

Which Keziah Hears Two Pr posals and the Beginning of a Third.

ously.

CHAPTER I.

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 Trumet in a fog; a fog blown usually called her aunt, though real nephews and nieces she had noneuring the night by the wind from the wide Atlantic. So wet and heavy that "why, Aunt Keziahl What do you one might taste the salt in it. So thick that houses along the main road mean by comparing the the person were but dim shapes behind its gray you just mentioned with a minister!" "Oh, I wasn't comparin' 'em; I'll trapery, and only the gates and fences leave that for you Come-Outers to do. the front yards were plainly in evience to the passers-by. The beach Drat this carpet! Seems's if I never ince to the passers by. The beach um and bayberry bushes on the mes were spangled with beady drops. The pole on Cannon Hill, where the the pole on Cannon Hill, where the eacon was hoisted when the packet let the Chinymen clinch 'em on t'other rom Boston dropped anchor in the side. I haul up a chunk of the cellar bay, was shiny and slippery. The new floor with every one. Ah, hum!" with weathervane, a gilded whale, present- a sigh, "I cal'late they ain't any more ed to the "Regular" church by Captain anxious to leave home than I am. But. bediah Mayo, retired whaler, swam far's the minister's concerned, didn't in a sea of cloud. The lichened eaves I hear of your Uncle Eben sayin' in the little "Come-Outer" chapel prayer meetin' only a fortnl't or so ago that all hands who wa'n't Comedripped at sedate intervals. The brick walk leading to the door of Captain Outers were own children to Satan? Elkanah Daniels's fine residence held Mr. Ellery must take after his father undignified puddles in its hollows. some. Surprisin', ain't it, what a famand, through the damp stillness, the 'ily the old critter's got." muttered growl of the surf, three The girl laughed again. For one

miles away at the foot of the sandy brought up, since her seventh year, in bluffs by the lighthouse, sounded omi- the strictest of Come-Outer families. she laughed a good deal. Many Come-Directly opposite Captain Elkanah's Outers considered it wicked to laugh.

front gate, on the other side of the Yet Grace did it, and hers was a laugh main road, stood the little story-and- pleasant to hear and distinctly pleasa-half house, also the captain's prop- ant to see.

"Aunt Keziah." she said. "why do erty, which for fourteen years had been tenanted by Mrs. Keziah Coffin you go away? What makes you? Is and ber brother, Solomon Hall, the it absolutely necessary?" "Why do I go? Why, for the same hoemaker. But Solomon had, the

month before, given up his fight with reason that the feller that was hove debt and illness and was sleeping qui- overboard left the ship-'cause I can': etly down in Trumet's most populous | stay." "I don't care!" The girl's dark eyes

senter, the graveyard. And Keziah, left alone, had decided that the rent flashed indignantly. "I think it's too and living expenses were more than bad of Cap'n Elkanah to turn you out her precarious earnings as a seamwhen-' stress would warrant, and, having bar-"Don't talk that way. He ain't turn

gained with the furniture dealer in in' me out. He ain't lettin' houses for Wellmouth for the sale of her house- his health and he'll need the money hold effects, was now busy getting to buy his daughter's summer rigs them ready for the morrow, when the She ain't had a new dress for a month. caler's wagon was to call. She was pretty near, and here's a young and roing to Boston, where a distant and good lookin' parson heavin' in sight ndescending rich relative had in- Maybe Cap'n Elkanah would think a prested himself to the extent of find-, minister was high-toned enough even He was the town assessor and tax colng her a place as sewing woman in for Annabel to marry."

a large tailoring establishment. "He's only twenty-three, they say." The fog hung like a wet blanket remarked Grace, a triffe maliciously, "Perhaps she'll adopt him." over the house and its small yard, Annabel was the only child of Capwhere a few venerable pear trees, too tain Elkanah Daniels, who owned the conservative in their old age to venture a bud even though it was almost finest house in town. She was the

