



# THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

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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 Cronshaw, 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 is kept 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 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 rescues Yancy, who is apparently dead. Price breaks jail. Betty and Carrington arrive at Belle Plain. Hannibal's rifle discloses some startling things to the judge. Hannibal and Betty meet again. Murrell arrives in Belle Plain. Is playing for big stakes. Yancy awakes from long dream. Makes startling discoveries in looking up land titles. Charles Norton, judge's mysteriously assaulted. Norton informs Carrington that Betty has promised to marry him. Norton is mysteriously shot. More light on Murrell's plot. He plans uprising of negroes. Judge Price, with Hannibal, visits Betty and she keeps the boy as a companion. In a stroll Betty takes with Hannibal they meet Bess Hicks, daughter of a former owner, who warns Betty of danger and counsels her to leave Belle Plain at once. Betty, terrified, acts on Bess' advice. Carrington, on their way their carriage it stopped by Slosson, the tavern keeper, and a confederate, and Betty and Hannibal are made prisoners. The pair are taken to Hicks' cabin, in an almost inaccessible spot, and there Murrell visits Betty and reveals his part in the plot and his object. Betty spurns his proffered love and the interview is ended by the arrival of a messenger, bearing the possible outcome of the crime. Judge Price, hearing of the abduction, plans action. The judge, in a charge of the situation, and search for the missing ones is instituted. Carrington visits the judge and allies are discovered. Judge Price visits Colonel Ferris, where he meets Yancy and Cavendish. Becoming enraged, Price dashes a glass of whiskey into the colonel's face and a duel is arranged. Murrell is arrested for negro stealing and his bubble bursts. The judge and Carrington makes frantic search for Betty and the boy. Carrington finds Betty and Hannibal, and a fierce gun fight follows. Yancy appears and assists in the rescue. Bruce Carrington and Betty come to an understanding. The judge receives an important letter. For the judge and is killed. Fights duel for the judge and is killed.

## CHAPTER XXII—(Continued.)

Hannibal instantly sat erect and looked up at the judge, his blue eyes wide with amazement at this extraordinary statement.

"It is a very strange story, Hannibal, and its links are not all in my hands, but I am sure because of what I already know. I, who thought that not a drop of my blood flowed in any veins but my own, live again in you. Do you understand what I am telling you? You are my own dear little grandson—and the judge looked down with no uncertain love and pride into the small face upturned to his.

"I am glad if you are my grandfather, judge," said Hannibal very gravely. "I always liked you."

"Thank you, dear lad," responded the judge with equal gravity, and then as Hannibal nestled back in his grandfather's arms a single big tear dropped from the end of that gentleman's prominent nose.

"There will be many and great changes in store for us," continued the judge. "But as we meet adversity with dignity, I am sure we shall be able to endure prosperity with equanimity—only unworthy natures are affected by what is at best superficial and accidental. I mean that the blight of poverty is about to be lifted from our lives."

"Do you mean we ain't going to be pore any longer, grandfather?" asked Hannibal.

The judge regarded him with infinite tenderness of expression; he was profoundly moved.

"Would you mind saying that again, dear lad?"

"Do you mean we ain't going to be pore any longer, grandfather?" repeated Hannibal.

"I shall enjoy an adequate competency which I am about to recover. It will be sufficient for the indulgence of those simple and intellectual tastes I propose to cultivate for the future. In spite of himself the judge sighed. This was hardly in line with his ideals, but the right to choose was no longer his. "You will be very rich, Hannibal. The Quintard lands—your grandmother was a Quintard—will be yours; they run up into the hundred of thousands of acres hereabout; this land will be yours as soon as I can establish your identity."

"Will Uncle Bob be rich too?" inquired Hannibal.

"Certainly. How can he be poor when we possess wealth?" answered the judge.

"You reckon he will always live with us, don't you, grandfather?"

"I would not have it otherwise. I admire Mr. Yancy—he is simple and direct, and fit for any company under

heaven except that of fools. His treatment of you has placed me under everlasting obligations; he shall share what we have. My one bitter, unavailing regret is that Solomon Mahaffy will not be here to partake of our altered fortunes." And the judge sighed deeply.

