



THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

By VAUGHAN KESTER
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 Way 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, a friend of 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. Yancy and Bladen, who are friends of the Ferrises, have an encounter with Captain Murrell, who forces his attentions on her, and is rescued by Bruce Carrington. Yancy and Bladen, who are friends of the Ferrises, have an encounter with Captain Murrell, who forces his attentions on her, and is rescued by Bruce Carrington.

and her hand stole up to her heart, and, white and slim, rested against the black fabric of her dress. "Don't you be scared, Miss Betty!" said Hannibal. They went silently from the house and again crossed the lawn to the terrace. Under the leafy arch which canopied them there was already the deep purple of twilight. "Do you reckon it were Captain Murrell shot Mr. Norton, Miss Betty?" asked Hannibal in a shuddering whisper. "Hush—Oh, hush, Hannibal! It is too awful to even speak of—" and, sobbing and half hysterical, she covered her face with her hands. "But where are we going, Miss Betty?" asked the boy. "I don't know, dear!" She had an agonizing sense of the night's approach and of her own utter helplessness. "I'll tell you what, Miss Betty, let's go to the judge and Mr. Mahaffy!" said Hannibal. "Judge Price?" She had not thought of him as a possible protector. "Why, Miss Betty, ain't I told you he ain't afraid of nothing? We could walk to Raleigh easy if you don't want your niggers to hook up a team for you."

Hannibal as before, and he returned to his consideration of the judge. He sensed something of that intellectual nimbleness which his patron's physical make-up in nowise suggested, since his face was a mask that usually left one in doubt as to just how much of what he heard succeeded in making its impression on him; but the boy knew that Slocum Price's blind side was a shelterless exposure. "You don't think the carriage could have passed us while we were crossing the corn-field?" said Betty. "No, I reckon we couldn't a-missed hearing it," answered Hannibal. He had scarcely spoken when they caught the rattle of wheels and the beat of hoofs. These sounds swept nearer and nearer, and the darkness disgorged the Belle Platin team and carriage. "George!" cried Betty, a world of relief in her tones. "Whoa, you!" and George reined in his horses with a jerk. "Who's dar?" he asked, bending forward on the box as he sought to pierce the darkness with his glance. "George!" cried Betty, a world of relief in her tones. "Whoa, you!" and George reined in his horses with a jerk. "Who's dar?" he asked, bending forward on the box as he sought to pierce the darkness with his glance.

ger which for the moment dominated all her other emotions. She struggled to her feet, but Slosson put out a heavy hand and thrust her back. "There now," he urged soothingly. "Why make a fuss? We ain't going to harm you; we wouldn't for no sum of money. Drive on, Jim—drive like hell!" This last was addressed to the man who had taken George's place on the box, where a fourth member of Slosson's band had forced the coachman down into the narrow space between the seat and dashboard, and was holding a pistol to his head while he sternly enjoined silence. With a word to the horses Jim swung about and the carriage rolled off through the night at a breakneck pace. Betty's shaking hands drew Hannibal closer to her side as she felt the surge of her terrors rise within her. Who were these men—where could they be taking her—and for what purpose? The events of the past week linked themselves in tragic sequence in her mind. What was it she had to fear? Was it Tom for whom these men were acting? Tom who would profit greatly by her disappearance or death? They swept past the entrance at Belle Platin, past a break in the wall of the forest where the pale light of stars showed Betty the cornfield she and Hannibal had but lately crossed, and then on into pitchy darkness again. She clung to the desperate hope that they might meet some one on the road, when she could cry out and give the alarm. She held herself in readiness for this, but there was only the steady pounding of the big bays as Jim with voice and whip urged them forward. At last he abruptly checked them, and Bunker and Slosson sprang from their seats. "Get down, ma'am!" said the latter. "Where are you taking me?" asked Betty, in a voice that shook in spite of her efforts to control it. "You must hurry, ma'am," urged Slosson impatiently. "I won't move until I know where you intend taking me!" said Betty. "If I am to die—"

CHAPTER XVIII (Continued).

