



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 Cresshaw, a business man, a stranger known as Bladen, and Bob Yancy, a farmer, while Hannibal Wayne Hazard, a mysterious figure 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 Balam, and is discharged with costs by 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. Betty and Carrington arrive at Belle Plain. Hannibal's ride 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 dreamless sleep on board the raft. Judge Price makes startling discoveries in looking up land titles. Charley Norton, a young planter, who assists the judge, is mysteriously assaulted. Norton informs Carrington that Betty has promised to marry him. Norton is mysteriously shot.

(CHAPTER XVI—Continued).

"There you go, Price—" began Mahaffy.

"Solomon, this is no time for me to hang back. I shall offer a reward of five thousand dollars for this information." The judge's tone was resolute.

"Yes, sir, I shall make the figure commensurate with the poignant grief I feel. He was my friend and client—"

The next morning it was discovered that some time during the night the judge had tucked his anonymous communication on the court house door; just below it was another sheet of paper covered with bold script:

"To Whom It May Concern:

"Judge Slocum Price assumes that the above was intended for him since he found it under his office door on the morning of the twenty-fifth inst.

"Judge Price begs leave to state it as his unqualified conviction that the writer is a coward and a cur, and offers a reward of five thousand dollars for any information that will lead to his identification."

Tom Ware was seated alone over his breakfast. He had left his bed as the pale morning light crept across the great fields that were alike his pride and his despair—what was the use of trying to sleep when sleep was an impossibility? He was about to quit the table when big Steve entered the room to say there was a white fellow at the door.

"Fetch him along in here," said Ware.

The white fellow delivered a penciled note from Murrell. When he was gone, the planter ordered his horse.

As Ware rode away from Belle Plain he cursed Murrell under his breath. His own inclination toward evil was never robust; he could have connived over a long period of years to despoil Betty of her property, but murder and abduction was quite another thing.

Three miles from Belle Plain he entered a bridge path that led toward the river. A growth of small timber was standing along the water's edge, but as he drew nearer, those betterments were the resident of that lonely spot had seen fit to make for his own convenience, came under his scrutiny; these consisted of a log cabin and several lesser sheds.

Landing, he advanced toward the cabin. As he did so he saw two women at work heckling flax under an open shed. They were the wife and daughter of George Hicks, his overseer's brother.

"Morning, Mrs. Hicks," he said, addressing himself to the mother, a hulking ruman of a woman. "Anybody with the captain?"

"Colonel Pentress is."

"Humph!" muttered Ware. He moved to the door of the cabin and entered the room where Murrell and Pentress were seated facing each other across the breakfast table.

"Well, what the devil do you want of me, a-yah?" demanded the planter.

"How's your sister, Tom?" inquired Murrell.

"I reckon she's the way you'd expect her to be," Ware dropped his voice to a whisper.

"John, you'll ruin yourself with your damned crazy infatuation!" it was Pentress who spoke.

"No, I won't, colonel, but I'm not going to discuss that. All I want is for Tom to go to Memphis and stay there for a couple of days. When he comes back Belle Plain and its niggers will be as good as his. I am going to take the girl away from them tonight. How soon can you get away



# THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

By VAUGHAN KESTER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY D. MELVILLE



"And Then It's Change Your Name and Strike Out for Texas."

from here, Tom?" he asked abruptly.

"By God, I can't go too soon!" cried the planter, staggering to his feet. He gave Pentress a hopeless look.

"You're my witness that first and last I've no part in this!"

The colonel shrugged his shoulders. Murrell reached out a hand and rested it on Ware's arm.

"Keep your wits, Tom, and within a week people will have forgotten all about Norton and your sister. I am going to give them something else to worry over."

Ware went from the cabin. "Look here, how about the boy—are you ready for him if I can get my hands on him? I'll send him either up or down the river and place him in safe keeping where you can get him at any time you want."

"This must be done without violence, John!" stipulated Pentress.

"Certainly, I understand. Which shall it be—up or down river?"

"Could you take care of him for me below, at Natchez?" inquired Pentress.

"As well there as anywhere."

"Good!" said Pentress, and took his leave.

Three-quarters of an hour slipped by, then, piercing the silence, Murrell heard a shrill whistle; it was twice repeated; he saw Beas go down to the landing again. A half-hour elapsed and a man issued from the scattering growth of bushes that screened the shore. The newcomer crossed the clearing and entered the cabin. He was a young fellow of twenty-four or five, whose bronzed face wore a reckless expression.

"Well, captain, what's doing?" he asked.

"If anything's to be done, now is the time, Hues. What have you to report?"

"Well, I've seen the council of each Clan division. They are ripe to start this thing off."

