



# THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

By VAUGHAN KESTER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY D. MELVILL



## 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 Hazard, 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 Balaam, and is discharged with costs for the plaintiff. Betty Malroy, a friend of the Ferrises, has an encounter with Captain Murrell, who forces his attentions on her, and is rescued by Bruce Carrington. Betty 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. Hannibal's rifle discloses some startling things to the judge. Hannibal and Betty meet again.

## CHAPTER XI—(Continued).

The judge gave a great start, and a hoarse, inarticulate murmur stole from between his twitching lips.

"What do you know of the Barony, Hannibal?"

"I lived at the Barony once, until Uncle Bob took me to Scratch Hill to be with him," said Hannibal.

"You—you lived at the Barony?" repeated the judge, and a dull wonder struck through his tone. "How long ago—when?" he continued.

"I don't know how long it were, but until Uncle Bob carried me away after the old general died."

The judge slipped a hand under the child's chin and tilted his face back so that he might look into it. For a long moment he studied closely those small features, then with a shake of the head he handed the rifle to Carrington, and without a word strode forward. Carrington had been regarding Hannibal with a quickened interest.

"Hello!" he said, as the judge moved off. "You're the boy I saw at Scratch Hill!"

Hannibal gave him a frightened glance, and edged to Mr. Mahaffy's side, but did not answer.

The judge plodded forward, his shoulders drooped, and his head bowed. For once silence had fixed its seal upon his lips, no inspiring speech fell from them. He had been suddenly swept back into a past he had striven these twenty years and more to forget, and his memories shaped themselves fantastically. Surely if ever a man had quitted the world that knew him, he was that man! He had died and yet he lived—lived horribly, without soul or heart, the empty shell of a man.

A turn in the road brought them within sight of Boggs' race-track, a wide, level meadow. The judge paused irresolutely, and turned his bleared face on his friend.

"We'll stop here, Solomon," he said rather wearily, for the spirit of boast and jest was quite gone out of him. He glanced toward Carrington. "Are you a resident of these parts, sir?" he asked.

"I've been in Raleigh three days altogether," answered Carrington, and they continued on across the meadow in silence.

Here were men from the small clearings in homespun and butternut or fringed hunting-shirts, with their women folk trailing after them. Here, too, in lesser numbers, were the lords of the soil, the men who counted their acres by the thousand and their slaves by the score. There was the flutter of skirts among the moving groups, the nodding of gay parasols that shaded fresh young faces, while occasionally a comfortable family carriage with some planter's wife or daughter rolled silently over the turf.

The judge's dull eye kindled, the haggard lines that streaked his face erased themselves. This was life, opulent and full. These swift-rolling carriages with their handsome women, these well-dressed men on foot, and splendidly mounted, all did their part toward lifting him out of his gloom.

A cry from Hannibal drew his attention. Turning, he was in time to see the boy bound away. An instant later, to his astonishment, he saw a young girl who was seated with two men in an open carriage, spring to the ground, and dropping to her knees put her arms about the tattered little figure.

"Why, Hannibal!" cried Betty Malroy.

"Miss Betty! Miss Betty!" and Hannibal buried his head on her shoulder.

"What is it, Hannibal; what is it, dear?"

"Nothing, only I'm so glad to find you!"

"I am glad to see you, too!" said Betty, as she wiped his tears away.

"When did you get here, dear?"

"We got here just today, Miss Betty," said Hannibal.

Mr. Ware, careless as to dress, scowled down on the child. He had favored Boggs' with his presence, not because he felt the least interest in horse-racing, but because he had no faith in girls, and especially had he profound mistrust of Betty. She was so much easily portable wealth, a pink-faced child ready to fall into the arms of the first man who proposed to her. But Charley Norton had not seemed disturbed by the planter's forbidding air.

"What ragamuffin's this, Betty?" growled Ware disgustedly.

But Betty did not seem to hear.

"Did you come alone, Hannibal?" she asked.

"No, ma'am; the judge and Mr. Mahaffy, they fetched me."

The judge had drawn nearer as Betty and Hannibal spoke together, but Mahaffy hung back. There were gulfs not to be crossed by him. It was different with the judge; the native magnificence of his mind flitted him for any occasion.

