

# KEZIAH COFFIN

by Joseph C. Lincoln

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"Cy Whittaker's Place"  
"Cap'n Eri, Etc."

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## SYNOPSIS.

Mrs. Keziah Coffin, supposed widow, is arranging to move from Trumet to Boston, following the death of her brother for whom she had kept house. Kyan Pepper, widower, offers marriage, and is indignantly refused. Capt. Elkanah Dan is 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 guardians and Ellery escorts her home in the rain. Capt. Nat Hammond, Eben's son, becomes a hero by bringing the boat 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. They become friends, and he visits 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 his desire to marry every Sunday at a certain time. Nat watches him through a spy glass. Nat again importunes Keziah to marry him. He says he has 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 disobey her guardian. Elkanah 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 he dies Eben exacts a promise from Nat and Grace that they will marry. Keziah breaks the news to Ellery and later he received a note from Grace saying she is to marry Nat. Nat is 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 her 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 overjoyed, 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 party to board the vessel. A man is found on 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. Grace takes him back to the shanty 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.

## CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

"Here she comes!" shouted Ezra Simmons, the postmaster. "Right on time, too."

Sure enough! A cloud of dust in the distance, rising on the spring wind, and the rattle of rapidly turning wheels. The reception committee prepared for action. Captain Elkanah descended from the carriage and moved in stately dignity to the front of the post office platform.

The stage, its four horses at a trot, swung up to the platform.

"Hurrah!" shouted the committee, its uninvited guests and the accompanying crowd of Bayport men and boys which had gathered to assist in the welcome. "Hurrah!"

A passenger or two peered from the coach window. The stage driver ironically touched his cap.

"Thank ye," he said. "Thank ye very much."

Captain Elkanah frowned his disapproval.

"We are cheering Cap'n Nathaniel Hammond of Trumet," he explained haughtily. "We are here to meet him and escort him home. Where is he? Where's Cap'n Hammond?"

"Well, now, I'll tell ye; I don't know where he is."

"You don't? Isn't he with you?"

"No, he ain't. And he didn't come on the train, nuther. He was on it. The conductor told me he saw him and set along with him between stations as far as Cohasset Narrows. But after that he never see hide nor hair of him. Oh, that's so! Here's the mail bag. Erry."

Captain Zeb stepped beside the stage and put one foot on the wheel.

"Say, That," he whispered, "is that all you know? Where did he go to?"

"Well," the driver's voice dropped lower. "Well," he whispered, "I did hear this much. A chap I know was on the train and he said he see Cap'n Nat get off the cars at the Cohasset Narrows depot and there was a woman with him."

"A woman? A woman? What woman?"

"Blessed if I know! And he didn't nuther. So long! Git dap!"

The reception committee and its escort drove slowly back to Trumet. The Daniels following was disgusted and disappointed.

Trumet spent that evening wondering what had become of Nat Hammond. Captain Zeb Mayo wondered most of all. Yet his wonderment was accompanied by vague suspicions of the truth. And, at eleven o'clock, when the village was in bed, a horse and buggy moved down the Turn-off and stopped before the Hammond gate. A man alighted from the buggy and walked briskly up to the side

door. There he knocked and then whistled shrilly.

A window overhead was opened.

"Who is it?" asked a feminine voice.

"Don't be frightened, Gracie," replied the man at the door. "It's me—Nat. I've come home again."

## CHAPTER XIX.

In Which the Minister Receives a Letter.

John Ellery was uneasy. Physically he was very much better, so much better that he was permitted to sit up a while each day. But mentally he was disturbed and excited, exactly the condition which the doctor said he must not be in. Keziah and Grace had gone away and left him, and he could not understand why.

Mrs. Higgins, like's mother, was at the shanty and she did her best to soothe and quiet him. She was a kind soul and capable, in her way, but she could not answer his questions satisfactorily.

He rose from the chair and started toward the living room. He would not be put off again. He would be answered. His hand was on the latch of the door when that door was opened. Dr. Parker came in.

The doctor was smiling broadly. His ruddy face was actually beaming. He held out his hand, seized the minister's, and shook it.

"Good morning, Mr. Ellery," he said. "It's a glorious day. Yes, sir, a bully day. Hey? Isn't it?"

Ellery's answer was a question.

"Doctor," he said, "why have Mrs. Coffin and—Miss Van Horne gone?"

