

Captain Amos Cosgrove's Mind Cure

By L. Frank Tooker

COPYRIGHT 1909



things is always just about as you look at 'em."

"Well, Henry's never been no hand to make the best o' things," replied Mrs. Ketchum. "If he was goin' on a picnic to-morrow, he'd spend half to-day lookin' for signs of rain—an' findin' 'em."

"I know," said Captain Amos. "I can't help thinkin', though, that if we only knew how to get a holt on him, we'd make him feel like a diff'rent man. Of course he might never be real robust, but that's a long ways from dyin'."

"No, Henry's never been over-strong an' lively—not like you an' me, Amos. Seems to me you ain't changed a mite in that respect for forty years. Why, one day this summer, I remember, I happened to look out the door an' saw somebody rushin' by the house. Before I really got a good look, says I to myself, 'I wonder what that young man's hurryin' so about.' Then I see 'twas you." She glanced at him, with a mischievous laugh.

"Is that so?" said Captain Amos, complacently. "Well, I don't know's you'll find many of these here youngsters any spryer 'n me, or tougher. I don't know's I feel any older'n I used to, though I s'pose I be," he added with a regretful sigh. "Anyway, I ain't recognizin' no diff'rence."

"Well, I wish somebody'd make Henry feel like that," she said, sighing. "You must come in to see him often, Amos. Why, you've cheered me up just these few minutes." She looked up at him with almost a coquettish air. Something in the look awoke a brilliant thought in Captain Amos's fertile brain.

"I will—I will," he promised. Then he laughed. "I've kind o' got a notion—mebbe I can help him, Maria. It's worth tryin'."

"What is it?" she asked eagerly.

"Why, I guess I'll have to work it alone—for the present," he replied regretfully. "Let's see how it goes first before I begin to crow."

It was with a definite purpose, therefore, that, somewhat carelessly dressed, he set out the next morning to call on the sick man, talking to himself as he went.

"Henry Ketchum ain't lived with Maria all these years without learnin' she ain't goin' to mourn for him long—if she gets a chance," he muttered. "Now, if I show him how it's goin' to work out, if he don't spunk up an' git well, I've lost my reckonin'."

He entered the sick man's room with all of his wonted cheerfulness, and his first words were nicely chosen to indicate the casualness of his coming.

"I heard you was a little under the weather, Henry," he said, as he sauntered over to the bed and took the sick man's limp hand in his own hearty grasp, "so I dropped in for a minute. Kind o' wanted your advice. Don't know's I expected to find you in bed this time o' day, though. Thought you was an early riser."

"I won't never rise no more, Amos," replied the sick man feebly. "That's all over for me."

"Sho!" exclaimed Captain Amos. "Can't be bad as that."

Henry shook his head and turned restlessly.

"I'll go before spring. The doctor don't give me no hope. Why, I've been dyin' for years."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Captain Amos sadly. For a moment he sat in silence, restlessly twiddling his thumbs. When he again spoke he felt the perfuminess of his question even as he asked it: "What seems to be the trouble, Henry?"

"They ain't no one thing that stands out beyond another," the sick man answered with almost a touch of pride; "it's a kind of a complication."

"Sometimes I think," said Captain Amos hopefully, grasping at a straw, "that in these here complications they fight each other to a standstill, an' there you be, chock-a-block, an' just a livin' on without knowin' why, but still livin'."

"Not in my case," declared the sick man. "You can't be sure," retorted Captain Amos, doggedly; "nobody can. There's more'n one way of lookin' at a thing; now you look at the bright side. Make up your mind you're goin' to live." He was silent a long time, and when he spoke again it was with the air of one who had looked for a brighter side, and found it. "Well, there's one thing," he said, "if you do go, you've got one consolation—you're leavin' Maria well fixed. A young-lookin' woman like her's liable to enjoy life—live on, that is to say—for years. If she's left well provided, why, it ain't quite as if she wa'n't," he ended lamely.

"Yes, I guess that's so," acquiesced the well-providing husband.

"She ain't goin' to be so lonesome," added Captain Amos. He glanced about the room, then tiptoed to the window. For a moment he stood looking out with the searching scrutiny of contemplated purpose; when finally he came back to his chair his voice had regained something of its usual cheerfulness.

"I was lookin' over your yard only yesterday—went by on my way home. Sometimes I've wished I had a little more ground myself, an' then, if I left the sea, I'd have something to potter over. Now your place is just about right. One thing, I'd cut down that big ba'm o' Gilead tree by the stoop. They litter up a good deal, an' I don't call the smell natural to any great extent."