Murrell gave him a moment of moody regard.

"Twice already I've named the day and hour, but now I'm going to put it through!" He set his teeth and thrust out his jaw.

"Captain, you're the greatest fellow in America! Inside of a week men who have never been within five hundred miles of you will be asking of each other who John Murrell is!" Murrell had expected to part with Hues then and there and for all time, but Hues possessed qualities which might still be of use.

"Hues, you must start back across Tennessee. Make it Sunday at midnight—that's three days off." Unconsciously his voice sank to a whisper.

"Sunday at midnight," repeated Hues slowly.

"When you have passed the word into middle Tennessee, turn south and

make the best of your way to New Orleans. Don't stop for anything—push through as fast as you can. You'll find me there. I've a notion you and I will quit the country together."

"Quit the country? Why, captain, who's talking of quitting the country?"

"You speak as though you were fool enough to think the niggers would accomplish something!" said Murrell coolly.

"There will be confusion at first, but there are enough white men in the southwest to handle a head better organized insurrection than we'll be able to set going. Our fellows will have to use their heads as well as their hands or they are likely to help the nigger swallow his medicine. I look for nothing else than considerable of a shake-up along the Mississippi—"

"what with lynchers and regulators a man will have to show a clean bill of health to be allowed to live, no matter what his color—just being white won't help him any!"

"No, you're right, it won't!" and again Hues gave way to easy laughter.

"When you've done your work you strike south as I tell you and join me. I'm going to keep New Orleans for myself—it's my ambition to destroy the city Old Hickory saved!"

"And then it's change your name and strike out for Texas with what you've picked up!"

"No, it isn't! I'll have my choice of men—a river full of ships. Look here, there's South America, or some of those islands in the gulf with a black-and-tan population and a few white mongrels holding on to civilization by their eye-teeth; what's to hinder our setting up shop for ourselves? Two or three hundred Americans could walk off with an island like Hayti, for instance—and it's black with niggers. What we'd done here would be just so much capital down there. We'd make it a stamping ground for the Clan! In the next two years we could bring in a couple of thousand Americans and then we'd be ready to take over their government, whether they liked it or not, and run it at a profit. We'd put the niggers back in slavery where they belong, and set them at work raising sugar and tobacco for their own bosses. Man, it's the richest land in the world, I tell you—and the mountains are full of gold!"

Hues had kindled with a ready enthusiasm while Murrell was speaking.

"That sounds right, captain—we'd have a country and a flag of our own—and I look at those free niggers as just so much boot!"

"I shall take only picked men with me—I can't give ship room to any other—but I want you. You'll join me in New Orleans?" said Murrell.

"When do you start south?" asked Hues quickly.

"Inside of two days. I've got some private business to settle before I leave. I'll hang round here until that's attended to."

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### The Judge Extends His Credit.

That afternoon Judge Price walked out to Belle Plain. Solomon Mahaffy had known that this was a civility Betty Malroy could by no means escape. He had been conscious of the judge's purpose from the moment it existed in the germ state, and he had striven to divert him, but his striving had been in vain, for though the judge valued Mr. Mahaffy because of certain sterling qualities which he professed to discern beneath the hard crust that made up the external man, he was not disposed to accept him as his mentor in nice matters of taste and gentlemanly feeling. He owed it to himself personally to tender his sympathy. Miss Malroy must have heard something of the honorable part he had played; surely she could not be in ignorance of the fact that the lawless element, dreading his further activities, had threatened him. She must know, too, about that reward of five thousand dollars. Certainly her grief could not blind her to the fact that he had met the situation with a largeness of public spirit that was an impressive lesson to the entire community.

These were all points over which he and Mahaffy had wrangled, and he felt that his friend, in seeking to keep him away from Belle Plain, was standing squarely in his light. He really could not understand Solomon or his objections. He pointed out that Norton had probably left a will—no one knew yet—probably his estate would go to his intended wife—what more likely? He understood Norton had cousins somewhere in middle Tennessee—there was the attractive possibility of extended litigation. Miss Malroy needed a strong, clear brain to guide her past those difficulties his agile fancy assembled in her path. He beamed on his friend with a wide sunny smile.

"You mean she needs a lawyer, Price?" insinuated Mahaffy.

"That slap at me, Solomon, is unworthy of you. Just name some one, will you, who has shown an interest comparable to mine? I may say I have devoted my entire energy to her affairs, and with disinterestedness. I have made myself felt. Will you mention who else these cutthroats have tried to browbeat and frighten? They know that my theories and conclusions are a menace to them! I got 'em in a panic, sir—presently some fellow will lose his nerve and light out for the tall timber—and it will be just Judge Slocum Price who's done the trick—no one else!"