"Humph!" he grunted. "I'll have to get into Mrs. Higgins's wig. You sit still. No, I'm not going to tell you anything. You sit where you are and maybe the news'll come to you. If you move it won't. Going to obey orders? Good! I'll see you by and by, Mr. Ellery."

He walked out of the room. It seemed to Ellery that he sat in that chair for ten thousand years before the door again opened. And then—

"Grace!" he cried. "O Grace! you—you've come back!"

She was blushing red, her face was radiant with quiet happiness, but her eyes were moist. She crossed the room, bent over and kissed him on the forehead.

"Yes, John," she said; "I've come back. Yes, dear, I've come back to you."

Outside the shanty, on the side farthest from the light and its group of buildings, the doctor and Captain Nat Hammond were talking with Mrs. Higgins. The latter was wildly excited and bubbling with joy.

"It's splendid!" she exclaimed. "It's almost too fine to believe. Now we'll keep our minister, won't we?"

Mrs. Higgins turned to Captain Nat. "It's kind of hard for you, Nat," she added. "But it's awful noble and self-sacrificin' and everybody'll say so. Of course there wouldn't be much satisfaction in havin' a wife you knew cared more for another man. But still it's awful noble of you to give her up."

The captain looked at the doctor and laughed quietly.

"Don't let my nobility weigh on your mind, Mrs. Higgins," he said. "I'd made up my mind to do this very thing afore ever I got back to Trumet. That is, if Gracie was willin'. And when I found she was not willin' but joyful, I—well, I decided to offer up the sacrifice right off."

"You did? You did? Why, how you talk! I never heard of such a thing in my born days."

"Oh, well, I—What is it, Grace?"

She was standing in the doorway and beckoning to him. Her cheeks were crimson, the breeze was tossing her hair about her forehead, and she made a picture that even the practical, unromantic doctor appreciated.

The captain went to meet her.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Nat," she whispered, "will you come in? He wants to see you."

John Ellery was still seated in the chair by the window, but he no longer looked like an invalid. There was no worry or care in his countenance now, merely a wondrous joy and serene happiness.

He held out his hands and the captain shook them heartily.

"Mr. Ellery," he said, "as they used to say at the circus, 'Here we are again.' And you and I have been doing all kinds of circus acrobatics since we shook last, hey? I'm glad you're pretty nigh out of the sick bay—and the doctor says you are."

"Captain," began Ellery. Hammond interrupted him.

"Hold on!" he said. "Belay right there. If you and I are to cruise in the same family—and that's what I hear is likely to happen—I ca'n't have you overboard the cap'n and Misters. My name's 'Nathaniel'—'Nat' for short."

"All right. And mine is 'John,' Captain—Nat. I mean—how can I ever thank you?"

"Thank me? What do you want to thank me for? I only handed over somethin' that wasn't mine in the first place and belonged to you all along. I didn't know it, that was the only trouble."

"But your promise to your father. I feel—"

"You needn't. I'm doin' the right thing and I know it. And don't pity me, neither. I made up my mind not to marry Grace—unless, of course, she was set on it—months ago. I'm tickled to death to know she's goin' to have as good a man as you are. She'll tell you so. Grace! Hello! she's gone."

"Yes. I told her I wanted to talk with you alone, for a few minutes. Nat, Grace tells me that Aunt Keziah was the one who—"

"She was. She met me at the Cohasset Narrows depot. I was settin' in the car, lookin' out of the window at the sand and sniffs' the Cape air, somebody tapped me on the shoulder. I looked up and 'twas her. I was surprised enough to see her. I told you. Way up there at the Narrows! I couldn't have said a word, anyway, and she never gave me a chance."

"Nat," she says, 'don't talk now. Come with me, quick afore the train starts. I've come here on purpose to meet you. I must talk with you; it's important. You can go to Trumet on the next train, tonight. But now I must talk with you. I must. Won't you please come, Nat?'"

"Well, I went. The engine bell was livinly, I tell you. I swung her off the step just as the car begun to move. So into the waitin' room we went and come to anchor on the settee. And then, John, we had our talk. Seems she left Trumet Wednesday afternoon. Got the livery stable man to drive her as far as Bayport, hired another team there and come on to Sandwich. Stayed overnight there and took the mornin' train which got to Cohasset Narrows just ahead of the one I was comin' on. She'd been so frigid of bein' late, she said. She must see me afore I got to Trumet."

