

# 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 plan 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, 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 Halaam, and is discharged with costs for the plaintiff. Betty Malroy, a friend of the Ferrisses, has a conversation with Captain Murrell, who forces his attentions on her, and is rescued by Yancy. Murrell sets out for her Tennessee home. Carrington takes the same stage. Yancy and Hannibal discuss the matter, and their trail. Hannibal arrives at the home of Judge Slocum Price. The judge recognizes in the boy the nephew of his late-time friend, Murrell. Murrell arrives at Judge's home. Cavendish family on raft reaches 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. He is playing for big stakes. Yancy awakes from long dreamless sleep on board the raft. Judge Price makes startling discovery in looking up and titles. Charles Yancy, a young planter, who assists the judge, is mysteriously assaulted. Norton informs Carrington that Betty promised to marry him. Norton is mysteriously shot. More light on Murrell's plot. He plans a springing of negroes. Judge Price, with Hannibal, visits Betty, and she keeps the boy as a companion. In a stroll Betty takes with Hannibal the money she has hidden. She leaves Belle Plain at once. Betty, terrified by her carriage it stopped by Slocum, acts on her own. She and Carrington, the tavern keeper, and a confederate, and Betty and Hannibal are made prisoners. The pair are taken to Hickok 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 Yancy, terrified at possible outcome of the crime. Judge Price, hearing of the abduction, plans action. The judge takes charge of the situation, and search for the missing ones is instituted. Carrington visits the judge and allies are discovered. Judge Price visits Colonel Pentress, 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 hubbub bursts. The judge and Murrell discuss the coming duel. 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.

pen at sun-up—he could not recall what it was to be, though he distinctly remembered that Mahaffy had spoken of this very matter—Mahaffy, the austere and implacable, the embodied conscience whose fealty to duty had somehow survived his own spiritual ruin, so that he had become a sort of moral sign-post, ever pointing the way yet never going it himself.

The judge lay still and thought deeply as the light intensified itself. What was it that Mahaffy had said he was to do at sun-up? The very hour accented his suspicions. Probably it was no more than some cheerless obligation to be met, or Mahaffy would not have been so concerned about it. Eventually he decided to refer everything to Mahaffy. He spoke his friend's name weakly and in a shaking voice, but received no answer.

"Solomon!" he repeated, and shifting his position, looked in what should have been the direction of the shake-down bed his friend occupied. Neither the bed nor Mahaffy were there. The judge gasped—he wondered if this were not a premonition of certain hallucinations to which he was not a stranger. Then all in a flash he remembered Pentress and the meeting at Boggs', something of how the evening had been spent, and a spasm of regret shook him.

"I had other things to think of. It should never happen again!" he told himself remorsefully.

He was wide-awake now. Doubtless Pegloe had put him to bed. Well,

He was beginning to experience a great sense of haste; it was two miles to Boggs' and Pentress would be there at sun-up. Finally he abandoned his quest of the missing garments and turned to the door. To say that he was amazed when he found it locked would have most inadequately described his emotions. Breathing deep, he fell back a step or two, and then with all the vigor he could muster launched himself at the door. But it resisted him.

"It's bolted on the other side!" he muttered, the full measure of Pegloe's perfidy revealing itself to his mind. He was aghast. It was a plot to discredit him. Pegloe's hospitality had been inspired by his enemy, for Pegloe was Pentress' tenant.

Again he attacked the door; he believed it might be possible to force it from its hinges, but Pegloe had done his work too well for that, and at last, spent and breathless, the judge dropped down on the edge of his bed to consider the situation. He was without clothes and he was a prisoner, yet his mind rose splendidly to meet the difficulties that beset him. His greatest activities were reserved for what appeared to be only a season of despair. He armed himself with a three-legged stool he had found and turned once more to the door, but the stout planks stood firm under his blows.

"Unless I get out of here in time I'm a ruined man!" thought the judge. "After this Pentress will refuse to meet me!"