"Allow me the honor to present myself, ma'am—Price is my name—Judge Slocum Price. May I be permitted to assume that this is the Miss Betty of whom my young protege so often speaks?"

Tom Ware gave him a glance of undisguised astonishment, while Norton regarded him with an expression of stunned and resolute gravity.

Betty looked at the judge rather inquiringly.

"I am glad he has found friends," she said slowly. She wanted to believe that Judge Slocum Price was somehow better than he looked, which should have been easy, since it was incredible that he could have been worse.

"He has indeed found friends," said the judge with mellow unction, and swelling visibly.

Now Betty caught sight of Carrington and bowed. Occupied with Hannibal and the judge, she had been unaware of his presence. Carrington stepped forward.

"Have you met Mr. Norton, and my brother, Mr. Carrington?" she asked.

The two young men shook hands, and Ware improved the opportunity to inspect the new-comer. But as his glance wandered over him, it took in more than Carrington, for it included the fine figure and swarthy face of Captain Murrell, who, with his eyes fixed on Betty, was thrusting his eager way through the crowd.

Murrell had presented himself at Belle Plain the day before. For upward of a year, Ware had enjoyed great peace of mind as a direct result of his absence from west Tennessee, and when he thought of him at all he had invariably put a period to his meditations with, "I hope to hell he catches it wherever he is!"

More than this, Betty had spoken

of the captain in no uncertain tones. He was not to repeat that visit.

As Murrell approached, the hot color surged into Betty's face. As for Hannibal, he had gone white to the lips, and his small hand clutched hers desperately.

Murrell, with all his hardihood, realized that a too great confidence had placed him in an awkward position, for Betty turned her back on him and began an animated conversation with Carrington and Charley Norton.

Hicks, the Belle Plain overseer, pushed his way to Murrell's side.

"Here, John Murrell, ain't you going to show us a trick or two?" he inquired.

Murrell turned quickly with a sense of relief.

"If you can spare me your rifle," he said, but his face wore a bleak look.

"Don't you think you've seen about enough, Bet?" demanded Tom. "You don't care for the shooting, do you?"

"That's the very thing I do care for; I think I'd rather see that than the horse-racing," said Betty perversely.

Betty now seated herself in the carriage, with Hannibal beside her, quietly determined to miss nothing. The judge, feeling that he had come into his own, leaned elegantly against the wheel, and explained the merits of each shot as it was made.

"I hope you gentlemen are not going to let me walk off with the prize?" said Murrell, approaching the group about the carriage. "Mr. Norton, I am told you are clever with the rifle."

"I am not shooting today," responded Norton haughtily.

Murrell stalked back to the line.

"At forty paces I'd risk it myself, ma'am," said the judge. "But at a hundred, offhand like this, I should most certainly fail—"

"It would be hard to beat that—" they heard Murrell say.

"At least it would be quite possible to equal it," said Carrington, advancing with Hannibal's rifle in his hands.

It was tossed to his shoulder, and poured out its contents in a bright stream of flame. There was a moment of silence.

"Center shot, ma'am!" cried the judge.

"I'll add twenty dollars to the purse!" Norton addressed himself to Carrington. "And I shall hope, sir, to see it go into your pocket."

"Our sentiments exactly, ma'am, are they not?" said the judge.

"Perhaps you'd like to bet a little of your money?" remarked Murrell.

"I'm ready to do that too, sir," responded Norton quietly.

"Five hundred dollars, then, that this gentleman in whose success you take so great an interest, can neither equal nor better my next shot!" Murrell had produced a roll of bills as he spoke.



Hannibal Gave Him a Frightened Glance and Edged Toward Mr. Mahaffy's Side.

Norton colored with embarrassment. Carrington took in the situation.

"Wait a minute," he said, and passed his purse to Norton. "Cover his money, sir," he added briefly.

"Thank you, my horses have run away with most of my cash," explained Norton.

"Your shot!" said Carrington shortly, to the outlaw.

Murrell taking careful aim, fired, clipping the center.

As soon as the result was known, Carrington raised his rifle; his bullet, truer than his opponent's, drove out the center. Murrell turned on him with an oath.

"You shoot well, but a board stuck against a tree is no test for a man's nerve," he said insolently.

Carrington was charging his piece.

"I only know of one other kind of target," he observed coolly.

"Yes—a living target!" cried Murrell.