"Well, she saw me and told me the whole yarn about you and Grace. She tried to break it to me gently, so I wouldn't feel too bad. She knew it would be a shock to me, she said. It was a shock, in a way, but as for feelin' bad, I didn't. I think the world of Grace. I'd do anything she wanted me to do; but most the way down on the train—yes, and long afore that—I'd been dreadin' my comin' home on one account. I dreaded tellin' her that, unless she was real set on it, she'd better not marry me."

"Nat, I want to tell you something. Something that only one other person knows. Grace doesn't know it yet. Neither does Aunt Keziah—the whole of it. And if she knew I told you even a part I'm afraid she would, as she would say, 'skinn me alive.' But I owe her—and you—more than I could repay if I lived a thousand years. So I'm going to tell and take the consequences."

"Nat, when—that morning after your father died and after you and Grace had agreed to—to—"

"To do somethin' neither of us wanted to do? Yes, I know. Go ahead."

"That mornin' Aunt Keziah came home to the parsonage and broke the news to me. She did it as only she could do such a thing, kindly and pityingly and I made a fool of myself, I expect; refused to believe her, behaved disgracefully, and at last, when I had to believe it, threatened to run away and leave my work and Trumet forever, like a coward. She made me stay."

"Did, hey?"

"Yes. She showed me it was my duty to face the music. When I whimpered about my troubles she told me her own story. Then I

one of the special Providences that's been helpin' along this last voyage of mine. My second mate was a Hyannis man, name of Cahoon. One day, on that pesky island, when we was eatin' dinner together, he says to me, 'Cap'n, he says, 'you're from Trumet, ain't you?' I owned up. 'Know anybody named Coffin there?' says he. I owned up to that, too. 'Well,' he says, 'I met her husband last trip I was in the Glory of the Wave.' I stared at him. 'Met his ghost, you mean,' I says. 'He's been dead for years, and a good thing, too. Fell overboard and, not bein' used to water, it killed him.' 'But he wouldn't have it so. 'I used to know Anse Coffin in New Bedford,' he says. 'Knew him well's I know you. And when we was in port at Havre I dropped in at a gin mill down by the water front and he come up and touched me on the arm. I thought same as you, that he was dead, but he wasn't. He was three sheets in the wind and a reg'lar dock rat to look at, but 'twas him sure enough. We had a long talk. He said he was comin' back to Trumet some day. Had a wife there, he said. I told him, sarcastic, that she'd be glad to see him. He laughed and said maybe not, but that she knew he was alive and sent him money when he was hard up. Wanted me to promise not to tell any Cape folks that I'd seen him, and I ain't till now.'

"Well, you can imagine how I felt when Cahoon spun me that yarn. First I wouldn't believe it and then I did. I explained things, just as you say, John. I could see now why Keziah gave me her walkin' papers. I could see how she'd been sacrificin' her life for that scum."

"Did you tell her—Aunt Keziah—when you met her at the Narrows?"

"No. But I shall tell her when I see her again. She shan't spoil her life—a woman like that! by the Lord! what a woman!—for any such crazy notion. I swore it when I heard the story and I've sworn it every day since. That's what settled my mind about Grace. Keziah Coffin belongs to me, even though my own pig-headedness lost her in the old days."

He was pacing the floor now, his face set like granite. Ellery rose, his own face beaming. Here was his chance. At last he could pay to this man and Keziah a part of the debt he owed.

"Nat stopped in his stride. 'Well!' he exclaimed. 'I almost forgot, after all. Keziah sent a note to you. I've got it in my pocket. She gave it to me when she left me at Cohasset.'"

"Left you? Why! didn't she come back with you on the night train?"

"No. That's funny, too, and I don't understand it yet. We was together all the afternoon. I was feelin' so good at seel'n' her that I took her under my wing and we cruised all over that town together. Got dinner at the tavern and she went with me to buy myself a new hat, and all that. At first she didn't seem to want to, but then, after I'd coaxed a while, she did. She was lookin' pretty sad and worn out, when I frst met her, I thought; but she seemed to get over it and we had a fine time. It reminded me of the days when I used to get home from a voyage and we were together. Then, when 'twas time for the night train we went down to the depot. She gave me this note and told me to hand it to you today."

"Good-by, Nat," she says. 'We've had a nice day, haven't we?'

"We have, for a fact, I says. 'But what are you sayin' good-by for?'

"'Because I'm not goin' to Trumet with you,' says she. 'I'm goin' to the city. I've got some business to see to there. Good-by.'"