"Are you looking for some one to take a pot shot at you?" inquired Mahaffy, sourly.

"Your remark uncovers my fondest hope, Solomon—I'd give five years of my life just to be shot at—that would round out the episode of the letter nicely"; again the judge beamed on Mahaffy with that wide and sunny smile of his.

"Why don't you let the boy go alone, Price?" suggested Mahaffy. He lacked that sense of sublime confidence in the judge's tact and discretion of which the judge, himself, entertained never a doubt.

"I shall not obtrude myself, Solomon; I shall merely walk out to Belle Plain and leave a civil message. I know what's due Miss Malroy in her bereaved state—she has sustained no ordinary loss, and in no ordinary fashion. She has been the center of a striking and profoundly moving tragedy; I would give a good deal to know if my late client left a will—"

"You might ask her," said Mahaffy cynically. "Nothing like going to headquarters for the news!"

"Solomon, Solomon, give me credit for common sense—go further, and give me credit for common decency! Don't let us forget that ever since we came here she has manifested a charmingly hospitable spirit where we are concerned!"

"Wouldn't charity hit nearer the mark, Price?"

#### (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Laying Something by for Future.

The general prosperity can only be a reflection of the prosperity of the individual, and no individual is really prosperous who is not laying aside something for the future. The man who makes \$10,000 per year and spends \$10,000 and spends but \$900. It may be hard to walk while your neighbor whisks by in an automobile, but it is the man who has the courage and character to live well within his means who accumulates enough capital to do things in the world—Indianapolis Star.

### BRIEF NEWS OF NEBRASKA

Benedict graduated a class of five this year. Sterling has put a ban on the discharging of fireworks within the city limits. The boys at the industrial school at Kearney have put out 25,000 tomato plants. The body of an unknown man was found in the Missouri river near Peru Saturday.

The canning factory at Kearney has been completed and is now ready for business. Deshler is arranging to celebrate the Fourth of July in the old-fashioned way.

The Nebraska State Holiness association is in session at Epworth Lake park, Lincoln.

Teumseh is experiencing a shortage in water, the old well on Clay street being about dry.

A special train of nineteen cars of cattle was shipped from York Monday evening to Chicago markets.

Mrs. Matilda Hawkins fell dead while ironing in her home near Raymond, Monday afternoon.

The city council of Sutton has established a permanent park fund and will make an annual levy for its maintenance.

St. Matthews' Episcopal congregation of Alliance has the plans of a fine new stone church to be erected this year.

Among the students receiving degrees at the commencement exercises at Wesleyan university, was Mrs. Ella May Hursey, 53 years of age.

Sixteen bicycles have been stolen in Fremont since the first of the year. Last fall fully twenty owners of bicycles reported their loss to the police.

While repairing a window, D. B. Wagner, of Alliance, slipped and his head was forced through the glass, a piece of which was driven into an eye ball.

The state occupation tax is not due until July 1, but more than 100 corporations have already paid in response to notices sent out by the secretary of state.

Theodore Stanikas, who suicided in the city jail at Lincoln some months ago, left an estate valued at over \$100,000. He was charged with complicity in a case of arson.

John Zimmerman, Jr., of Seward, has returned from a trip around the world, mostly made in an automobile, going over deserts and mountains never before traveled by an automobile.

In a program furnished entirely by the members of the class, forty-five students of the high school graduated at Grand Island, receiving their diplomas from Superintendent Barr.

Plans and specifications for a modern fire department building and jail are being made for the city of Sutton. It is proposed to erect a cement block building 45x50 feet on city property.

The stockmen's convention at Alliance, June 20, 21 and 22, it is thought will be the largest and the entertainment will be the most elaborate of any in the history of the association.

Fred Post and his nephew, Will Post, both residents of Winslow, were seriously injured when a threshing machine and traction engine they were driving went into a creek near Fontanelle.

Edgar will celebrate the Fourth of July in both old fashioned and new fashioned style. The Commercial club is busy preparing a program that is expected to eclipse all former celebrations in this city.

C. C. Johns, secretary of the Nebraska Press association, of Grand Island, and Miss Pearl Brown of Norfolk were married Tuesday at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Brown of that city.

Sales of fresh beef by the South Omaha packers at this city averaged a year ago 8.93 cents per pound. Sales for the corresponding week this year average 11.68 cents per pound, or nearly 3 cents more to the retailer.

In spite of the cold, the rain and the heavy skies, two camps of the Modern Woodmen and one lodge of the Workmen Sunday carried on their annual decoration of the graves of the dead at Wyuka cemetery at Lincoln.

There will be five numbers on the lecture course for the summer school at Peru, the first of which will be given by the Steckelberg Concert company. Prof. Wiley, the pure food expert, will deliver a lecture during the course.