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Portal of Hope.

"This—" the speaker was Judge Price; "this is the place for me. They are a warm-hearted people, sir; a prosperous people, and a patriotic people with an unstinted love of country. I'd like to hang out my shingle here and practice law."

The judge and Mr. Mahaffy were camped in the woods between Boggs' and Raleigh. Betty had carried Hannibal off to spend the night at Belle Plain.

"I crave opportunity, Solomon—the indorsement of my own class. I feel that I shall have it here," resumed the judge pensively. "Will you stroll into town with me, Solomon?"

He asked. Mahaffy shook his head.

"Then let your prayers follow me, for I'm off!" said the judge.

Ten minutes' walk brought him to the door of the city tavern, where he found Mr. Pegloe directing the activities of a small colored boy who was mopping out his bar. To him the judge made known his needs.

"Goin' to locate, are you?" said Mr. Pegloe.

"My friends urge it, sir, and I have taken the matter under consideration," answered the judge.

"Well, the only empty house in town is right over yonder; it belongs to young Charley Norton out at Thicket Point Plantation."

The house Mr. Pegloe pointed out was a small frame building; it stood directly on the street, with a narrow porch across the front, and a shed addition at the back. The judge scuttled over to it. The judge's pulse quickened. What a location, and what a fortunate chance that Mr. Norton was the owner of this most desirable tenement! He must see him at once. As he turned away to recross the street and learn from Mr. Pegloe by what road Thicket Point might be reached, Norton himself galloped into the village. Catching sight of the judge, he reined in his horse and swung himself from the saddle.

"I was hoping, sir, I might find you," he said.

"A wish I should have echoed had I been aware of it!" responded the judge. "I was about to do myself the honor to wait upon you at your plantation."

"Then I have saved you a long walk," said Norton. He surveyed the judge rather dubiously, but listened with kindness as he explained the business that would have taken him to Thicket Point.

"The house is quite at your service, sir," he said, at length.

"The rent—" began the judge.

But Mr. Norton, with a delicacy equal to his own, entreated him not to mention the rent. The house had come to him as boot in a trade. It had been occupied by a doctor and a lawyer; these gentlemen had each decamped between two days, heavily in debt at the stores and taverns, especially the taverns. And thus handsomely did Charley Norton acquit himself of the mission he had undertaken at Betty Malroy's request.

That same morning Tom Ware and Captain Murrell were seated in the small detached building at Belle Plain, known as the office, where the former spent most of his time when not in the saddle.

### (TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Reptiles That Have Long Life.

Some of the sacred crocodiles of India are said to be over a hundred, and vast estimates have been made of the ages of the giant tortoises of Madagascar. Certainly there was till recently (and may be still) a tortoise in the garden of the Governor of Cape-town which came there eighty years ago, and was believed to be 120 when it arrived.

### Only a Few.

Only a few of the people who are not satisfied with the world are doing anything to make it better.

## COMMERCIAL

### Weekly Review of Trade and Market Reports.

#### Bradstreets' says:

"Trade and crop reports, barring corn, are even more encouraging than heretofore. Improvement in trade has become more widespread, buyers visiting the larger centres are purchasing more freely, thus adding zest to house trade, road salesmen are doing better, profits and demand for iron and steel are growing, labor is well employed, the railroads have fewer idle cars, collections are less difficult to make, money is firmer because business demand has expanded and, finally, feeling throughout the surplus grain crop producing regions is better than it has been for several years.

"It is true that retail trade is rather dull and that clearance sales are general, but this situation is always characteristic of this time of the year.

"Business failures in the United States for the week were 221, against 224 last week, 208 in the like week of 1911, 231 in 1910, 219 in 1909 and 249 in 1908.

"Wheat, including flour, exports from the United States and Canada for the week aggregate 2,740,125 bushels, against 2,494,657 last week and 2,560,967 this week last year."

### Wholesale Markets

NEW YORK.—Wheat—Spot strong; new red, 107½¢ c f track, and No. 2 red, 109½¢ f o b adroit to arrive; new, No. 1 Northern Duluth, 104 f o b adroit.

Corn—Spot firm; export, 82½¢ f o b adroit.

Oats—Spot unsettled; new natural white, 58c, and white clipped, 61¢@64c on track.