"Uncle Bob told me Mr. Mahaffy got hurt in a duel, grandfather?" said Hannibal.

"He was as inexperienced as a child in the use of firearms, and he had to deal with scoundrels who had neither mercy nor generous feeling—but his courage was magnificent."

Presently Hannibal was deep in his account of those adventures he had shared with Miss Betty.

"And Miss Malroy—where is she now?" asked the judge, in the first pause of the boy's narrative.

"She's at Mr. Bowen's house. Mr. Carrington and Mr. Cavendish are here too. Mrs. Cavendish stayed down yonder at the Hates' plantation. Grandfather, it were Captain Murrell who had me stole—do you reckon he was going to take me back to Mr. Bladen?"

"I will see Miss Malroy in the morning. We must combine—our interests are identical. There should be help in this for more than one scoundrel! I can see now how criminal my disinclination to push myself to the front has been!" said the judge, with conviction. "Never again will I shrink from what I know to be a public duty."

A little later they went down-stairs, where the judge had Yancy make up a bed for himself and Hannibal on the floor. He would watch alone beside Mahaffy, he was certain this would have been the dead man's wish; then he said good night and mounted heavily to the floor above to resume his vigil and his musings.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

A Crisis at the Court-House.

Just at daybreak Yancy was roused by the pressure of a hand on his shoulder, and opening his eyes saw that the judge was bending over him.

"Dress!" he said briefly. "There's every prospect of trouble—get your rifle and come with me!"

Yancy noted that this prospect of trouble seemed to afford the judge a pleasurable sensation; indeed, he had quite lost his former air of somber and suppressed melancholy.

"I let you sleep, thinking you needed the rest," the judge went on. "But ever since midnight we've been on the verge of riot and possible bloodshed. They've arrested John Murrell—it's claimed he's planned a servile rebellion! A man named Hues, who had warmed his way into his confidence, made the arrest. He carried Murrell into Memphis, but the local magistrate, intimidated, most likely, declined to have anything to do with holding him. In spite of this, Hues managed to get his prisoner lodged in jail, but along about nightfall the situation began to look serious. Folks were swarming into town armed to the teeth, and Hues fetched Murrell across country to Raleigh—"

"Yes," said Yancy.



"Well, the sheriff has refused to take Murrell into custody. Hues has him down at the court-house, but whether or not he is going to be able to hold him is another matter!"

Yancy and Hannibal had dressed by this time, and the judge led the way from the house. The Scratch Hiller looked about him. Across the street a group of men, the greater number of whom were armed, stood in front of Pegloe's tavern. Glancing in the direction of the court-house, he observed that the square before it held other groups. But what impressed him more was the ominous silence that was everywhere. At his elbow, the judge was breathing deep.

"We are face to face with a very deplorable condition, Mr. Yancy. Court was to sit here today, but Judge Morrow and the public prosecutor have left town, and as you see, Murrell's friends have gathered for a rescue. There's a sprinkling of the better element—but only a sprinkling. I saw Judge Morrow this morning at four o'clock—I told him I would obligate myself to present for his consideration evidence of a striking and sensational character, evidence which would show conclusively that Murrell should be held to await the action of the next grand jury—this was after a conference with Hues—I guaranteed his safety. Sir, the man refused to listen to me! He showed himself utterly devoid of any feeling of public duty." The bitter sense of failure and futility was leaving the judge. The situation made its demands on that basic faith in his own powers which remained imbedded in his character.

They had entered the court-house square. On the steps of the building Betts was arguing loudly with Hues, who stood in the doorway, rifle in hand.

"Maybe you don't know this is county property?" the sheriff was saying. "And that you have taken unlawful possession of it for an unlawful purpose? I am going to open them doors—a passel of strangers can't keep folks out of a building their own money has bought and paid for!"

While he was speaking, the judge had pushed his way through the crowd to the foot of the steps.

"That was very nicely said, Mr. Betts," observed the judge. He smiled widely and sweetly. The sheriff gave him a hostile glare. "Do you know that Morrow has left town?" the judge went on.