May, stood bare and forlorn. The day belle of Trumet, and had been for a dismal. The dismantled dining good many years. Grace smiled, but quickly grew room, its tables and chairs pushed into corner, and its faded ingrain carpet grave. "Now. Auntie," she said, "please coming courting, Aunt Keziah." partially stripped from the floor, was dismal, likewise. Considering all listen. I'm in earnest. It seems to things, one might have expected Ke me that you might do quite well at

repeated. "What in talk about the tort To s'pose. How on earth and " How on earth did Laviny ever Mr. Pepper, Mr. Abishai Pepper, lo-cally called "Kyan" (Cayenne) Pepper because of his red hair and thin red cally cal ide whiskers, was one of Trumet's "characters," and in his case the haracter was weak. He was born in the village and, when a yougster, had, like every other boy of good family in the community, cherished ambitions for a seafaring life. His sister, Laney, don't it? Tell you what you can me." vinia, 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 Stri." Kyan projected that he did not need the hammer, but his protect was unthese 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 carefully behind her. Mr. Pepper laof 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 wagrant to Trumet. That was Kyan's sole venture, so far as sailoring was concerned, but he

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 bereaved 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! Laviny," 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-Laviny." protested pool

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. lector, 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

"I-I-" he began, "Well, the fact

with both hands. hat; and in this fog! I do believe he's "You poor-miserable-impudent-" began the lady. Mr. Pepper entered diffidently.

pleased? Why not?"

The girl hesitated.

Keziah nodded understandingly.

while: I'll take care of that."

a block of wood eight inches long.

yard.

chest of drawers out so's you can get behind it. Grace, you help me. There! That's better. Now move your chair." Kyan stepped from the chair and moved the latter to a position between the high-boy and the wall. Then he remounted and gripped the pipe in the middle of its horizontal section. "Don't be in such a hurry." inter-rupted Keziah. "Does stick in the chim-remount it? Tell you what you can

do, Grace; you can go in the woodshed and fetch the hammer that's in the coat, jammed the tall hat down upon table drawer. Hurry up, that's a good his head, and, seizing him by the arm, stalked to the door.

"Good day, marm," she said. You know Uncle Eben." " de hope the next widower you get to take heeded. With one more glance at the down your stovepipe-yes, indeed! couple, Grace departed from the kitch-ha! ha!---I hope you'll have better luck en, biting her lips. She shut the door with him. Though I don't know who twould be; there ain't no more idiots in town that I know of. Good day, and "No use to shake it any more till thank you kindly for your attentions you get the hammer," advised Kesiah." to our family."

Kezlah turned from the door she

had closed behind her visitor "Well!" she ejaculated. "Well!" Steps, measured, dignified steps, sounded on the walk. From without came a "Hum—ha!" a portentous combination of cough and grunt. Grace dodged back from the window and nastily began donning her hat and acket

"It's Cap'n Elkanah," she whispered 'I must go. This seems to be your busy morning, Aunt Keziah. I"-here she choked again-"really, I didn't know you were so popular.'

Keziah opened the door. Captain Elkanah Daniels, prosperous, pompou and unbending, crossed the threshold Richest man in the village, retired shipowner, pillar of the Regular church and leading member of its parish conmittee, Captain Elkanah looked th part. He removed his hat, cleared his throat behind his black stock, and spoke with impressive deliberation. "Keziah," he said, "Keziah, I came to see you on a somewhat important matter. I have a proposal I wish to make you."

He must have been surprised at th effect of his words. Keziah's face was a picture, a crimson picture of para lyzed amazement. As for Miss Van Horne, that young lady gave vent t what her friend described afterward as a "squeal," and bolted out of the door and into the grateful seclusion of "No, no! I ain't loony. I want to the fog.

together. I could have some peace in Which Keziah Unearths a Prowler then. And I think a whole lot of you, The fog was cruel to the gossips of too," he added, apparently as an after-Trumet that day. Mrs. Didama Rogthought "Don't stop to argue, Keziah. ers, who lived all alone, except for I've got 'most fifteen hundred dollars the society of three cats, a canary in the bank. Laviny keeps the pass and a white poodle named "Bunch. book in her bureau, but you could get in the little house next to Cantain Elit from her. I own my house. I'm a kanah's establishment, never entirely man of good character. You're poor. recovered from the chagrin and disbut I don't let that stand in the way. appointment caused by that provoking Anyhow, you're a first-rate housekeep- mist. er. And I really do think an awful lot

