of the children, and

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MAY SAVE BIRDS FROM CATS

Kansas University Professor is Recommended for Legislation for Protection of Songsters.

Lawrence, Kan.—Prof. L. L. Dyche of the University of Kansas recommends to the legislature changes in the laws designed to protect birds from the family cat.

"I know of no greater enemy to the birds than the domestic cat," Prof. Dyche said the other day. "Legislation to protect all birds except the classified as 'game' and 'outlaw' would save the farmers millions of dollars each year. I believe it may be necessary to have a cat license law in Kansas."

TRAVELS TO COAST ON AUTO

"Stowaway" From Indiana Found on Side Extra Tire on Car Near Los Angeles, Cal.

Los Angeles, Cal.—Henry Wheelwright, twelve years old, of Crawfordsville, Ind., who said he had ridden the entire distance on the rear of automobiles, was discovered at Pomona, miles east of here, wedged into a large tire fastened on the rear of a transcontinental automobile. He was taken out, given a good dinner and a comfortable ride for the rest of his journey. The lad said he had spent a cent on the entire trip, which required two months.

TO BE SAVED FROM EVICTION

Mrs. Otto Wagner's Practical Efforts in Behalf of New York's Poor.

New York.—While other rich women with nothing particular to do are busy in the suffragette movement or giving pink teas for foreign missions, we'll stop and take off our hats to Mrs. Otto Wagner of this big, silly, cruel city. Without any effort to attract public attention to herself, Mrs. Wagner has set in operation a real and original charity. She calls it the Antievection society. At present the society consists simply of Mrs. Wagner and some few of her friends whom she has called on for modest contributions of cash. There is, however, such a definite field for genuine charitable effort in the movement which Mrs. Wagner has begun that a permanent organization is being formed with the purpose of securing sufficient funds to carry out Mrs. Wagner's idea in a systematic way.

Every week a score of families in the poor quarters of New York are evicted from their homes—homes that are hardly worthy of the name, perhaps, but homes nevertheless. Frequently it is the duty of these officials to turn sick mothers, helpless children or aged people, with their poor belongings, out upon the sidewalk. The landlord wants his rent. Nothing else counts with him. Mrs. Wagner has arranged with officials of the sheriff's office to be notified in advance of every intended eviction. She has organized a committee among her friends to assist in the work of investigating each case, and where the failure to pay rent is due to sickness or other genuine distress to advance the small amount of money necessary to help the impoverished family out

ALASKA RAISES VEGETABLES

American Teachers Send Potatoes, Turnips and Carrots From Klukwan Garden.

Washington.—As evidence of the American school teachers are accomplishing in Alaska, the federal bureau of education received a basket of potatoes, turnips, carrots and other vegetables grown in the school garden at Klukwan. The vegetables are of excellent size and weight and produce of similar value are raised on the land surrounding the other eight public schools in the nation's "most northern" possession. In many of the products of the gardens are of distinct monetary value to the school.

The importance of this form of education for the natives is appreciated by the bureau, which has made an art of truck farming part of its national campaign. The school movement accordingly has been extended until it has penetrated the arctic circle, where remarkable success with the patches of earth surrounding the schools has been attained. The model gardens, the bureau has been informed, have served to inspire the natives to take up cultivation of their own ground the standard of living among tribes has risen accordingly.

in the hunter's hamper, but training say contraband quail invariably is cated. The plan is said to be proved so successful this season that the ways will make it permanent.

Butler is Son of Edward VII. Pittsburgh.—Henry Holden Colyer employed here as a butler, declares is the eldest son of the late King Edward VII. of England and is a gallant fight for recognition the reigning family of England, says.