The window next engaged his attention. That, too, Pegloe had taken the precaution to fasten, but a single savage blow of the stool shattered glass and sash and left an empty space that framed the dawn's red glow. The judge looked out and shook his head dubiously. It was twelve feet or more to the ground, a risky drop for a gentleman of his years and build. The judge considered making a rope of his bedding and lowering himself to the ground by means of it; he remembered to have read of captives in that interesting French prison, the Bastille, who did this. However, an equally ingenious but much more simple use for his bedding occurred to him; it would form a soft and yielding substance on which to alight. He gathered it up into his arms, feather-bed and all, and pushed it through the window, then he wriggled out across the ledge, feet first, and lowering him-

Some twenty minutes later Boggs' came in sight. He experienced a moment of doubt—doubtless Pentress had been there and gone! It was a hideous thought and the judge groaned. Then at the other end of the meadow near the woods he distinguished several men, Pentress and his friends beyond question. The judge laughed aloud. In spite of everything he was keeping his engagement, he was plucking his triumph out of the very dregs of failure. The judge threw himself over the fence, a corner of the quilt caught on one of the rails; he turned to release it, and in that instant two pistol shots rang out sharply in the morning air.

**CHAPTER XXXI.**

**Solomon's Last Night.**

It had been with no little reluctance that Solomon Mahaffy accompanied Yancy and Cavendish to Belle Plain; he would have preferred to remain in Raleigh in attendance upon Judge Price. Intimately acquainted with the judge's mental processes, he could follow all the devious workings of that magnificent mind; he would fathom the simply hellish ingenuity he was capable of putting forth to accomplish temporary benefits. Permitting his thoughts to dwell upon the mingled strength and weakness which was so curiously blended in Slocum Price's character, he had hadroid visions of that great soul, freed from the trammels of restraint, conducting his melancholy history to Mr. Pegloe in the hope of bolstering his fallen credit at the City Tavern.

Always where the judge was concerned he fluctuated between extremes of doubt and confidence. He felt that under the urgent spur of occasion his friend could rise to any emergency, while a sustained activity made demands which he could not satisfy; then his efforts were discounted by his insane desire to realize at once on his opportunities; in his haste he was for ever plucking unripe fruit; and though he might keep one eye on the main chance the other was fixed just as resolutely on the nearest tavern.

With the great stake which fate had suddenly introduced into their losing game, he wished earnestly to believe that the judge would stay quiet in his office and complete the task he had set himself; that with this off his hands the promise of excitement at Belle Plain would compel his presence there, when he would pass some what under the restraining influence which he was determined to exert; in short, to Solomon, life embraced just the one vital consideration, which was to maintain the judge in a state of sobriety until after his meeting with Pentress.

The purple of twilight was stealing over the land when he and his two companions reached Belle Plain. They learned that Tom Ware had returned from Memphis, that the bayou had been dragged but without results, and that as yet nothing had been heard from Carrington or the dogs he had gone for.

Presently Cavendish and Yancy set off across the fields. They were going on to the raft, to Polly and the six little Cavendishes, whom they had not seen since early morning; but they promised to be back at Belle Plain within an hour.

By very nature an alien, Mahaffy sought out a dark corner on the wide porch that overlooked the river to await their return. The house had been thrown open, and supper was being served to whoever cared to stay and partake of it. The murmur of idle purposeless talk drifted out to him; he was irritated and offended by it. There was something garish in this indiscriminate hospitality in the very home of tragedy. As the moments slipped by his sense of displeasure increased, with mankind in general, with himself, and with the judge—principally with the judge—who was to make a foolish target of himself in the morning. He was going to give the man who had wrecked his life a chance to take it as well. Mahaffy's cold logic dealt cynically with the preposterous situation his friend had created.

In the midst of his angry meditations he heard a clock strike in the hall and counted the strokes. It was nine o'clock. Surely Yancy and Cavendish had been gone their hour! He quitted his seat and strolled restlessly about the house. He felt deeply indignant with everybody and everything. Human intelligence seemed but a pitiable advance on brute instinct. A whole day had passed and what had been accomplished? Carrington, the judge, Yancy, Cavendish—the four men who might have worked together to some purpose—had widely separated themselves; and here was the duel, the very climax of absurdity. He resumed his dark corner and waited another hour. Still no Carrington, and Yancy and Cavendish had not come up from the raft.

"Fools!" thought Mahaffy bitterly. "All of them fools!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**TRAITS OF CHILDREN**

**How Parents of the Balkan States Raise Their Offspring.**

Montenegrin Youngsters Taught to Fight Turks to the Death—In Bulgaria Racial Hatred is Taught in Public Schools.