The fog prevented Mrs. Rogers' noting the entrance of Mr. Pepper at the Coffin front gate. Also his exit, under lirection of the kitchen. Instead, she sisterly arrest. It shut from her view

the majestic approach of Captain Elkanah Daniels and Grace's flight, her a lock on the front door, of course, face dimpled with smiles and breaking but no one thought of meddling with you suppose_

into laughter at frequent intervals. that. That door had been opened but "Sg-s-h-h! It sounded from the For a young lady, supposed to be a defront room somewhere. And yet there once during the late pastor's thirty-Why, Keziah, don't you want to?" | vout Come-Outter, to hurry along the

He turned redder than ever and wrenched at the pipe. It loosened at its lower and and the wires holding it in suspension shook. "If guess," observed the lady of the house, "that you'd better move that chest of drawers out be's you can get We're art plant of move we innocent! "Behind it, Grace you help me. There is a still more the turned at the pipe. It loosened at its lower and and the wires holding it in suspension shook. "If guess," observed the lady of the behind it. Grace you help me. There is a still and nobody else's." "Behind it. Grace you help me. There is a still more is a remembrance of what hed is lower and ever so glad for you. I know years ago by s The deceased boat in sure everyone will be delighted when they learn that you're going to "Humphi that includes Laviny Pep-per, of course. I cal'iste Laviny's de-"So this is going to be your new ing of Stephen," and a still more

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"Humphi that interface Laviny's de-per, of course. I callate Laviny's de-light won't keep her up nights. But I home now, Aunt Keziah," she ob-home now, Aunt Keziah," she observed. "How queer that seems." Grace, what is it? You ain't real "Um-h'm Dees seem queer, don't it? Must seem queer to you to be so near the headquarters of everything "Auntie," she said, "I'm selfish, I guess. I'm glad for your sake; you mustn't think I'm not. But I almost your uncle thinks is wicked. Smell of brimstone any, does it?" she asked with a smile.

wish you were going to do something She threw open another door. A else. You are going to live in the Regular parsonage and keep house for, room gloomy with black walnut and fragrant with camphor was dimly visof all parsons, a Regular minister. ble.

Why, so far as my seeing you is con-"Cheerrul's a tomb, ain't it?" was arned, you might as well be in China. Mrs. Coffin's comment. "Well, we'll get some light and air in here pretty soon. Here's the front hall and there's "Yes," she said, "I know him. Eben Hammond thinks that parsonage is the front stairs. The parlor's off to the presence chamber of the Evil One, the left. We won't bother with that yet a while. This little place in here L presume likely. But, Grace, you is what Mr. Langley used to call his mustn't blame me, and if you don't call I'll know why and I shan't blame "study.' Halloa! how this door sticks!" The door did stick, and no amount you. We'll see each other once in a of tugging could get it open, though Grace added her efforts to those of Ke-The packing took about an hour. When it was finished, the carsiah.

""Tain't locked." commented Mrs pet rolled up, and the last piece of linen placed in the old trunk, Keziah | Coffin, "cause there ain't any lock on turned to her guest. "Now, Gracie," she said, "I feel as from the damp. Though it's odd, I though I ought to go to the parsonage. don't remember- Oh, well! never I can't do much more'n look at the mind. Let's sweeten up this settin' room a little. Open a window or two cobwebs tonight, but tomorrow those want to do anything before it gets spiders had better put on their ascendark. I'm goin' into the kitchen to get sion robes. The end of the world's comin' for them, even though it missed a broom."

She hurried out, returning in a mofire for the Millerites when they had their doin's a few years ago. You ment or two with a broom and a most can stay here and wait, if 'twon't be disgusted expression.