"That tree sprung up when the house was first built," said Henry stiffly. "I'd as soon think of tearin' down the house."

"Oh, of course you might feel diff'rent about it," soothingly responded Captain Amos. "I was just thinkin' of myself. I'm kind o' practical. An' speakin' of the house, I've kind o' got a notion that a long grape-arbor there at the south end would set things off. An' that cupolo—I'd build that out forter. Don't know when I've enjoyed a visit more." He rose, sniffing at the air.

"What's that you're bakin', Maria? Cookies? Blame if they don't smell temptin'."

"Come down and try them," she invited, "an' see if they taste so."

"Well, I will bite at one before I go aboard," said Captain Amos. "I'm due now, if I'm goin' to dismantle the old ba'm any before noon; but a fresh-baked cookie'd stop me on the way to my weddin'."

For half an hour, Henry, lying in the room above, heard their murmured talk and laughter, and grimly smiled as he thought of his friend's haste. For the first time he felt an unaccountable loneliness. He wondered at the unending stream of Captain Amos's talk, and strained his ears to catch the indistinguishable sound; he was a little envious.

"Amos always could take more words to say nothin' than any person I ever knew," once he muttered to himself impatiently, as a burst of laughter came up the stairs. Then he wondered if it was nonsense; Amos was no man's fool. He was glad when at last he heard his voice pass from the door.

He came again the next afternoon, and it was clear that he had no intention of reproaching himself this time for the carelessness of his dress. He wore, too, the air of ceremonial calling—on ladies. Indeed, Henry's first knowledge of his presence was the sound of his voice outside on the lawn, whither he had conducted Mrs. Ketchum, whose ideas of the balm o' Gilead tree agreed with his own.

Presently the voices passed on, and the sick man surmised that they were discussing Captain Amos's proposed arbor, and his curiosity became unbearable. He was also lonely, and craved the companionship of the cheerful people below. Summoning his courage, he crept groaning from the bed, and walked to the south window, the blinds of which were closed.

Yes, they were discussing the grape-arbor, Henry saw at once. Captain Amos was pacing off the ground, while Mrs. Ketchum followed him with a childlike interest in his action. As they stood together above the spot where Captain Amos dug his heel in the sod, Henry tried to catch their murmured talk, but failed. It seemed intimate.

They passed around to the back of the house, and for half an hour the watcher waited for their return; then he heard their voices at the front of the house, and went to a west window. Captain Amos was passing out the front gate. Even as the sick man wondered, the captain stopped short and with a laugh turned back. Henry hurried back to the bed as he heard footsteps on the stairs.

Captain Amos was still chuckling as he entered the room.

"Here I fixed up to come over an' pay you a little visit and cheer you up, but I got so interested in that there grape-arbor I was talkin' to you about, that blame if I didn't cart Maria all over the place, an' was just a-goin', before I thought what I came for. Guess my mind's sort o' like a bottle—holds only one thing at a time." He hitched his chair nearer the bed and said with a new air of solicitude, "How you feelin' to-day, Henry?"

"Middlin'," replied the sick man. "I ain't in no pain. How'd Maria take to the arbor?"

"Like a duck to water," Captain Amos said enthusiastically. "Why, she wanted to get to work at once. But I kind o' discouraged her for the present."

"Well, I was kind o' considerin' it, too,"

"It's good of you to come in to see Henry so soon," she told him. "You're so cheerful, I know you'll help him. Why, you quite livened me up—just the few words we had together yesterday. I caught myself hummin' two or three times; it's been a long time since I've felt like that."

"Well, that's me," acquiesced the captain. "I'll have folks cheerful round me if I have to bat 'em over the head to make 'em so." His downward glance at that moment, however, had the effect of recalling to himself a weaker side. He went on with a touch of confusion: "If I'd 'a' knowed I was goin' to visit with ladies, I'd 'a' spruced up a bit. A man gets careless livin' alone, with no one to take an interest in him." He sighed deeply.

"Well, when folks gets on like us, I guess the heart counts more'n clothes," warmly answered Mrs. Ketchum. "Everybody knows you've got sympathy, and to spare."

Captain Amos shook his head dolefully.