Uzhitse, Servia.—One cannot help wondering during wartime what the children of the belligerent nations think about it all. How do the panics, the carnage, the firing of guns appear to their young minds?

It is fairly easy to answer this question so far as Montenegro is concerned, for from the earliest age children take the keenest interest in their father's collection of weapons and the dozen or so knives, pistols and other knick-knacks he wears in his wide belt.

A Montenegrin would be just as likely to go for a stroll down the village street without his entire "arsenal" as a Philadelphia dandy would be likely to walk down Chestnut street without his collar.

In Spain I used to watch the children play, and here the game was invariably bull-fighting, but in Montenegro the only game for babies is war to the death with the Turk.

The Montenegrins are a stern race, and the fathers, though devoted to their children, do not believe in pampering them.

But I shall not easily forget the face of Prince Mirko, the second son of King Nicholas, and the idol of the nation, when he told me of the death of his two children. They caught typhoid fever in Nice and died within a few days of each other.

"Have you any children?" he asked me.

"None," I replied.

"Well, you may thank heaven for that," said he, "for you will never go through the agony I suffered. I verily thought my heart was broken and that I never could be happy again.

"As it is, I cannot bear to hear the Riviera mentioned, and wild horses will not drag me to Nice again."

Servian children are like pretty little dolls with great dark eyes, and wearing long white shirts under charming brown suede leather zouave jackets edged with fur.

These jackets are most quaint and original, and are decorated with arabesques and devices of gaily colored leathers and pieces of looking glass sewn in imitation of sprays and flowers.

The fur is left on the reverse side, so that the coats are very warm. I have often wondered on a broiling



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**CHAPTER XXX.—(Continued.)**

An hour later Pegloe's black boy presented himself to the judge. He came bearing a gift, and the gift appropriately enough was a square case bottle of respectable size. The judge was greatly touched by this attention, but he began by making a most temperate use of the tavern-keeper's offering; then as the formidable document he was preparing took shape under his hand he more and more lost that feeling of Spartan fortitude which had at first sustained him in the presence of temptation. He wrote and slipped in complete and quiet luxury, and when at last he had exhausted the contents of the bottle it occurred to him that it would be only proper personally to convey his thanks to Pegloe. Perhaps he was not unimpaired in this by ulterior hopes; if so, they were richly rewarded. The resources of the City Tavern were suddenly placed at his disposal. He attributed this to a variety of causes all good and sufficient, but the real reason never suggested itself; indeed it was of such a perfidious nature that the judge, open and generous-minded, could not have grasped it.

By six o'clock he was undeniably drunk; at eight he was sounding still deeper depths of inebriety, with only the most confused memory of impending events; at ten he collapsed and was borne upstairs by Pegloe and his black boy to a remote chamber in the kitchen wing. Here he was undressed and put to bed, and the tavern-keeper, making a bundle of his clothes, retired from the room, locking the door after him, and the judge was doubly a prisoner.

Rousing at last from a heavy, dreamless sleep the judge was aware of a faint impalpable light in his room, the ashen light of a dull October dawn. He was aware, too, of a feeling of profound depression. He knew this was the aftermath of indulgence and that he might look forward to forty-eight hours of utter misery of soul, and, groaning aloud, he closed his eyes. Sleep was the thing if he could compass it. Instead, his memory quickened. Something was to hap-



**Pegloe's Black Boy Came Bearing a Gift.**

that had been thoughtful of Pegloe—he would not forget him—the City Tavern should continue to enjoy his patronage. It would be something for Pegloe to boast of that Judge Slocum Price Turberville always made his place headquarters when in Raleigh. Feeling that he had already conferred wealth and distinction on the fortunate Pegloe the judge thrust his fat legs over the side of his bed and stood erect. Stooping he reached for his clothes. He confidently expected to find them on the floor, but his hand merely swept an uncarpeted waste. The judge was profoundly astonished.

"Maybe I've got 'em on. I don't recall taking them off," he thought hopefully. He moved uncertainly in the direction of the window, where the light showed him his own bare extremities. He reverted to his original idea that his clothes were scattered about the floor.

self to the full length of his arms, dropped.