too lonesome. We'll have supper when "How's a body goin 'to sweep with I get back." She threw a shawl over her shoul. frayed utensil, the business end of which was worn to a stub. "More like that?" she demanded, exhibiting the ders, draped a white knitted "cloud" which was worn to a stub. "More like over her head, and took from a nail a shovel, enough sight. Well, there's a key, attached by a strong cord to pretty nigh dust enough for a shovel, so maybe this'll take off the top lay-"Elkanah left the key with me," she ers. S'pose I'll ever get this house fit observed. "No danger of losin' it, is for Mr. Ellery to live in before he there. Might as well lose a lumber comes? I wonder if he's a particular

man?' Grace, who was struggling with a re-They left the house and came out into the wet mist. Then, turning to fractory window, paused for breath. the right, in the direction which Tru-"I'm sure I don't know," she remet, with unconscious irony, call; plied. "I've never seen him." "downtown," they climbed the lorg "Nor I either. Sol was so had the

slope where the main road mounts the Bunday he preached that I couldn't go outlying ridge of Cannon Hill, passed to meetin'. They say his sermon was Captain Mayo's big house-the finest fine; all about those who go down to in Trumet, with the exception of the the sea in ships. That's what got the Daniels mansion-and descended into parish committee, I guess; they're all the hollow beyond. Here, at the cor. old salts. I wonder if he's as fine-lookner where the "Lighthouse Lane" be in' as they say?"

Miss Van Horne tossed her head. gins its winding way over the rolling knolls and dunes to the light and the She was resting, prior to making anfish shantles on the "ocean side," stood other assault on the window.

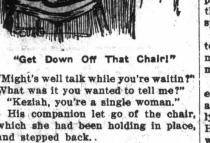
the plain, straight-up-and-down meet-ing house of the Regular society. Di- ceited little snippet and I shall hate rectly opposite was the little parson- the sight of him. There! there! age, also very straight up and down. Auntie, you musn't mind me. I tok Both were painted white with green you I was a selfish pig. But don't you blinds. This statement is superfluous ask me to like this precious ministe) to those who remember Cape architec. of yours, because I shan't do it. He ture at this period; practically every has no business to come and separate ! building from Sandwich to Province- me from the best friend I've got. I'd town was white and green. tell him so if he was here- What They entered the yard, through the was that?"

gap in the white fence, and went Both women looked at each other around the house, past the dripping with startled faces. They listened inevergreens and the bare, wet lilac tently. "Why, wa'n't that funny!" whisbushes, to the side door, the lock of which Keziah's key fitted. There was per . Keziah I thought I heard-"

"You did hear So did I. What do

ATHENS, via





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which she had been holding in place, and stepped back. "He is loony!" she exclaimed under her breath. "I-"

make a proposal to you. I want to see

if you won't marry me. I'm sick of

Laviny. Let's you and me settle down

Mrs. Coffin stepped no farther in the

trode toward the rickety chair and

ts occupant. Kyan grasped the pipe

bored frantically with the pipe.

sish herself to be even more dismal. dressmaking here in town, if you had thirty-nine years of life had been dollars in the bank, presents from passed under a wet blanket, so to uncle, and my father's insurance speak, and she had not permitted the money. I should love to lend it to you, Gracie. Good mornin'." depressing covering to shut out more you, and I know uncle would-" sunshine than was absolutely necessary. "If you can't get cream, you might as well learn to love your sas- I haven't got where I need to borrow ser of skim milk," said practical Ke money yet a while. Thank you just zlah.

Mrs. Coffin interrupted her. "Cat's foot!" she exclaimed. "I hope as much, deary, but long's I've got

She was on her knees, her calico two hands and a mouth, I'll make the She was on her knees, her calico dress sleeves, patched and darned, but wouldn't wonder. No, I shan't think absolutely clean, rolled back, undover-

ing 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 sub-ject which all Trumet had discussed for three weeks, namely, the "calling" the pastorate of the "Regular" bhurch 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 She Broke Into a Smothered Laugh. rest of their journey by stage. Many same direct from the city by the of it, so don't say another word. No." packet, the little schooner, but Mr.

Ellery had written that he should Grace was silenced. Her disappointprobably come on the coach.

"They say he's very nice-looking," Keziah hastened to change the subremarked Miss Van Horne soberly, but ject. with a mischievous glance under her "How do you know," she observed,

dark lashes at Kesiah. The lady ad "but what my goin' to Boston may be dressed paused long enough to trans- the best thing that ever happen fer several tacks from the floor to the me? You can't tell. No use despairsaucer, and then made answer.

