



# THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

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Illustrations By D. MELVILLE



## 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 Shocum Price. The judge recognizes in the boy, the grandson of an old time friend. Murrell arrives at Judge's home. Carrington's family on raft rescue Yancy, who is apparently dead. Price breaks jail. Betty and Carrington arrive at Belle Plain. Hannibal's ride is a most startling thing to the judge. Hannibal and Betty meet again. Murrell arrives in Belle Plain. He is playing for big stakes. Yancy awakes from long dreamless sleep on board the raft. Judge Price makes startling discoveries in looking up land titles. Charley Norton, a young planter, who assaults the judge, is mysteriously assaulted. Norton informs Carrington that Betty has promised to marry him. Norton is mysteriously shot. More light on Murrell's plots. He plans uprising of negroes.

## (CHAPTER XVII—Continued.)

"I have never so regarded it, Solomon," said the judge mildly. "I have read a different meaning in the beef and four and potatoes she's sent here. I expect if the truth could be known to us she is wondering in the midst of her grief why I haven't called, but she'll appreciate the considerate delicacy of a gentleman. I wish it were possible to get out flowers in this cussed wilderness!"

The judge had been occupied with a simple but ingenious toilet. He had trimmed the frayed skirts of his coat; then, by turning his cuffs inside out and upside down a fresh surface made its first public appearance. Next his shoes had engaged his attention. They might have well discouraged a less resolute and resourceful character, but with the contents of his in-well he artfully colored his white yarn socks where they showed through the rifts in the leather. This the judge did gaily, now humming a snatch of song, now listening civilly to Mahaffy, now replying with undisturbed cheerfulness. Last of all he clasped his dingy beaver on his head, giving it an indescribably jaunty slant, and stepped to the door.

"Well, wish me luck, Solomon, I'm off—come, Hannibal!" he said.

At heart he cherished small hope of seeing Betty, advantageous as he felt an interview might prove. However, on reaching Belle Plain, he and Hannibal were shown into the cool parlor by little Steve. It was more years than the judge cared to remember since he had put his foot inside such a house, but with true grandeur of soul he rose to the occasion; a sublimated dignity shone from every battered feature, while he fixed little Steve with so fierce a glance that the grin froze on his lips.

"You are to say that Judge Shocum Price presents his compliments and condolences to Miss Malroy—have you got that straight, you pinch of snoot?" he concluded affably. Little Steve, impressed alike by the judge's air of condescension and his easy flow of words, signified that he had.

"You may also say that Judge Price's ward, young Master Hazard, presents his compliments and condolences—What more the judge might have said was interrupted by the entrance of Betty, herself.

"My dear young lady—" the judge bowed, then he advanced toward her with the solemnity of carriage and countenance he deemed suitable to the occasion, and her extended hand was engulfed between his two plump palms. He rolled his eyes heavenward. "It's the Lord's to deal with us as his own inscrutable wisdom dictates," he murmured with pious resignation. "We are all poorer, ma'am, that he has died—just as we were richer while he lived!" The rich cadence of the judge's speech fell sonorously on the silence, and that look of horror which had never quite left Betty's eyes since they saw Charley Norton fall, rose out of their clear depths again. The judge, instantly stricken with a sense of the inadequacy of his words, doubled on his spiritual tracks. "In a round-about way, ma'am, we're bound to believe in the omnipotence of Providence—we must think it—though a body might be disposed to hold that west Tennessee had got out of the line of divine supervision recently. Let me lead you to a chair, ma'am!"

Hannibal had slipped to Betty's side and placed his hand in hers. The judge regarded the pair with great benevolence of expression.

"He would come, and I hadn't the heart to forbid it. If I can be of any service to you, ma'am either in the capacity of a friend—or professionally—I trust you will not hesitate to command me—" The judge backed toward the door.

"Did you walk out, Judge Price?" asked Betty kindly.

"Nothing more than a healthful exercise—but we will not detain you, ma'am; the pleasure of seeing you is something we had not reckoned on!" The judge's speech was thick and unctuous with good feeling. He wished that Mahaffy might have been there to note the reserve and dignity of his deportment.

"But you must let me order luncheon for you," said Betty. At least this questionable old man was good to Hannibal.

"I couldn't think of it, ma'am—" "You'll have a glass of wine, then," urged Betty hospitably. For the moment she had lost sight of what was clearly the judge's besetting sin.

The judge paused abruptly. He endured a moment of agonizing irresolution.

"On the advice of my physician I dare not touch wine—gout, ma'am, and liver—but this restriction does not apply to corn whiskey—in moderation, and as a tonic—either before meals, immediately after meals or at any time between meals—always keeping in mind the idea of its tonic properties—" The judge seemed to mellow and ripen. This was much better than having the dogs sicked on you! His manner toward Betty became almost fatherly. Poor young thing, so lonely and desolate in the midst of all this splendor—he surreptitiously wiped away a tear, and when little Steve presented himself and was told to bring whiskey, suddenly smacked his lips—a whole lot better, surely!

