



# THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

By VAUGHAN KESTER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY D. MELVILLE

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### SYNOPSIS.

The scene at the opening of the story is laid in the library of an old worn-out southern plantation, known as the Barony. The place is to be sold, and its history and that of the owners, the Quintards, is the subject of discussion by Jonathan Crenshaw, a business man, a stranger known as Bladen, and Bob Yancy, a farmer, when Hannibal Wayne Hazare, a mysterious child of the old southern family, makes his appearance. Yancy tells how he adopted the boy. Nathaniel Ferris buys the Barony, but the Quintards deny any knowledge of the boy. Yancy to keep Hannibal, Captain Murrell, a friend of the Quintards, appears and asks questions about the Barony. Trouble at Scratch Hill, when Hannibal is kidnapped by Dave Blount, Captain Murrell's agent. Yancy overtakes Blount, gives him a thrashing and secures the boy. Yancy appears before Squire Balsam, and is discharged with costs for the plaintiff. Betty Malroy, a friend of the boy, sets out for her Tennessee home. Carrington takes the same stage. Yancy and Hannibal disappear with Murrell on their trail. Hannibal arrives at the home of Judge Slocum Price. The Judge recognizes in the boy, the grandson of an old time friend. Murrell arrives at Judge's home. Cavendish family on raft rescue Yancy, who is apparently dead. Price breaks jail.

### CHAPTER VIII—(Continued).

"We don't want to get there too early," explained the judge, as they quitted the cabin. "We want to miss the work, but be on hand for the celebration."

"I suppose we may confidently look to you to favor us with a few eloquent words?" said Mr. Mahaffy, the judge.

"And why not, Solomon?" asked the opportunity he craved was not denied him. The crowd was like most southwestern crowds of the period, and no sooner did the judge appear than there were clamorous demands for a speech. He cast a glance of triumph at Mahaffy, and nimbly mounted a convenient stump. He extolled the climate of middle Tennessee, the unsurpassed fertility of the soil; he touched on the future that awaited Pleasantville; he apostrophized the jail.

Presently the crowd drifted away in the direction of the tavern. Hannibal meantime had gone down to the river. He haunted his banks as though he expected to see his Uncle Bob appear any moment. The judge and Mahaffy had mingled with the others in the hope of free drinks, but in this hope there lurked the germ of a bitter disappointment. After a period of mental anguish Mahaffy parted with his last stray coin, and while his flask was being filled the judge indulged in certain winsome gallantries with the fat landlady.

"La, Judge Price, how you do run on!" she said with a coquettish toss of her curls.

"That's the charm of you, ma'am," said the judge. He leaned across the bar and, sinking his voice to a husky whisper, asked: "Would it be perfectly convenient for you to extend me a limited credit?"

"Now, Judge Price, you know a heap better than to ask me that!" she answered, shaking her head.

"No offense, ma'am," said the judge, hiding his disappointment, and with Mahaffy he quitted the bar.

The sudden noisy clamor of many voices, high-pitched and excited, floated over to them under the hot sky. "I wonder—" began the judge, and paused as he saw the crowd stream into the road before the tavern. Then a cloud of dust enveloped it, a cloud of dust that came from the tramping of many pairs of feet, and that swept toward them, thick and impenetrable, and no higher than a tall man's head in the lifeless air. "I wonder if we missed anything?" continued the judge, finishing what he had started to say.

The score or more of men were quite near, and the judge and Mahaffy made out the tall figure of the sheriff in the lead. And then the crowd, very excited, very dusty, very noisy and very hot, flowed into the judge's front yard. For a brief moment that gentleman fancied Pleasantville had awakened to a fitting sense of its obligation to him and that it was about to make amends for its churlish lack of hospitality. It rose from his chair, and with a splendid fligid gesture, swept off his hat.

"It's the pussy fellow!" cried a voice.

"Oh, shut up—don't you think I know him?" retorted the sheriff tartly.



"I Want My Money!" Shrieked the Landlady.

"I want my money!" shrieked the landlady. "Good money—not this worthless trash!" she shook a bill under his nose. The judge recognized it as the one of which he had deposited Hannibal.

"You have been caught passing counterfeit," said the sheriff. A light broke on the judge, a light that stunned and dazzled.

"I can explain—" "Speak to them, Solomon—you know how I came by the money!" cried the judge, clutching his friend by the arm. Mahaffy opened his thin lips, but the crowd drowned his voice in a roar.

A tall fellow shook a long finger under Mahaffy's nose.

"You scoot!" Mr. Mahaffy seemed to hesitate. Some one gave him a shove and he staggered forward a step. Before he could recover himself the shove was repeated.