"Humph!" she observed. "A good why should I? Hey? Ain't that wome many years ago I saw a theater show body comin'?" up to Boston. Don't be shocked; Her companion sprang to her feet up to Boston. Don't be shocked; these circumstances we hear so much tell of the kind you can't control-have kept me from goin' to theatern much, sven if I wanted to. But I did see this entertainment, and a foel one "twas, too, all singin' instead of talkin' - opers, I believe they called it. Well, cloust I must be going. I didn't as I started to say, one of the lendin', know you expected colliers."

thin', Keziah, so- Oh! I didn't see Pepper," she said. "I was only helpmust run on now." Willin

ziah decisively. "You're goin' to stay this minute!" right here and help us get that stovepipe down. And 'Bishy'll help, too. tell you. Be reason'ble, Keziah. Do-LE Von't you, 'Bish?" don't you touch me! I'll fall if you The stovepipe was attached to the do. Pl-e-as-e, Keziah!- O Lordy!] are you? I begun to think you'd been "air-tight" in the dining room. It- knew it. Laviny!" the pipe-rose perpendicularly for a The door opened. On the threshold, few feet and then extended horizon. arms akimbo and lips set tight, stood tally, over the high-boy, until it en. Lavinia Pepper. Her brother's knees tered the wall. Kyan looked at it and gave way; in their collapse they

then at his "Sunday clothes." struck the chair back; the rickety les "Why, I'd be glad to, of course," he wabbled. Kyan grasped at the pipe to declared with dubious enthusiasm. save himself and, the next moment "Oh, Laviny can spare you for 'a

few minutes, I guess; 'specially as she don't know you're out. Better take glared at the wreck. In the doorway Bishy to stand on." Grace obediently brought the chair. fears in her eyes. Lavinia, majestic it happened to be the one with a and rigid, dominated the scene. From 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 The negative was so decided that his person on occasions of ceremony ever since. She did not notice the ment showed in her face, however, and chair.

It's feat good of you to enter to help," she said. "Grace and I didn't work hards and knees. His hair, was been up so long that I wouldn't work and collar it helps, who the parish come that been opened when she hands and knees. His hair, was been up so long that I wouldn't work and collar it helps, who the parish come that been opened when she hands and knees. His hair, was been up so long that I wouldn't work and collar it helps, who the parish come that been opened when she hands and knees. His hair, was been up so long that I wouldn't work and collar it be left, and so were more than a deeper gloom could poest to the chair. He mounted it and ginger with the down her stovepips" he gend to the parish. He stove hole if arts, "advised Keriah. "What was it to "You wanted to see mabout, Biah?" "Yes, I see. Well, I judge you got the pare and dueting to help you didn't hur yourset and wash your face. Hearwas and with him backs?" "To help you didn't hur yourset and wash your face. Hearwas and with him backs?" is was you wanted to see mabout, Biah?" "I do hope you didn't hur yourset." "I do hope you didn't hur yourset."" "I do hope you didn't h d to

is, I came out by myself. You see. But, to all outward appearances, she a little-well, ready money to help you had mouth and her eyes sparkling with as was proper, by that solemn portal. The fund of the start. I've got a few hundred to fund out." church doin's. I-t-well, I kind of the inter you use grave the study of the study o and body! some one's knockin' at the And Didama missed it.

door! And this dummed pipe's fetched Other happenings she missed, also. He didn't seem overjoyed to see loose!"

of you."

toward the door. The girl, her eyes did she heed the knock at the door. his stay. She did not see him, in comtwinkling, took up her jacket and hat. Her hands were opening and closing pany with Mrs. Coffin, go down the kanah's doin's. For a critter as fussy "Oh! I'm not going to stop, Mr. convulsively. road in the opposite direction from

"Be glad!" she repeated. "Glad to that taken by Grace. Nor their return ing Aunt Keziah a little, that's all. I marry a good-for nothin' sand-peep like and parting at the gate, two hours you! You sassy- Get down off that later. It was three o'clock in the after-"Run on-nonsense!" declared Ke chair and out of this house! Get down noon before a visitor came again to

the Coffin front gate, entered the yard "I can't! This stovepipe's loose,] and rapped at the side door. Keziah opened the door.

"Halloa!" she exclaimed. "Back, scared away for good."