"I am sorry you think you must hurry away, Judge Price," said Betty. She still retained the small brown hand Hannibal had thrust into hers.

"The eastern mail gets in today, ma'am, and I have reason to think my share of it will be especially heavy, for it brings the bulk of my professional correspondence." In ten years the judge had received just one communication by mail—a bill which had followed him through four states and seven counties. "I expect my secretary—" boldly fixing Solomon Mahaffy's status, "is already dipping into it; an excellent assistant, ma'am, but literary rather than legal."

Little Steve reappeared bearing a silver tray on which was a decanter and glass.

"Since you insist, ma'am," the judge poured himself a drink, "my best respects—" he bowed profoundly.

"If you are quite willing, judge, I think I will keep Hannibal. Miss

Bowen, who has been here—since—" her voice broke suddenly.

"I understand, ma'am," said the judge soothingly. He gave her a glance of great concern and turned to Hannibal. "Dear lad, you'll be very quiet and obedient, and do exactly as Miss Malroy says? When shall I come for him, ma'am?"

"I'll send him to you when he is ready to go home. I am thinking of visiting my friends in North Carolina, and I should like to have him spend as much time as possible with me before I start for the east."

It had occurred to Betty that she had done little or nothing for the child; probably this would be her last opportunity.

The state of the judge's feelings was such that with elaborate absence of mind he poured himself a second drink of whiskey; and that there should be no doubt the act was one of inadvertence, said again, "My best respects, ma'am," and bowed as before. Putting down the glass, he backed toward the door.

"I trust you will not hesitate to call upon me if I can be of any use to you, ma'am—a message will bring me here without a moment's delay." He was rather disappointed that no allusion had been made to his recent activities. He reasoned correctly that Betty was as yet in ignorance of the somewhat dangerous eminence he had achieved as the champion of law and order. However, he reflected with satisfaction that Hannibal, in remaining, would admirably serve his ends.

Betty insisted that he should be driven home, and after faintly protesting, the judge gracefully yielded the point, and a few moments later rolled away from Belle Plain behind a pair of sleek-coated bays, with a negro in livery on the box. He was conscious of a great sense of exaltation. He felt that he should paralyze Mahaffy. He even temporarily forgot the blow his hopes had sustained when Betty spoke of returning to North Carolina. This was life—broad acres and big game—principally to trot after you totting liquor—and such liquor!—he lolled back luxuriantly with half-closed eyes.

"Twenty years in the wood if an hour!" he muttered. "I'd like to have just such a taste in my mouth when I come to die and probably she has barrels of it!" he sighed deeply, and searched his soul for words with which adequately to describe that whisky to Mahaffy.

But why not do more than paralyze Solomon—that would be pleasant, but not especially profitable. The judge came back quickly to the vexed problem of his future. He desired to make some striking display of Miss Malroy's courtesy. He knew that his credit was experiencing the pangs of an early mortality; he was not sensi-

tive, yet for some days he had been sensible of the fact that what he called the commercial class was viewing him with open disfavor; but he must hang on in Raleigh a little longer—for him it had become the abode of hope. The judge considered the matter. At least he could let people see something of that decent respect with which Miss Malroy treated him.

They were entering Raleigh now, and he ordered the coachman to pull his horses down to a walk. He had decided to make use of the Belle Plain turnout in creating an atmosphere of confidence and trust—especially trust. To this end he spent the best part of an hour interviewing his creditors. It amounted almost to a mass-meeting of the adult male population, for he had no favorites. When he invaded virgin territory he believed in starting the largest possible number of accounts without delay. The advantage of his system, as he explained its workings to Mahaffy, was that it bred a noble spirit of emulation.

He let it be known in a general way that things were looking up with him; just in what quarter he did not specify, but there he was, seated in the Belle Plain carriage, and the inference was unavoidable that Miss Malroy was to recognize his activities in a substantial manner.

Mahaffy, looting away the afternoon in the county clerk's office, heard of the judge's return. He heard that Charley Norton had left a will; that Thicket Point went to Miss Malroy; that the Norton cousins in Middle Tennessee were going to put up a fight; that Judge Price had been retained as counsel by Miss Malroy; that he was authorized to begin an independent search for Charley Norton's murderer, and was to spare no expense; that Judge Price was going to pay his debts. Mahaffy grinned at this and hurried home. He could believe all but the last; that was the crowning touch of unreality.

The judge explained the situation. "I wouldn't withhold hope from any man, Solomon; it's the cheapest thing in the world and the one thing we are most miserably about extending to our fellows. These people all feel better—and what did it cost me?—just a little decent consideration; just the knowledge of what the unavoidable associations of ideas in their own minds would do for them!"

What had seemed the corpse of credit breathed again, and the judge and Mahaffy immediately embarked upon a characteristic celebration. Early candle-light found them making a beginning; midnight came—the gray and purple of dawn—and they were still at it, back of closed doors and shuttered windows.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Betty Leaves Belle Plain.