"I was set back, with all my canvas flaplin'. I told her I'd go to Boston with her and we'd come home to Trumet together tomorrow, that's today. But she said no. I must come here and ease your mind and Grace's. I must do it. So at last I agreed to, sayin' I'd see her in a little while. She went on the up train and I took the down one. Hired a team in Sandwich and another in Bayport and got to the tavern about eleven. That's the yarn. And here's your note. Maybe it tells where she's gone and why."

The minister took the note and tore open the envelope. Within was a single sheet of paper. He read a few lines, stopped, and uttered an exclamation.

"(TO BE CONTINUED.)"

"A Mighty Man Was He."

At a concert for charity in a country town Miss Carter obliged by reciting "The Village Blacksmith." At the conclusion of her recital the rural audience cheered. "Ancower!" they cried. "Ancower!" Miss Carter was about to grant the request when a burly fellow, very much out of breath, tapped her on the shoulder. "I've just come around from in front," I whispered this man, excitedly. "I want you to do me a favor." "Well, what is it?" queried Miss Carter. "It's this," whispered the intruder. "I happen to be the fellow you've been talkin' about, and I want you to put in a verse this time saying how I let out bicycles."

Ox Made Investigation.

At a recent auction sale in Echt, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, a good deal of amusement was occasioned when a large ox, which the auctioneer was trying to dispose of, took into it head to walk into the auctioneer's box, and, after he had cleared the office of officials, made a minute inspection of the books, and retired from the rostrum evidently quite pleased with the way the sale was being conducted and also with the state of the books. It is needless to say that the officials were much more excited than the ox, and made a quick exit, while the ox walked with the utmost deliberation.

## PATIENT OF FRIEDMANN DIES

After Treatment by the German Scientist Another Form of Tuberculosis Appeared.

New York.—Benjamin Temple, a Friedmann patient treated for tuberculosis more than three weeks ago at the Mount Sinai Hospital is dead. When his case was accepted for test purposes by the government physicians and Doctor Friedmann himself, Temple was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis and tuberculosis of the wrist, neither of which, was thought to be advanced. His death was caused by the sudden development of tuberculosis meningitis.

This case was one of ninety-four under the observation of doctors of the public health service from Washington.

The immediate cause of Temple's death was another form which his disease took after treatment. Doctor Friedmann's injection of the live turtle bacilli didn't prevent that development. That point was emphasized by medical men whose attention was drawn to the case.

## PROGRESSIVES OUTLINE WORK

House Members Parcel Out Ten Legislative Subjects at a Washington Conference.

Washington, D. C.—The Progressive conference of the House parceled out the work of preparing the measures that will form a part of the Progressive legislative plan. The House members will work in conjunction with the legislative committee of the national Progressive party of which Gifford Pinchot, Jane Addams, Dean Lewis of Pennsylvania university, Walter Weyl, and others are members.

Ten legislative subjects were assigned at the conference. Bills on these subjects will be prepared after thorough investigation by the members assigned to them and will form the basis for the legislative campaign of the Progressives in the present congress.

## LIBERTY SALUTED BY CHINA

The New Declaration of Independence Has Been Received in Washington—Recognition Soon.

Washington, D. C.—The Chinese declaration of independence, which took the form of an address to the world, was cabled here from Peking and after being read in the Cabinet meeting, was made public.

State Department officials said it reflected the influence of the Young Chinese members, who have been educated in American colleges. The president and his cabinet praised it enthusiastically, and formal recognition of the republic by the United States awaits only the actual organization of the constituent assembly, which will meet again soon in Peking.

## LIGHTNING IN A HOTEL LOBBY

Twenty-five Persons Were Injured, Nine Dangerously, by a Bolt in Independence, La.

Independence, La.—Twenty-five persons were injured, nine dangerously, by a bolt of lightning which swept through a hotel lobby. Richard Edwards of Pierce City, Mo., was paralyzed in the lower limbs; N. N. Hoover of Pierce City, Mo., was burned on the body and silk underwear completely destroyed. Martin Donald, St. Joseph, Mo., was affected by the shock mentally; seventeen of the party being unconscious for an hour or more.

## Sailors Killed in Mexico.

Guaymas, Mexico.—Two sailors of the United States cruiser California were killed and three others wounded in a street fight at Mazatlan, a Pacific port below this point. Two or three Mexican policemen were wounded in attempting to arrest the American sailors. Admiral Cowles is investigating.