Grace laughed as she entered "Well, auntie," she said, "I don't wonder you thought I was scared. Truly, I didn't think it was proper for . me to stay. First Kyan and then

Cap'n Elkanah, and both of them expressing their wishes to see you alone. "But I don't know's I'll have time. Per chair, sections of stovepipe, and Mr. so er pointedly. I thought it was haps I'd better come later and do it. Pepper disappeared with a mighty time for me to go. Surely, you give crash behind the high-boy. A cloud of me oredit for a little delicacy." HIN? "Grace Van Hornel there's born soot arose and obscured the view. fools enough in this town without your Keziah, too indignant even to laugh,

tryin' to be one. Grace, I ain't goin' your coat off, hadn't you? Grace, fetch of the kitchen Grace Van Horne, ham. to leave Trumet, not for the present, one of those chairs for Ky-for mer in hand, leaned against the lamb, anyhow. I've got a way of earnin' my her handkerchief at her mouth and livin' right here. I'm goin' to keep house for the new minister."

> The girl turned, her hat in her hand. behind the high-boy came coughs, "Oh!" she cried in utter, astonish-

sneezes and emphatic ejaculations. ment Keziah nodded. "Yes," she affirmed. Miss Pepper was the first to speak. "Abishai Pepper," she commanded, "That was what Elkanah's proposal "come out of that this minute." "come out of that this minute." amounted to. Ha, ha! Deary me! There was a sound of scrambling. When he said 'proposal,' I own up for amounted to. Ha, ha! Deary me! we ain't had any tramps around here a man's voice, and its tone indicated

lately. Come in." "Hore soot floated in the air. Then a minute I didn't know what was com-"It's real good of you to effer to around the corner of the high-boy ap- in". After Kyan I was prepared for She led the way into the dining room of the parsonage. Two of the be out in another minute. If you will help," she said. "Grace and I didn't peared Mr. Pepper, crawling on his 'most anything. But he told me that blinds shading the windows of that

He spoke as if the possibility of a re- main road, a handherchief at her funeral the mourners came and went, My soul! there 'tis again. I'm goin' She grasped the stubby broom by to turn it.

ward the front hall. Grace seized her "Humph!" she muttered, twisting to by the arm.

Not knowing of Captain Daniel's call no purpose; "I don't see why- This "Don't you do it, auntie!" she whis-He didn't seem overjoyed to see to the must be the right key; because— percent frantically. "I may be a tramp." pered frantically. "Don't you do it!

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"I don't care. Whoever or whatever it is, it has no business in this and particular about some things, he's house, and I'll make that plain in &

hurry. Just like as not it's a cat got in when Elkanah was here this forenoon. Don't be scared, Grace. Come right along."

The girl came along, but not with enthusiasm. They tiptoed through the dark, narrow hall and peered into the parlor. This apartment was dim and still and gloomy, as all proper parlors should be, but there was no sign of life.

Mrs. Coffin was glancing back down the hall with a strange expression on her face. Her grip upon the broom handle tightened.

"What is it?" pleaded the girl in an agonized whisper.

"Grace," was the low reply, "I've just remembered somethin'. That study door isn't stuck from the damp. because-well, because I remember now that it was open this mornin'." Before her companion could fully grasp the import of this paralyzing fact, Keziah strode down the hall and seized the knob of the study door. "Whoever you are in there," she commanded sternly, "open this door

and come out this minute. Do you hear? I'm orderin' you to come out." There was an instant of silence;

embarrassment. "Madam," it said, "I-I am-I will

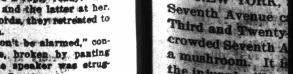
just be patient-" "Come out then!" snapped Keziah. "Come out! Patience! Of all the cheek! Why don't you come out now?"

"Well, to be frank, since you insist," snapped the voice, "I'm not fulif dressed."

> This was a staggerer. For once Ke siah did not have a reply ready. She looked at Grace and the latter at her. Then, without words, they retreated to the sitting room.

> "I hope you won't be slarmed," continued the voice, broken by pasting peuses as if the speaker was strug-To be Continued

run the slightest r NEW YORK,



BERLIN, Sep have been given st that in case of dor take the safe cour

Mrs. Coffin's Comment. careless enough about others. Mercy then a voice from within made answer,