"Lope on out of here!" yelled the tall fellow. Mahaffy was hurried toward the road. Twenty men were in chase behind him. Then the woods closed about him. His long legs, working tirelessly, carried him over fallen logs and through tangled thickets, the voices behind him growing more and more distant as he ran.

### CHAPTER IX.

The Family on the Raft. That would unquestionably have been the end of Bob Yancy when he was shot out into the muddy waters of the Elk river, had not Mr. Richard Keppel Cavendish, variously known as Long-Legged Dick, and Chills-and-Fever Cavendish, of Lincoln county, in the state of Tennessee, some months previously and after unprecedented mental effort on his part, decided that Lincoln county was no place for him.

Mr. Cavendish's paternal grandparent had drifted down the Holston and Tennessee; and Mr. Cavendish's father, in his son's youth, had poled up the Elk. Mr. Cavendish now determined to float down the Elk to its juncture with the Tennessee, down the Tennessee to the Ohio, and it need be, down the Ohio to the Mississippi, until he found some spot exactly suited to his taste.

With this end in view he had toiled through the late winter and early spring, building himself a raft on which to transport his few belongings and his numerous family.

Thus it happened that as Murrell and Slosson were dragging Yancy down the lane, Cavendish was just rounding a bend in the Elk, a quarter of a mile distant. Leaning loosely against the long handle of his sweep, he was watching the lane of bright water that ran between the black shadows cast by the trees on either bank.

He heard a dull splash, and caught sight of some object in the eddy that swept alongside. Mr. Cavendish promptly detached himself from the handle of the sweep and ran to the edge of the raft.

It was a face, livid and blood-streaked. Dropping on his knees he reached out a pair of long arms and made a detestable grab, and his fingers closed on the collar of Yancy's shirt. He drew Yancy close alongside, and pulled him clear of the water. Mr. Cavendish began a hurried examination of the still figure. "There's a little life here—not much, Polly!" he called.

"Please, judge—" it was Hannibal. "Yes, dear lad?" "I'm mighty sorry that ten dollars I loaned you was bad—but you don't need ever to pay it back! It were Captain Murrell gave it to me."

"I consecrate myself to his destruction! Judge Slocum Price cannot be humiliated with impunity!" "I should think you would save your wind, Price, until you'd waddled out of danger!" Mahaffy spoke gruffly.

"How are you going to get me out of this, Solomon—for I suppose you are here to break jail for me," said the judge.

"Well, Price, I guess all we can do is to go back to town and see if I can get into my cabin—I've got an old saw there. If I can find it, I can come again tomorrow night and cut away one of the logs, or the cleats of the door."

"In heaven's name, do that tonight, Solomon!" implored the judge. "Why procrastinate?" "Price, there's a pack of dogs in this neighborhood, and we must have a full night to move in, or they'll pull us down before we've gone ten miles!"

"You're right, Solomon; I'd forgotten the dogs." Mahaffy closed and fastened the shutters, then he and Hannibal stole across the clearing and entered the woods. The judge went to bed. He was aroused by the arrival of his breakfast, which the sheriff brought about eight o'clock.

"Well, if I was in your boots I couldn't sleep like you!" remarked that official admiringly. "But I reckon, sir, this ain't the first time the penitentiary has stared you in the face."

It was nearing the noon hour when the judge's solitude was again invaded. He first heard the distant murmur of voices on the road and passed an uneasy and restless ten minutes, with his eye to a crack in the door. He was soothed and reassured, however, when at last he caught sight of the sheriff.

"Well, judge, I got company for you," cried the sheriff cheerfully, as he threw open the door. "A horse-thief!"

He pushed into the building a man, hatless and coatless, with a pair of pale villainous eyes and a tobacco-stained chin. The judge viewed the newcomer with disfavor. As for the horse-thief, he gave his companion in misery a coldly critical stare, seated himself on the stool, and with quite a fierce air devoted all his energy to mastication. He neither altered his position nor changed his expression until he and the judge were alone, then, catching the judge's eye, he made what seemed a casual movement with his hand, the three fingers raised; but to the judge this clearly was without significance, and the horse-thief manifested no further interest where he was concerned. He did not even condescend to answer the one or two civil remarks the judge addressed to him.

As the long afternoon wore itself away, the judge lived through the many stages of doubt and uncertainty, for suppose anything had happened to Mahaffy!

Standing before the window, the judge watched the last vestige of light fade from the sky and the stars appear. Would Mahaffy come? The suspense was intolerable. Suddenly out of the silence sounded a long-drawn whistle. Three times it was repeated. The horse-thief leaped to his feet.