"Guess I'd be better off if I was cold-hearted," he said with bitterness. "Why, I ain't got even a cat to talk to. Blame if I don't feel lonesome ev'ry day I live."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Ketchum; "you're like me, considerable of a talker. If I had to mope round all day, with no one to say a word to, seems 's if I should fly. An' a woman can't go round like a man."

"Tain't the same," replied Captain Amos, shaking his head. "These here outsiders you just meet on the street don't help you none; they ain't got no interest in you. Just as likely's not they get up an' go off before you're half through. Now, my wife wa'n't no talker, but she was interested an' a good listener, an' I guess I don't need much more'n that as a general thing, though I like a talker, too."

"It does help," agreed Mrs. Ketchum. "an' if you can talk over old times together—"

"That's it," broke in Captain Amos, with pleased recognition of a great truth. "When folks git on, the biggest part of you's behind you, an' your heart goes back. Well, I guess you an' me are on firm ground there, Maria. I remember you when you were knee-high to a grasshopper. Why, Henry here ain't knowin' you longer."

"No," she said, "though you was some older."

"Some," acknowledged Captain Amos, "though a little diff'rence don't count after fifty like it does before twenty, I notice."

"No, it don't," she agreed; then she rose.

"Well, you must come in often, Amos. I know you'll do Henry a world o' good. I can tell by myself."

"I will, I will," the captain promised.

"I guess I was kind o' cut out for a sick con-

forter. Don't know when I've enjoyed a visit more." He rose, sniffing at the air.

"What's that you're bakin', Maria? Cookies? Blame if they don't smell temptin'."

"Come down and try them," she invited, "an' see if they taste so."

"Well, I will bite at one before I go aboard," said Captain Amos. "I'm due now, if I'm goin' to dismantle the old ba'm any before noon; but a fresh-baked cookie'd stop me on the way to my weddin'."

For half an hour, Henry, lying in the room above, heard their murmured talk and laughter, and grimly smiled as he thought of his friend's haste. For the first time he felt an unaccountable loneliness. He wondered at the unending stream of Captain Amos's talk, and strained his ears to catch the indistinguishable sound; he was a little envious.

"Amos always could take more words to say nothin' than any person I ever knew," once he muttered to himself impatiently, as a burst of laughter came up the stairs. Then he wondered if it was nonsense; Amos was no man's fool. He was glad when at last he heard his voice pass from the door.

He came again the next afternoon, and it was clear that he had no intention of reproaching himself this time for the carelessness of his dress. He wore, too, the air of ceremonial calling—on ladies. Indeed, Henry's first knowledge of his presence was the sound of his voice outside on the lawn, whither he had conducted Mrs. Ketchum, whose ideas of the balm o' Gilead tree agreed with his own.

Presently the voices passed on, and the sick man surmised that they were discussing Captain Amos's proposed arbor, and his curiosity became unbearable. He was also lonely, and craved the companionship of the cheerful people below. Summoning his courage, he crept groaning from the bed, and walked to the south window, the blinds of which were closed.

Yes, they were discussing the grape-arbor, Henry saw at once. Captain Amos was pacing off the ground, while Mrs. Ketchum followed him with a childlike interest in his action. As they stood together above the spot where Captain Amos dug his heel in the sod, Henry tried to catch their murmured talk, but failed. It seemed intimate.

They passed around to the back of the house, and for half an hour the watcher waited for their return; then he heard their voices at the front of the house, and went to a west window. Captain Amos was passing out the front gate. Even as the sick man wondered, the captain stopped short and with a laugh turned back. Henry hurried back to the bed as he heard footsteps on the stairs.

Captain Amos was still chuckling as he entered the room.

"Here I fixed up to come over an' pay you a little visit and cheer you up, but I got so interested in that there grape-arbor I was talkin' to you about, that blame if I didn't cart Maria all over the place, an' was just a-goin', before I thought what I came for. Guess my mind's sort o' like a bottle—holds only one thing at a time." He hitched his chair nearer the bed and said with a new air of solicitude, "How you feelin' to-day, Henry?"

"Middlin'," replied the sick man. "I ain't in no pain. How'd Maria take to the arbor?"

"Like a duck to water," Captain Amos said enthusiastically. "Why, she wanted to get to work at once. But I kind o' discouraged her for the present."

"Well, I was kind o' considerin' it, too,"

chum's interpretation at least, his coming was vastly helpful.