"I ain't got nothin' to do with Judge Morrow. It's my duty to see that this building is ready for him when he's a mind to open court in it."

"You are willing to assume the responsibility of throwing open these doors?" inquired the judge affably.

"I shorley ain't," said Betts. "Why, some of these folks are our leading people!"

The judge turned to the crowd, and spoke in a tone of excessive civility. "Just a word, gentlemen!—the sheriff is right; it is your court-house and you should not be kept out of it. No doubt there are some of you whose presence in this building will sooner or later be urgently desired. We are going to let all who wish to enter, but

I beg you to remember that there will be five men inside whose prejudices are all in favor of law and order." He pushed past Hues and entered the court-house, followed by Yancy and Hannibal. "Well let 'em in where I can talk to 'em," he said almost gaily. "Besides, they'll come in anyhow when they get ready, so there's no sense in exciting them."

In the court-house, Murrell, bound hand and foot, was seated between Carrington and the Earl of Lambeth in the little railed-off space below the judge's bench. Fear and suffering had blanched his unshaven cheeks and given a wild light to his deeply sunken eyes. At sight of Yancy a smothered exclamation broke from his lips; he had supposed this man dead these many months!

Hues had abandoned his post, and the crowd, suddenly grown clamorous, stormed the narrow entrance. One of the doors, borne from its hinges, went down with a crash. The judge, a fierce light flashing from his eyes, turned to Yancy.

"No matter what happens, this fellow Murrell is not to escape—if he calls on his friends to rescue him he is to be shot!"

The hail was falling with swearing, struggling men, the floor shook beneath their heavy tread; then they burst into the court-room and saluted Murrell with a great shout. But Murrell, bound, in rags, and silent, his lips frozen in a wolfish grin, was a depressing sight, and the boldest felt something of his unrestrained lawlessness go from him.

Less noisy now, the crowd spread itself out among the benches or swarmed up into the tiny gallery at the back of the building. Man after man had hurried forward, intent on passing beyond the railing, but each had encountered the judge, formidable and forbidding, and had turned aside. Gradually the many pairs of eyes roving over the little group surrounding the outlaw focused themselves on Slocum Price. It was in unconscious recognition of that moral force which was his, a tribute to the grim dignity of his unshaken courage; what he would do seemed worth considering.

He was charmed to hear his name pass in a whisper from lip to lip. Well, it was time they knew him! He squared his ponderous shoulder and made a gesture commanding silence. Battered, shabby and debauched, he was like some old war horse who sniffs the odor of battle that the wind incontinently brings to his nostrils.

"Don't let him speak!" cried a voice, and a tumult succeeded.

Cool and indomitable the judge waited for it to subside. He saw that the color was stealing back into Murrell's face. The outlaw was feeling that he was a leader not overthrown; these were his friends and followers, his safety was their safety, too. In a lull in the storm of sound the judge attempted to make himself heard, but his words were lost in the angry roar that descended on him.

"Don't let him speak! Kill him! Kill him!"

A score of men sprang to their feet and from all sides came the click of rifle and pistol hammers as they were drawn to the full cock. The judge's fate seemed to rest on a breath. He swung about on his heel and gave a curt nod to Yancy and Cavendish, who, falling back a step, tossed their guns to their shoulders and covered Murrell. A sudden hush grew up out of the tumult; the cries, angry and jeering, dwindled to a murmur, and a dead pall of silence rested on the crowded room.

The very taste of triumph was in the judge's mouth. Then came a commotion at the back of the building.

A ripple of comment, and Colonel Ferriss elbowed his way through the crowd. At sight of his enemy the judge's face went from white to red, while his eyes blazed; but for the moment the force of his emotions left him speechless. Here and there, as he advanced, Ferriss recognized a friend and bowed coolly to the right and left.

## (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Improved Spanking Machine.

A spanking machine, operated by electricity and warranted to cure unruly youngsters, was exhibited at New York recently. The electric spanker is constructed somewhat similar to an electric vibrator. The preliminary preparations for an electric spanking are the same as in the olden days. When the child is ready the hard rubber disk is applied to the area under treatment and the current turned on. Small disks are provided for the younger offenders. To add to the other advantages of the electric spanker, it might be said it does not pain the parent more than the child.