"Neighbor, that means me!" he cried. The moon was rising now, and by its light the judge saw a number of horsemen appear on the edge of the woods. They entered the clearing, picking their way among the stumps without haste or confusion. When quite close, five of the band dismounted; the rest continued on about the jail or cantered off toward the road.

"Look out inside, there!" cried a voice, and a log was dashed against the door; once—twice—it rose and fell on the clapboards, and under those mighty thuds grew up a wide gap through which the moonlight streamed splendidly. The horse-thief stepped between the dangling cleats and vanished.

The judge tossed away the stool. He understood now. With a confident, not to say jaunty step, the judge emerged from the jail.

"Your servant, gentlemen!" he said, lifting his hat. "GHI!" said one of the men briefly, and the judge moved limply away toward the woods.

## 1913 AUTO TAGS WILL BE GREEN

Highway Commissioner Orders 75,000 for Coming Year.

TO COMMENCE ISSUE EARLY

Many Applications for License Received Before New Year Arrives—30,000 Orders Were Filled Before Close of 1911.

(Special Harrisburg Correspondence.)

Harrisburg.—The automobile tags for 1913 of this State will be dark olive green with white figures and the keystone in soft metal. This color has been decided upon by Highway Commissioner E. M. Bigelow, who is in charge of the automobile registration of the State, and bids will be asked at once for furnishing 75,000 to the State. This year the tags have been mahogany with white letters and in other years have been yellow with black letters, red with white letters and dark blue. The green tags will be something like those used by New York this year, but the style of the Pennsylvania tag is different from that of New York. An innovation by Mr. Bigelow is the order that the contractors bid to supply the tags by November 1. This is considerably earlier than ever before and is due to the fact that for weeks before the close of the year the department has many applications for new tags for the coming year, and it is planned to get them out ahead. Last year over 30,000 applications were made before the close of 1911, and the work had to go on day and night for the latter part of December and early part of January. This year a start will be made in November and there will be no congestion at the close of the year. The new tags will not be worth anything until January 1, 1913, and it will not matter how early they are bought. This year 60,000 tags were ordered. Mr. Bigelow will order 75,000 for 1913.

### Playgrounds Are Popular.

With the last couple of years this city has taken marvelous strides forward in developing its playground system and one of the important contributing causes is undoubtedly the class of youthful playground assistant instructors that make up the Park Commission's staff. It's worth while to pay a visit to the Park Commission offices when the instructors are holding their weekly conferences with Playground Supervisors J. K. Staples and Miss Jessie C. Beldiman. The young men and women are the pick of the crack athletes of both sexes of the high schools generally. Among the staff of boys, for instance, are the captains of the high school football eleven and other stars in baseball, basketball and track athletics; among the girls are the pretty champions in tennis, in basketball and other branches of sport.

### Deer Like Sanitarium.

Dr. Samuel G. Dixon, State Health Commissioner, returned from a visit to the State Tuberculosis Sanitarium at Mount Alto. On the road down from the sanitarium to the station Mr. Dixon was confronted by three deer, a doe and two well-grown fawns. The wild animals stood and watched the approach of the team until quite close, when they moved off leisurely into the woods. The reservation on which the sanitarium is located is full of deer, and they are very tame, frequently going to the houses to get salt and other things to eat. Some time ago a herd of twelve were seen and last spring a bunch of seventeen that had been after salt at the cook-house stood still long enough to be photographed. It is forbidden to kill deer on the reservation, but in the woods surrounding they are plentiful, and in season hunters have fine sport.

### Lehigh Resources Grow.

A marked increase in the resources of Lehigh County is noted in the annual report by the commissioners to the Department of Imperial Affairs. During the last decade the money on interest has tripled. Totals show that Lehigh taxables number 47,178. The value of real estate in the county is placed at \$69,634,850, the amount of exempted property \$5,949,415, and the value of real estate taxable \$63,685,435. The amount of money on interest in the county amounts to \$18,559,859, of which sum Allentown has \$11,691,752; the borough, \$3,116,618, and the townships \$5,152,089. Allentown's share to be paid to the county tax is \$46,766.99, the borough's \$12,464.07, and the townships \$16,608.34, a total of \$75,839.40. The debt of the county is placed at \$325,000.

### Ice Cream Decision.

The decision of Judge Walling that the pure ice cream act is constitutional is exactly what we have been looking for and it will enable us to go right ahead with enforcement of the law," says Dairy and Food Commissioner James Foust. "The case decided by the Judge was watched by big interests and involved what they considered to be a conflict with the pure food act of 1909. Had the State lost it would have put us to much inconvenience, but now we will be able to go right ahead."

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