"I declare, Amos," she said one day as they sat in the sick-room, "I don't know but what I've got to dependin' on you 'most as much as Henry. Now he's sick, I don't hardly stir out; but there don't really seem no need, with you bringin' all the news. As for Henry, he can't seem to think o' nothin' but you. Why, I feel real jealous; I ain't nothin'." He gets real restless when you leave, an' he's always askin' what you talk about down stairs. Seems like he couldn't bear to miss a word."

"Sho!" exclaimed Captain Amos, with becoming modesty. "You make me feel like one of them prophets out o' the Old Testament—hangin' on my talk like that. I don't know but I've missed my callin', an' ought to leave the water an' take up with good works."

"Well, I don't know how we could spare you to anybody else," she objected laughingly. "Do we, Henry?"

Her husband smiled oddly.

"Well, we wouldn't want to be selfish, s'long as Amos ain't," he responded. Then he changed the subject by asking the captain if it was not likely to rain before morning.

Two days passed before Captain Amos came again.

They were quieter than usual, but as Captain Amos rose to go, his host awoke to new interest. He motioned toward the door.

"Shut it, Amos," he said. "I want to talk with you."

"Don't you talk if it's goin' to make you feel worse," warned the captain. "Your comfort's the first thing."

"That's why I want to talk," replied Henry. Then he looked up with a smile at his friend as he went on: "Amos, we've been pretty good friends for a good many years, an' now I want to ask you a question, an' I want you to give me a fair an' square answer. Will you?"

Captain Amos nodded.

"Yes," he said. "I kind o' like the truth myself between friends, though I ain't above a reasonable lie when it comes in handy. Fire away."

"Well, now, don't think I'm tryin' to meddle with other folks' business, for I ain't; I've got a particular reason for what I want to know. Have you ever had any notion—just a notion, mind—of marryin' Maria after I'm gone?"

Suddenly and unexpectedly face to face with his mind-cure, Captain Amos was in a panic. If now he said that he had had, what would be the feelings of his friend? If he denied it, what would be the effect upon his mind-cure? Must he now confess that he had no faith in it? He could not, but he answered haltingly:

"Why, if you ask me p'int-blank—why, I guess I've had just a sort o' notion one time or another. My mind kind o' flies about haphazard, so to speak. They ain't no real reliance on it." Then he added, with a vague attempt at a soothing thought: "Of course Maria might not have me, even if I ever went beyond thinkin' on it, which I ain't. She's—"

"That's all I wanted to know," broke in the sick man, with what seemed to his friend a surprising air of relief. "an' I'm goin' to tell you why. You know how it seemed a toss-up between folks which one, Joel Parker or me, was goin' to get Maria when we was young. I won't deny Joel troubled me a good deal in them days, an', what's more, he's been troublin' me ever since I've been fallin'. I guess Maria never cared for him."

But Henry smilingly shook his head.

"No, Amos," he said, "I've give' up, an' glad to. I've been a considerable sufferer. Now my mind's at peace for the first time in years."

"But it don't seem right to look at it that way," burst in Captain Amos. "It's kind o' like suicide to let yourself go without no effort—suicide."

"No," declared the sick man, "I know when my time's come. It's foolish to talk like that."

They were again in Captain Amos's voice as he hunched his chair necessarily closer to the bed.

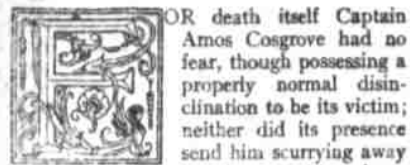
"But, Henry, I want to tell you—I don't want to marry Maria. I—"

He found himself saved to silence.

"Don't say a word, Amos," he exclaimed almost breathlessly. "I know just how you feel, but I understand. It's all right—let it be. I tell you I ain't feelin' him. An' yes, I want to sleep. I was kind o' tired when my first bad night. He turned his face to the wall and slowly Captain Amos left the room and the door.

As he turned the door knob he heard a knock from the door and he turned back, expecting to find the sick man extending on the threshold of the door the figure of Joel Parker. Instead, as he would like to see Joel's face, he learned how things is going to turn out. He was uttering to himself:

He would have had long to wait. He had told the truth when he had said that his mind, released of its anxiety about Joel, was at peace for the first time in years. Indeed, it reacted upon his physical condition. Before Thanksgiving he was on the street again, and though he never was robust, he lived comfortably and happily for twenty years. Captain Amos never disclosed his mind-cure. He often thought of it, however, though he never could come to any satisfactory conclusion about its logical working-out.