Whatever the promptings that inspired this warning, they plainly had nothing to do with either liking or sympathy. Her dominating emotion seemed to be a sullen sort of resentment which lit up her glance with a dull fire; yet her feelings were so clearly and so keenly personal that Betty understood the motive that had brought her there. The explanation, she found, left her wondering just where and how her own fate was linked with that of this poor white.

Betty suddenly remembered the carriage which had taken the judge into town; she was sure it had not yet returned. "We will go to the judge, Hannibal! George, who drove him into Raleigh, has not come back; if we hurry we may meet him on the road." Screened by the thick shadows, they passed up the path that edged the bayou; at the head of the inlet they entered a clearing, and crossing this they came to the corn-field which lay between the house and the high-road. Following one of the shock rows they hurried to the mouth of the lane. "Hannibal, I don't want to tell the judge why I am leaving Belle Platin—about the woman, I mean," said Betty. "You reckon they'd kill her, don't you, Miss Betty, if they knew what she'd done?" speculated the boy. It occurred to him that an adequate explanation of their flight would require preparation, since the judge was at all times singularly alive to the slightest discrepancy of statement. They had issued from the corn-field and went along the road toward Raleigh. Suddenly Betty paused. "Hark! she whispered. "It were nothing, Miss Betty," said Hannibal reassuringly, and they hurried forward again. In the utter stillness through which they moved Betty heard the beating of her own heart, and the soft and all but inaudible patter of the boy's bare feet on the warm dust of the road. Vague forms that resolved themselves into trees and bushes seemed to creep toward them out of the night's black uncertainty. Once more Betty paused. "It were nothing, Miss Betty," said

CHAPTER XIX. Prisoners. In the face of Betty's indignant protest Slosson and the man named Bunker climbed into the carriage. "Don't you be scared, ma'am," said the tavern-keeper, who smelt strongly of whisky. "I wouldn't lift my hand ag'in no good-looking female except in kindness." "How dare you stop my carriage?" cried Betty, with a very genuine an-

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He Was Looking into the Face of Slosson, the Tavern-keeper.

COMMERCIAL

Weekly Review of Trade and Market Reports.

R. G. Dun and Company's weekly review of trade says: "All the developments of the week confirm and strengthen the improvement in business activity. Each week brings a higher price level in iron and steel, and the resumption of several merchant furnaces that have been idle for two years is expected. Firmness prevails in pig iron at all leading centers, with substantial advances noted in some districts. Premiums paid for prompt shipments indicate that consumers are in urgent need of material and new business is pretty evenly distributed, with special activity in steel bars, plates and shapes. "Dry goods houses report a steady volume of duplicate business, buyers displaying confidence, but confining their operations to frequent purchases of small parcels. Fall distribution of cotton goods is much better than last year, and indications are that current values will be maintained for a considerable period. "Trading in footwear shows further improvement, and while little buying has yet been done for spring, many supplementary orders for fall and winter goods have been received."

Wholesale Markets

NEW YORK.—Wheat—Spot steady; new No. 2 red, 103½¢; c i f track and f o b afloat; No. 1 Northern Duluth, 100¼¢ f o b afloat. Corn—Spot steady; export, 59½¢; f o b afloat, December to March. Oats—Spot firm; new standard white nominal; No. 3, 38¢35½¢; No. 4, 36½¢37¢; natural white, 26¢29¢; white clipped, 39¢42¢. Butter—Steady; receipts, 5,744 tubs. Creamery extras, 20½¢31¢; firsts, 28¢30¢; factory current make firsts, 23¢; seconds, 22¢22½¢. Eggs—Fresh gathered extras, 30¢32¢; extra firsts, 27¢28½¢; firsts, 24¢26¢; thirds and poorer, 18¢20¢; refrigerator firsts, season's storage charges paid, 23½¢24½¢; lower grades, 19¢22½¢; state, Pennsylvania and nearby henery whites, fancy, large, new laid, 29¢40¢. Dressed Poultry—Firm; fresh killed Western chickens, 14¢24¢; fowls, 15¢17½¢; turkeys, 16¢17¢. Live barely steady; Western broilers, 19¢20¢; fowls, 18¢; turkeys, 15¢.