He landed squarely on the rolled-up bed with a jar that shook him to his center. Almost gaily he snatched up a quilt, draping it about him after the manner of a Roman toga, and thus lightly habited, started across Mr. Pegloe's truck-patch, his one thought Boggs' and the sun. It would have served no purpose to have gone home, since his entire wardrobe, except for the shirt on his back, was in the tavern-keeper's possession, besides he had not a moment to lose, for the sun was peeping at him over the horizon.

Unobserved he gained the edge of the town and the highroad that led past Boggs' and stole a fearful glance over his shoulder. The sun was clear of the treetops, he could even feel the lifeless dust grow warm beneath his feet; and wrapping the quilt closer about him he broke into a labored run.

**Montenegrin Mountaineer.**

summer day how they can stand the heat.

Their manners are very pleasing and they remind one of nice little puppies or kittens. The Servians have a certain regard for their offspring without any wild devotion.

I remember slightly shocking some of my friends out there by my partiality for four-legged creatures. I was sitting outside a cafe at Uzhitse feeding a cat with the remains of my dish of kaimak, the Servian equivalent to Devonshire cream. This extravagance they put up with, but when they saw me tempting a dog with bits of sugar they thought it was time to remonstrate.

"Gospozha!" they exclaimed. "What a strange thing to do! Why, you ought to put that sugar in your pocket and give it to children on the road."

In Bulgaria one hears of horrible massacres of babes. Only a day or two ago Bulgarians near Ruzhuk attacked a harmless Turkish settlement and spared neither women nor children.

But the Bulgarians set great store by their schools, and in these schools racial hatred is encouraged, and even the youngest learns that he will some day have to struggle for mastery with the Serb, the Greek and the Turk.

Unlike the babies of other Slav nations, the Bulgarians are not, as a rule, beautiful. They are wooden-looking, flat faces, and are rather Mongolian in type; but they are as hard as nails.

Carmen Sylva of Roumania might well be called the Children's Queen. She adores children, and the grief of her life was when her little daughter died.

She has never really recovered from losing her only child, but it has had the effect of making her as good as a mother to all her young subjects.

No one will ever know the extent of her benevolence and charity, and Roumanian mothers bless her name. She interests herself especially in the blind, and her home for blind children is perhaps the most excellent charity of the country.

One of the things that strikes a visitor to Roumania is how everything is discussed before children.

Twenty-Five Rats in One Trap. Talbury, England.—A record in rat catching has been made here, where 25 rats were caught in one wire trap in two nights, 15 the first night and 10 the second.



**ALREADY LAUGHABLE.**

**Curious Russian Law.**

Russia has a law which to outside observers seems almost to put a premium on theft by which stolen goods become the property of the thief if he can prove that he has had possession of them for over five years. In the thieves' market—which is, of course, licensed by the police—goods that admittedly have been stolen (more than five years before) are openly offered for sale, and the place is a veritable Mecca for the light fingered gentry and their enterprising friends, as also for the more honest members of society, who secure many a tempting bargain.

**Society.**

Mrs. Wayupp—No wonder I look worried, my dear. My husband has just gone out, and if he is discovered it will probably cost us our social position.

Mrs. Blase—Goodness! Where is he?

Mrs. Wayupp—He has gone out in-cog, to pay a bill.—Puck.

Distance sometimes lends enchantment to a man's view of his mother-in-law.

Smokers like LEWIS' Single Binder cigar for its rich mellow quality. Adv.

Of course we all feel sorry for people who don't like us.

It may be all right for a man to have a past, if it will only stay past.

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**Turkish Counting of Time.**

Through the center of the mosque of St. Sophia runs the theoretical meridian which gave the Turks their local time—one hour and fifty-five minutes fifty-two seconds fast on Greenwich—until, two years ago, the new government fell in with the standard system of time zones, and came into the eastern European zone, exactly two hours ahead of Greenwich time. For religious purposes, however, 12 o'clock always happens at sunset, and noon thus wanders with the seasons all round the clock.—Westminster Gazette.

**Worth Three Times a Diamond.**

Nearly all the emeralds mined to date come from Colombia. And, in spite of the supposed higher value of diamonds, the emerald is the most precious of gems. Carat for carat, a flawless emerald would bring perhaps three times the price of a flawless diamond in the jewelry market. India, the storehouse of precious stones, is credited with producing the first emeralds, but the Oriental emerald is not identical with the modern gem, as it is a variety of the ruby, of green color and extremely rare.