OR death itself Captain Amos Cosgrove had no fear, though possessing a properly normal disinclination to be its victim; neither did its presence send him scurrying away on tiptoes with solemn

frown. Indeed, he was habitually inclined to challenge it, and for ordinarily ailing people he had the scorn of health and settled opinion. It was with his usual skeptical attitude, then, that, coming home at the close of one season, he heard that his friend Henry Ketchum was fast failing.

"All right—all right," he exclaimed freely. "I never knowed Henry to be really goin' to die in his life." At the same time, however, he felt him ten times as straight with a frown. "What's the matter with him? No, what Henry wants is to have his mind

set on his own. I don't know about that," declared Deacon Amos, solemnly shaking his head. "I can't see that Henry's been fallin' fast this winter. He ain't been surprised to see his doctor any time before spring."

"Of course he failed," replied Captain Amos. "If I should turn out some mornin', I'd be drivin' the doctor an' think how sorrowful I felt when I was in bed all day so that you couldn't see the sun for the shadow of a cloud. Same with ailin' folks. Think you're aillin' an' first you know you are. It's all notions an' imaginin'."

He was still thinking deeply of the matter when, late in the afternoon, he went home, half-unconsciously taking a roundabout way that led him just the sick man's house. It was one of the largest houses in the port, with spacious, well-kept grounds, that bespoke both thrift and prosperity. With his eyes turned toward the upper windows, Captain Amos did not at first catch sight of the kneeling figure of Mrs. Ketchum, carefully covering with newspapers the artemisias blooming by the side of the porch. Her profile was turned toward him, and Captain Amos's far-sighted eyes noted the youthful color of her rounded cheeks, which belied her fifty-odd years. There was, too, something youthful in the quick dexterity of her movements. When he awoke to the duty of inquiring about her husband, and, turning, entered the

bedroom, he looked up at the sound of his step on the wall, and sprang to her feet with a smile of welcome.

"Is that you, Amos?" she said as she came forward to greet him.

"Same old s'pence," replied Captain Amos. "An' you—you're just as young as ever. Don't have to ask how you be."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Captain Amos sadly. For a moment he sat in silence, restlessly twiddling his thumbs. When he again spoke he felt the perfuminess of his question even as he asked it: "What seems to be the trouble, Henry?"

"They ain't no one thing that stands out beyond another," the sick man answered with almost a touch of pride; "it's a kind of a complication."

"Sometimes I think," said Captain Amos hopefully, grasping at a straw, "that in these here complications they fight each other to a standstill, an' there you be, chock-a-block, an' just a livin' on without knowin' why, but still livin'."

"Not in my case," declared the sick man. "You can't be sure," retorted Captain Amos, doggedly; "nobody can. There's more'n one way of lookin' at a thing; now you look at the bright side. Make up your mind you're goin' to live." He was silent a long time, and when he spoke again it was with the air of one who had looked for a brighter side, and found it. "Well, there's one thing," he said, "if you do go, you've got one consolation—you're leavin' Maria well fixed. A young-lookin' woman like her's liable to enjoy life—live on, that is to say—for years. If she's left well provided, why, it ain't quite as if she wa'n't," he ended lamely.

"Yes, I guess that's so," acquiesced the well-providing husband.

"She ain't goin' to be so lonesome," added Captain Amos. He glanced about the room, then tiptoed to the window. For a moment he stood looking out with the searching scrutiny of contemplated purpose; when finally he came back to his chair his voice had regained something of its usual cheerfulness.

"I was lookin' over your yard only yesterday—went by on my way home. Sometimes I've wished I had a little more ground myself, an' then, if I left the sea, I'd have something to potter over. Now your place is just about right. One thing, I'd cut down that big ba'm o' Gilead tree by the stoop. They litter up a good deal, an' I don't call the smell natural to any great extent."

"That tree sprung up when the house was first built," said Henry stiffly. "I'd as soon think of tearin' down the house."

"Oh, of course you might feel diff'rent about it," soothingly responded Captain Amos. "I was just thinkin' of myself. I'm kind o' practical. An' speakin' of the house, I've kind o' got a notion that a long grape-arbor there at the south end would set things off. An' that cupolo—I'd build that out forter. Don't know when I've enjoyed a visit more." He rose, sniffing at the air.

"What's that you're bakin', Maria? Cookies? Blame if they don't smell temptin'."

"Come down and try them," she invited, "an' see if they taste so."