Fifty Nebraska Bohemians have joined a party of 1,500 countrymen, who sail from New York City to attend a jubilee at Prague, Bohemia, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Sokols, an organization of Bohemian physical culturists.

The Fremont merchants' association has decided not to continue closing Fremont places of business for baseball openings, celebrations and the like, excepting such closing is asked for on holidays.

More than 100 Nebraska boys already have entered the Nebraska boys' corn growing contest being conducted through the agricultural department of the state university. And entries still are coming in, according to C. W. Pugsley, superintendent of the agricultural extension department.

District Judge Kennedy of the Omaha juvenile court claims that less than 25 per cent of the 6,000 boys of that place attend Sunday school.

At the postmasters' convention just closed at Lincoln, the following officers were elected: President, J. H. Tower, Sutton; first vice president, E. R. Sizer, Lincoln; second vice president, Lon Cone, McCook; third vice president, S. W. Wilson, Wood River; fourth vice president, John Lett, Benedict; secretary, L. F. Etter, South Omaha; treasurer, A. F. Buechler, Grand Island; delegate to national association, W. J. Cook, Blair.

### HARD FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

It's hard enough to keep house if in perfect health, but a woman weak, tired and suffering with an aching back has a heavy burden. Any woman in this condition has caused to suspect kidney trouble, especially if the kidney action seems disordered. Doan's Kidney Pills have cured thousands. It is the best recommended special kidney remedy.

Mrs. C. F. Mace, Madison St., Shaw, neetown, Ill., says: "I suffered intensely from backache and headache and was very nervous. I was scarcely able to attend to my housework and at times was so bad I was confined to bed. Doan's Kidney Pills gave me quick relief and before long cured me completely."

"When Your Back Is Lame, Remember the Name—DOAN'S." 50c, all stores. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

Silence and blushing are the eloquence of women.—Chinese Proverb.

As soon as women are ours, we are no longer theirs.—Michael de Montaigne.

If testimonials received from those using Garfield Tea are of any value, Garfield Tea does what we claim for it. Enough said.

When birds of a feather flock together it is a pretty safe bet they'll try to pluck each other.

Important to Mothers. Examining carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of Dr. J. C. Fletcher. In Use For Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria.

Poor Father. Mayor Turnbull of Canton was talking about a statement, made all unconsciously by a Titanic officer, that had been a terrible black eye for the Titanic administration.

"This statement," he said, "reminds me of a little Canton boy."

"Tommy, why are you so unkind to your nurse? Why don't you love her?" his mother once asked him.

"Because I don't," the infant terrible replied. "I just hate her! I could pinch her cheeks like papa does!"

He Could. A northern visitor in the south tells the following story to illustrate the taciturnity of the southern negro.

He had asked Steve, a typical dandy of the region, numerous questions concerning a certain plantation, and to each the negro gave the invariable reply of "Yahs, sah."

"Steve," asked the somewhat exasperated northerner, "don't you say anything but 'Yahs, sah'? Can't you say 'No, sir'?"

The negro blinked his eyes indolently for a moment and replied, "Yahs sah."—Judge.

Going Further Back. A man who had suddenly become very rich went to live in New York and began to spend money with a lavish hand. He decided that his name needed advertising, so he visited a genealogist.

"I suppose," he said, "if I pay you enough you can trace my family back to Adam."

"My dear, sir," replied the genealogist, "if you're willing to put up the money we can prove by evolution that your family existed before Adam."—Lippincott's Magazine.

OUTDOOR LIFE. Will Not Offset the Ill Effects of Coffee and Tea When One Cannot Digest Them.

A farmer says: "For ten years or more I suffered from dyspepsia and stomach trouble, caused by the use of coffee (Tea contains caffeine, the same drug found in coffee), until I got so bad I had to give up coffee entirely and almost give up eating. There were times when I could eat only boiled milk and bread; and when I went to the field to work I had to take some bread and butter along to give me strength."

"I doctored steady and took almost everything I could get for my stomach in the way of medicine, but if I got any better it only lasted a little while I was almost a walking skeleton."

"One day I read an ad for Postum and told my wife I would try it, and as to the following facts I will make affidavit before any judge:

"I quit coffee entirely and used Postum in its place. I have regained my health entirely and can eat anything that is cooked to eat. I have increased in weight until now I weigh more than I ever did. I have not taken any medicine for my stomach since I began using Postum."

"My family would stick to coffee at first, but they saw the effects it had on me and when they were feeling bad they began to use Postum, one at a time, until now we all use Postum." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Ten days' trial of Postum in place of coffee proves the truth, an easy and pleasant way.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.