Wrong idea of Education.

It is a mistake to look on education as a golden key to individual pecuniary profit.

DEATH RATE IS LOWER IN STATE

This Year Will Be Lowest Per 1,000 Ever Known

SAFE METHOD OF LIVING

Dr. Samuel C. Dixon, Commissioner of Health, Announces Decrease in Annual Rate of Mortality—Commends Purity of Waters.

(Special Harrisburg Correspondence.)

Harrisburg.—The new year is welcomed by 17,000 men, women and children in this State who would not have lived this year to hear the merry jangle of the bells ringing in 1913 had the death rate of 1906 prevailed during the past year. From the figures which have already been compiled, Dr. Samuel C. Dixon, Commissioner of Health, was able to announce that the death rate throughout the State for 1912 will only average 14 per thousand. This is the lowest rate which has ever been reached in the Commonwealth. Dr. Dixon said: "The benefits of public health work and the accompanying enlightenment of the people in regard to matters of sanitation and hygiene are shown by the steady decrease in the death rate in the past few years. The purification of the waters, the reduction of communicable diseases and the cordination of the various organizations to aid in the reduction of infant mortality have all wrought splendid results. What has been done shows that we have excellent ground to hope for a Pennsylvania in which no children shall die from diphtheria, in which there shall be no typhoid, scarlet fever, whooping cough, measles and tuberculosis. This is the goal toward which we are striving. The work of the past few years has wrought tangible results. It has paid enormous dividends on the money invested through the lives saved and the illness eliminated. The knowledge that in the past year untimely death has been shut out of more than 17,000 of our homes and that more than 170,000 of our people have been spared the ravages of acute diseases, give us courage for the work of the coming year."

Agricultural Education Aid.

L. H. Dennis, the agricultural expert of the State Department of Public Instruction, will work out a plan whereby a system can be devised to furnish aid for furtherance of such education. Professor Dennis spent part of this year visiting districts where interest was shown in such education and a pamphlet giving an outline of courses was published. It is the idea to have an item inserted in the appropriation bill to assist in establishing such courses in districts where such education is needed and where means are not at hand to secure material.

Receivers for Phone Companies.

Two receivers will be appointed by Federal Judge Witmer to conduct the affairs of the various underlying and subsidiary companies of the American Union Telephone and Telegraph Company. One will be selected by the court and the other nominated by counsel. This action was outlined during the applications of the United Telephone and Telegraph and the Huntington and Bedford Telephone companies for receivers. These are the last of the subsidiary companies of the American Union to appear in court.

Court Helps State Taxes.

As the result of two lengthy opinions by the Dauphin County Court, the Commonwealth gains just \$300 in corporation taxes. In the case against the Johnstown Passenger Railway Company the State lost its contention that the \$1,400,000 fixed by the company as its capital stock was \$750,495 short of the actual figures. This is one of the few cases Auditor-General Sisson has lost. The court decides in the case against the Black Creek Improvement Company that the capital of \$600,000 certified by the company is \$60,000 less than the actual stock of the company, and orders the company to pay the State on the basis of 5 mills.

State Treasury's Report.

The total receipts for the month of December at the State Treasury were \$625,926, a gain of \$192,928 over the same period of last year, but there is a deficit of \$1,650,368 over the first month of last fiscal year. The balance to start the new year is \$7,345,738 in the general fund and \$785,744 in the sinking fund, making the total on deposit \$8,131,482.

Another Girl's Picture.

A good story is going the rounds of Capitol Hill. It seems a man who is married, or billed for early matrimony, took his watch to a jeweler to have it repaired. He had his girl's picture in the watch when he turned it over to the jeweler, and when it came back he had some other girl's picture in it. But he did not know it until he took out his watch in the presence of the real girl. And all the State's soldiers and all the State's automobiles and all the State's police can hardly convince that real girl of the truth.

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Do You Mean We Ain't Going to Be Pore Any Longer, Grandfather?