Cheese firm; receipts, 1,451 boxes. Dairies, new, best, 16¢@16¼¢; skims, 3½¢@12¢.

Eggs firm; receipts, 10,882 cases. Fresh gathered extras, 23½¢@26¢; fresh gathered dirties, No. 1, 17½¢; do, No. 2, 15½¢@16½¢; do, inferior, 11¢@15¢.

Live poultry steady; Western broilers, 18¢@20¢; fowls, 15¢; turkeys, 14¢. Dressed poultry irregular; fresh killed, Western broilers, 18¢@25¢; fowls, 14¢@17¢; turkeys, 16¢@17¢.

Potatoes easy; Long Island, per brl, \$2.40@2.60; Jersey, \$2@2.40; Southern, \$1.20@2.50; Jersey sweets, basket, \$1.50@2.25; Southern, brl, \$2.25@4.

PHILADELPHIA.—Wheat firm and 1c higher; No. 2 red winter, in export elevators, 96½¢@97c.

Corn firm, ½c higher; No. 2 yellow, for local trade, 83¢@83½¢.

Eggs firm, 15c per case higher; Pennsylvania and other nearby firsts, f c, \$6.60 per case; do, current, receipts, f c, \$5.85@6.30; Western firsts, f c, \$6.60 per case; do, current receipts, f c, \$5.85@6.30.

BALTIMORE.—Wheat—Settling prices were: No. 2 red Western, 100½¢. Contract, 99. Steamer, No. 2 red, 94.

Corn—Western opened dull; spot mixed, 76½¢ nominal. Fair local demand reported, but little corn changing hands. Settling prices were: Contract, 77.

The closing was firmer. Spot, 77½¢ nominal.

Rye—Bag lots, nearby, as to quality, 75¢@82.

Hay—No. 1 timothy, \$25; No. 2, do, \$22.50@23.50; No. 3, do, \$19@20.50; choice light, clover mixed, \$21.50@22; No. 1 clover mixed, \$19.50@21; No. 2, do, \$17@18.50; No. 1 clover, \$17@18; No. 2, do, \$13.50@16; meadow grass and very grassy hay, \$12@15; packing hay and swale grass, \$10@12; no grade hay, as to kind, quality and condition, \$10@16.

Straw—No. 1 straight rye straw, \$16@16.50; No. 2, do, \$15.50@16; No. 1 tangled, do, \$12@12.50; No. 2, do, \$11@11.50; No. 1 wheat straw, \$8@8.50; No. 2, do, \$7.50@8; No. 1 oat straw, \$9@9.50; No. 2, do, \$8@8.50.

Butter—Creamery, fancy, 27½¢; creamery, choice, 26¢@27¢; creamery, good, 24¢@25¢; creamery, prints, 28¢@30c.

Cheese—Jobbing lots, per lb., 17 to 18c.

Eggs—We quote, per dozen, loss off: Maryland, Pennsylvania and nearby firsts, 20c; Western firsts, 20; West Virginia firsts, 19¢@20; Southern firsts, 18¢@19; recrated and rehandled eggs ½¢@1c higher.

Live Poultry—Chickens—Old hens, heavy, 15¢@15½¢; spring, 1½ lbs and over, 18; do, 1½ lbs, 17; do, 1 lb and under, 17.

### Live Stock

CHICAGO.—Cattle market slow; heaves, \$5.75@10.25; Texas steers, \$5@6.90; Western steers, \$6@8.30; stockers and feeders, \$4@7; cows and heifers, \$2.70@8.10; calves, \$6.50@9.90.

Hogs—Light, \$7.75@8.35; mixed, \$7.35@8.30; heavy, \$7.15@8.15; rough, \$7.15@7.40; pigs, \$6.40@8.10; bulk of sales, \$7.54@8.10.

Sheep—Native, \$3.20@4.65; Western, \$3.40@4.60; yearlings, \$4.40@5.60; native lambs, \$4.40@4.50; Western, \$4.30@7.60.

PITTSBURGH, PA.—Cattle steady; choice, \$9.25@9.50; prime, \$8.65@9.10.

Hogs—Prime heavy, \$8.60@8.65; mediums, \$8.70@8.75; heavy Yorkers, \$8.70@8.75; light Yorkers, \$8.70@8.75; pigs, \$8@8.50; roughs, \$7@7.40.

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