PHILADELPHIA.—Wheat—Quiet and unchanged. Corn—Firm and unchanged. Oats—Firm and unchanged. Butter—Firm, unchanged. Eggs—Firm, unchanged. Cheese—Firm; good demand. New York full cream, choice, 16¼¢; do, fair to good, 15½¢16¼¢. Live Poultry—Dull and lower. Fowls, 15¢16¢; old roosters, 12¢13¢; spring chickens, 16¢17¢. Dressed poultry firm and unchanged. Tallow unchanged. Potatoes—Firm, shade higher. Jersey, prime, per basket, 35¢40¢; nearby, per bu, 50¢55¢.

BALTIMORE.—Wheat—Spot and September, No. 2 red, 94¢; October, No. 2 red, 95¢; November, No. 2 red, 97¢; December, No. 2 red, 100¢. Corn—Contract, 79½¢. The closing was quiet; spot, 79¼¢ nominal. Oats—No. 2 white, 40¼¢; standard white, 38¼¢38¾¢; No. 3 white, 36¢36¼¢; No. 4 white, 35¢ asked. Rye—No. 2 Western domestic, 78¢80¢; No. 3 do do, 76¢77¢; No. 2 nearby carlots, 76¢78¢; bag lots nearby, as to quality, 65¢80¢. Hay—No. 1 timothy, \$21.50@22¢; No. 2, do, \$19.50@20¢; No. 3, do, \$17@19¢; choice light, clover mixed, \$18.50@19¢; No. 1 clover mixed, \$17@18¢; No. 2, do, \$14@16¢; No. 1 clover, \$13@14¢; No. 2, do, \$11@12¢. Straw—No. 1 straight rye straw, \$19@16.50; No. 1, do, \$18@15.50; No. 1 tangled, do, \$12@12.50; No. 2, do, \$11@11.50; No. 1 wheat straw, \$7.50@8¢; No. 2, do, \$6.50@7¢; No. 1 oat straw, \$8.50@9¢; No. 2, do, \$8@8.50.

Butter—Creamery, fancy, 29½¢30¢; creamery, choice, 28¢29¢; creamery, good, 26¢27¢; creamery, prints, 29¢31¢; creamery, blocks, 28¢30¢; Maryland and Pennsylvania rolls, 20¢22¢. Cheese—Jobbing lots, per lb., 18¢18½¢. Eggs—Maryland, Pennsylvania and nearby firsts, 25¢; Western firsts, 25¢; West Virginia, firsts, 24¢25¢; Southern firsts, 23¢24¢. Recrated and re-hatched eggs ¼ to 1c higher. Live Poultry—Chickens, per lb.—Old hens, heavy, 16¢; do do, small to medium, 15¢; old roosters, 10¢; spring, 1½ lbs and over, 18¢; do, 1½ lbs, 18¢; do, 1 lb and under, 18¢.

Live Stock

CHICAGO.—Cattle—Beeves, \$5.85@11; Texas steers, \$4.45@6.25; Western steers, \$5.70@6.30; stockers and feeders, \$4.30@7.35; cows and heifers, \$2.90@8¢. Hogs—Light, \$7.15@8.80; mixed, \$8@8.80; heavy, \$7.85@8.60; rough, \$7.85@8.05; pigs, \$5@7.90; bulk of sales, \$8.10@8.60. Sheep—Native, \$3.50@4.60; Western, \$3.60@4.45; yearlings, \$4.75@5.65; lambs, native, \$4.85@7.40; Western, \$4.90@7.60. PITTSBURGH, PA.—Cattle steady; supply light. Choice, \$9@9.25; prime, \$8.30@8.70. Sheep—Prime wethers, \$4.50@4.65; culls and common, \$2@3; lambs, \$5@7; veal calves, \$10@10.60.

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