Hannibal had devoted himself loyally to the judge's glorification, and Betty heard all about the letter, the snuffing of the candles and the reward of five thousand dollars, it vastly increased the child's sense of importance and satisfaction when he discovered she had known nothing of these matters until he told her of them.

"Why, where would Judge Price get so much money, Hannibal?" she asked, greatly astonished.

"He won't have to get it, Miss Betty; Mr. Mahaffy says he don't reckon no one will ever tell who wrote the letter—he 'lows the man who done that will keep pretty mum—be just desent tell!" the boy explained.

"No, I suppose not—" and Betty saw that perhaps, after all, the judge had not assumed any very great financial responsibility.

"He can't be a coward, though, Hannibal!" she added, for she understood that the risk of personal violence which he ran was genuine. She had formed her own unsympathetic estimate of him that day at Boggs' race-track; Mahaffy in his blackest hour could have added nothing to it. Twice since then she had met him in Raleigh, which had only served to fix that first impression.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"Since You Insist, Ma'am—My Best Respects."

## SHIFTS BLAME TO TAFT

### PERKINS ON CONDITIONS IN HARVESTER WORKS.

Roosevelt's Financial Backer Admits Employees Are Imposed on But Throws Responsibility on Government.

The facts made public by the state factory investigating committee, regarding labor conditions in the mills of the Harvester company at Auburn, N. Y., are of a character which would seem to invite immediate and indignant comment from the candidate of the Progressive party. It was admitted, in the superintendent's testimony, that 150 women were working at night on a ten-hour shift; that some of the working rooms were dark, even in daylight; that the women workers had to haul to their machines piles of hemp weighing 100 pounds, and that, contrary to law, no exhausts were operated to clear the atmosphere of the dust with which it was charged. Such conditions are unhappily too familiar in certain manufacturing centers of the country; but to Mr. Roosevelt, this opportunity for denouncing by name the individuals responsible for them, in one striking instance, ought to be something for immediate and effective use. For the superintendent also testified that orders as to labor conditions emanate ultimately from the board of directors of the company which owns the mill, and the Progressive platform insists on "the general prohibition of night work for women, and the establishment of an eight-hour day for women."

Unfortunately, that company is the International Harvester, and one of those directors is Mr. George W. Perkins, Mr. Roosevelt's chief financial backer and chairman of the third party's executive committee. While awaiting the comment of his candidate, Mr. Perkins made his own remarks on the factory committee's statements promptly. To inquiring reporters, he explains that the night work of the women "has been rendered necessary largely because of the government's perfectly unreasonable attitude toward large corporations." That is, it is really Mr. Taft who is responsible. This provides a new and interesting example of the familiar reasoning whereby, to certain minds, "Government" (especially government of the party to which one does not belong) is responsible for everything that is wrong with business, including our own mistakes. Mr. Perkins, however is glad the state of New York is making these things public, and is sure that "such results will be helpful to the cause." That, at all events, is an unselfish point of view. We are in the habit of doing wrong, but we want the government to stop us. It merely repeats the conclusions set forth by Mr. Perkins to the life insurance investigating committee of 1905, when, after describing how he and his colleagues on the board of the New York Life contributed \$50,000 of the policyholders' money to Mr. Roosevelt's campaign of 1904, he added that this was "a very, very bad practice," and that the government ought to do something about it. It is not every chairman of a political party's executive committee who is ready so cheerfully to pose as the terrible example which necessitates legislation to curb the misdoings of "the interests."—New York Evening Post.

### Deserting the Third Term.

It is really distressing how the predatory interests are deserting the Bull Moose standard. From Bandanna-ville, L. I., the colonel utters this complaint in a recent interview: "One of the most significant features of the present situation is the way in which all the big trusts all the corporation lawyers representing big trusts and every public man who now represents or has represented the cause of reaction and privilege in public life have rallied to the defense of the present administration's method of enforcing the anti-trust law, and admirably approved of the position held by Mr. Taft, Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Rockefeller and all other trust magnates and trust lawyers, that no further legislation is needed."

So George Perkins has rallied to the defense of the administration? Shame on you, George!

So Boss Finck has rallied to the defense of the administration? There's gratitude for you.

So Cecil Lyon, the Big Boss of Texas, has rallied to the defense of the administration?

For administration!

So McCormick, of the Harvester trust, has rallied to the defense of the administration? This is news, indeed!

So Frank Munsey has rallied to the defense of the administration? And thou, too, Frank!

Soon there will be nobody left but Me.

The Hardwick investigation exposed the vulnerable spots of the sugar trust to public attack. The Penrose hearings denounced the Dutch Standard. The Lodge amendment to the house bill provided a fresh touchstone for this giant among listed stock speculations as well as for its adjunct, the beet sugar stock.

Therefore, we answer the esteemed New York World that there is no mystery. Research, coupled with a truthful publication of facts, easily tell the tale.—Pittsburgh Leader.

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