**Providing.**

"Is it really easy taking candy from a baby?"

"Not if the baby takes the place."

Red Cross Ball Blue will wash double as many clothes as any other blue. Don't put your money into any other. Adv.

If you make a remark don't you enjoy having some one say, "Is that so?"

No, Cordelia, a dancing academy is not necessarily a hop joint.

**ALBERTA**

**THE PRICE OF BEEF**

IS HIGH AND SO IS THE PRICE OF CATTLE.

For the Province of Alberta (Western Canada) was the Big Ranching Country. Many of the ranches today are immense grain fields and the cattle have been driven to the coast and the climate is excellent, schools and churches are everywhere, and the price of live stock is increased the price of live stock. There is splendid opportunity now to get a

**Free Homestead**

of 160 acres (and another as a pre-emption) in the newer districts and produce either cattle or grain. The crops are always good, the climate is excellent, schools and churches are everywhere, and the price of live stock is increased the price of live stock. There is splendid opportunity now to get a

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**Maternity Is a Privilege**

Little Lecture on Marriage and Divorce That May Interest Some Modern Parents.

"Some folks wonder at the miracles in the Good Book, but God did the biggest and most unexplainable thing when he gave woman the privilege of being a mother. You might marry another man some time, but there's something you'd never forget, and that is that Perk is the father of Lucille and Mary Jane. It's something that demands from you a lot of forgiveness, if need be, for whatever he does. I don't think there's any divorce that God's a-goin' to recognize which separates fathers and mothers. He might overlook their livin' apart from each other if things went too far crosswise, but I doubt if he's goin' to fix affairs up in heaven after the judgment day by sayin' 'Mr. Smith, the courts down here in the U. S. A. says you ain't got no right to call this woman your wife and so I'm givin' her

to Mr. Jones, who married her three years after she got her decree. He'll take care of your angel children and you'll have to go way back and sit down.' I say I don't think he's goin' to do it that way."—"Mary Jane's Pa." in the Novelization by Norman Way.

**Muffled Knocks.**

"I don't wonder you keep your shapely arms bare, Mildred, even if they do look somewhat hairy."

"I'm rather glad you dropped in, Boris; when a fellow feels blue and lonesome he's ready to welcome almost anybody."

"Yes, of course, I can recommend you for that position, McCorkle. Fortunately, perhaps, I don't know you very well."

"Your new job will take you out of the country for three or four years, will it, Bingley? Well, I'm glad you got it."

"I'm enjoying your call so much, Mr. Spurling, that I hate to remind

you that the next car will pass here in about five minutes, and then there won't be another one for half an hour."

**Ear Phones for a Church.**

Ear phones have been introduced into the Wollaston Congregational Church of Quincy, Mass. This is the first church in the city to adopt this invention.

A transmitter and six receivers comprise the initial equipment and should these prove satisfactory others will be added as occasion requires.

The apparatus is extremely simple, consisting of a neat box-like transmitter at the pulpit and modest watch-like receivers, on convenient handles, in various pews. Receivers and transmitters are connected by invisible wiring and the electricity is supplied by dry cells.

**Fused Alumina.**

"Alundum" is the name given to a fused form of alumina. It is extensively used in the manufacture of crucibles and other vessels for which a refractory material is needed.

**Cruelty to Animals.**

Brian G. Hughes, whose practical jokes so often delight New York, said at a recent dinner at the Plaza: "I don't mind practical jokes on human beings, but when it comes to animals I draw the line."

"Two artists were once bragging to each other. 'I painted up a lump of pig iron to look like cork,' said the first artist, and, by Jove, when I threw it in the East river it floated."

"No," said Mr. Hughes, "there was no harm in that. But listen to the second artist. He said, with a cruel, unfeeling laugh; 'I painted a lump of pig iron once to look like a roast of beef, and my dog ate three-quarters of it before he discovered his mistake.'"

**Cruel Candor.**

She—So many foolish people tell me I sing like a bird. Do you think so, Mr. Batty?

He—Certainly I do.

She (with a giggle)—Oh, you flat ter me. What kind of a bird do you think I sing like?

He—A screech owl.

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