## A New Suffragette Trick.

London, Eng.—The militant suffragettes started a fresh ruse by attacking the fire alarms in the London streets. They destroyed three. In each case a card bearing the words "Vote for Women," was attached to the damaged apparatus.

## Graft in Voting Machines?

Chicago.—A grand jury investigation of the purchase of \$1,000,000 worth of voting machines by this city was ordered by State's Attorney Mac Lay Hynes. A legislative committee also will make an investigation.

## An Argentina Aviator Killed.

Buenos Aires.—Perez Arzeno, an aviator, was killed when the aeroplane which he was driving fell from an altitude of 1,200 feet.

## Sues His Flock for Slander.

New York.—The Rev. Joseph L. Hervey, pastor of the United Presbyterian Church of the Open Door, has sued ten members of his congregation for \$25,000. They said he had a "serpent's tooth."

## Pensions for Ohio Mothers.

Columbus, O.—The Greenland Bill, providing for pensions for indigent mothers, was passed in the house and now goes to Governor Cox, whose approval is assured. The vote was 92 to 4.

## She Knew It.

One day a teacher was having a first-grade class in physiology. She asked them if they knew that there was a burning fire in the body all of the time. One little girl spoke up and said: "Yes'em, when it's a cold day I can see the smoke."—National Monthly.

## Get "In the Game"

but remember you must be strong and robust to win. A sickly person is the loser in every way; but why remain so?

## HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

will aid digestion and help you back to health and strength. Try a bottle today. Avoid substitutes.

## All Fools' Day.

When freakish April lifts the latch all wits and wags consider themselves free to vent their nonsense upon the victims whom they would fool by their tricks. The gay Parisian calls such "April fish"; in bonnie Scotland on this day they make merry "hunting the govk"; whilst in England and this country a man keeps a sharp lookout lest he be caught at a disadvantage by the joker who glories in his smartness if he only can make some one look ridiculous. But it is just as well not to be too smart. The boomerang has a wicked habit of coming back. Silly as All Fools' day custom may seem to the solemn, it has an ancient ancestry. Its origin is obscure, but somewhere from the far-off times when those old Romans felt the lilt of the vernal equinox, and went on the spree accordingly, comes this rollick which still trills forth its merry ditty in our streets. Deeper still, the calm, contemplative Hindu, for some reason or other, from time immemorial has gone a-fooling on the first of April. It was probably from France, whence all things vivacious come, that Europe got the unruly itch for turning this day into a comedy of errors.

## His Consolation.

"So you've lost your nice pussy-cat since I was here last?" sympathized grandma. "Too bad! Of course you miss him dreadfully, don't you?"

"Well, yes," six-year-old John assumed a look of chastened sorrow; "but then, grandma, since I've heard so much about this germ business, I try to think it's just as well!"

## He Wasn't Sure.

A gentleman was sorely out of patience by some blunder of his new groom.

"Look here," he cried, in his anger. "I won't have things done in this way. Do you think I'm a fool?"

"Sure, sort," said the groom. "OI can't say, sorr. OI only came here yesterday."

## Good Polish.

To make a polish for patent leather make a mixture of one part of linseed oil and two of cream. Mix it thoroughly and apply with a flannel, after removing every particle of dust from the shoes. Then rub the leather with a soft cloth.

Honesty never looks better to a man than when it comes home to roost.

## FRIENDS HELP.

St. Paul Park Incident.

"After drinking coffee for breakfast I always felt languid and dull, having no ambition to get to my morning duties. Then in about an hour or so a weak, nervous derangement of the heart and stomach would come over me with such force I would frequently have to lie down."

Tea is just as harmful, because it contains caffeine, the same drug found in coffee.

"At other times I had severe headaches; stomach finally became affected and digestion so impaired that I had serious chronic dyspepsia and constipation. A lady, for many years State President of the W. C. T. U., told me she had been greatly benefited by quitting coffee and using Postum; she was troubled for years with asthma. She said it was no cross to quit coffee when she found she could have as delicious an article as Postum."

"Another lady who had been troubled with chronic dyspepsia for years, found immediate relief on ceasing coffee and using Postum. Still another friend told me that Postum was a Godsend, her heart trouble having been relieved after leaving off coffee and taking on Postum."

"So many such cases came to my notice that I concluded coffee was the cause of my trouble and I quit and took up Postum. I am more than pleased to say that my days of trouble have disappeared. I am well and happy."

Look in pkgs. for the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Ever read the above letter? A new case appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.