"Well, I will bite at one before I go aboard," said Captain Amos. "I'm due now, if I'm goin' to dismantle the old ba'm any before noon; but a fresh-baked cookie'd stop me on the way to my weddin'."

For half an hour, Henry, lying in the room above, heard their murmured talk and laughter, and grimly smiled as he thought of his friend's haste. For the first time he felt an unaccountable loneliness. He wondered at the unending stream of Captain Amos's talk, and strained his ears to catch the indistinguishable sound; he was a little envious.

"Amos always could take more words to say nothin' than any person I ever knew," once he muttered to himself impatiently, as a burst of laughter came up the stairs. Then he wondered if it was nonsense; Amos was no man's fool. He was glad when at last he heard his voice pass from the door.

He came again the next afternoon, and it was clear that he had no intention of reproaching himself this time for the carelessness of his dress. He wore, too, the air of ceremonial calling—on ladies. Indeed, Henry's first knowledge of his presence was the sound of his voice outside on the lawn, whither he had conducted Mrs. Ketchum, whose ideas of the balm o' Gilead tree agreed with his own.

Presently the voices passed on, and the sick man surmised that they were discussing Captain Amos's proposed arbor, and his curiosity became unbearable. He was also lonely, and craved the companionship of the cheerful people below. Summoning his courage, he crept groaning from the bed, and walked to the south window, the blinds of which were closed.

Yes, they were discussing the grape-arbor, Henry saw at once. Captain Amos was pacing off the ground, while Mrs. Ketchum followed him with a childlike interest in his action. As they stood together above the spot where Captain Amos dug his heel in the sod, Henry tried to catch their murmured talk, but failed. It seemed intimate.

They passed around to the back of the house, and for half an hour the watcher waited for their return; then he heard their voices at the front of the house, and went to a west window. Captain Amos was passing out the front gate. Even as the sick man wondered, the captain stopped short and with a laugh turned back. Henry hurried back to the bed as he heard footsteps on the stairs.

Captain Amos was still chuckling as he entered the room.



"You must come in often, Amos. Why, you've cheered me up just these few minutes."

Make a fine place in summer to set with a spy-glass an' watch the vessels goin' up an' down the Sound. Don't know's an old sailor ashore could find a better job to top off with."

"I wouldn't be the same house," said Henry with decision.

"No, I judge not," airily replied Captain Amos. "You see, I don't set no great store on things just because they're old; but, then, I ain't got no more sentiment than a cow."

"Thought you had a good deal," retorted Henry with what seemed like an air of suspicion.

"Well, not about what don't belong to me," exclaimed Captain Amos.

It was with an air of almost protecting tenderness that he turned to greet Mrs. Ketchum at that moment, as if the biblical injunction concerning widows and orphans was already in his mind. She, on her part, gave him a smiling welcome.

"It's good of you to come in to see Henry so soon," she told him. "You're so cheerful, I know you'll help him. Why, you quite livened me up—just the few words we had together yesterday. I caught myself hummin' two or three times; it's been a long time since I've felt like that."

"Well, that's me," acquiesced the captain. "I'll have folks cheerful round me if I have to bat 'em over the head to make 'em so." His downward glance at that moment, however, had the effect of recalling to himself a weaker side. He went on with a touch of confusion: "If I'd 'a' knowed I was goin' to visit with ladies, I'd 'a' spruced up a bit. A man gets careless livin' alone, with no one to take an interest in him." He sighed deeply.

"Well, when folks gets on like us, I guess the heart counts more'n clothes," warmly answered Mrs. Ketchum. "Everybody knows you've got sympathy, and to spare."

Captain Amos shook his head dolefully.

"Guess I'd be better off if I was cold-hearted," he said with bitterness. "Why, I ain't got even a cat to talk to. Blame if I don't feel lonesome ev'ry day I live."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Ketchum; "you're like me, considerable of a talker. If I had to mope round all day, with no one to say a word to, seems 's if I should fly. An' a woman can't go round like a man."

"Tain't the same," replied Captain Amos, shaking his head. "These here outsiders you just meet on the street don't help you none; they ain't got no interest in you. Just as likely's not they get up an' go off before you're half through. Now, my wife wa'n't no talker, but she was interested an' a good listener, an' I guess I don't need much more'n that as a general thing, though I like a talker, too."

"It does help," agreed Mrs. Ketchum. "an' if you can talk over old times together—"

"That's it," broke in Captain Amos, with pleased recognition of a great truth. "