



THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

By VAUGHAN KESTER
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SYNOPSIS.

The scene at the opening of the story is laid in the office of the judge, who owns the 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 Binden, and Bob Yancy, a farmer who 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, where Hannibal is kidnaped by Dave Blount, Captain Murrell's agent, Yancy overtakes Blount, gives him a thrashing and secures the boy. Yancy appears before Judge Price, and after an encounter with Capt. 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 as Murrell 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. Murrell 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. Judge Price 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. 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 Boss Hicks, daughter of the over-seer, who warns Betty of danger and counsels her to leave Belle Plain at once. Betty, terrified, acts on Boss' advice, and on their way their carriage is stopped by Blossom, 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 object. Betty mourns his proffered love and the interview is ended by the arrival of Ware, 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 bubble bursts. The judge and Mahaffy 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.

CHAPTER XXIX.—(Continued.)

But Betty shrank from him in involuntary agitation.

"Oh, not now, Bruce—not now—we mustn't speak of that—it's wrong—it's wicked—you mustn't make me forget him!" she cried brokenly, in protest.

"Forgive me, Betty, I'll not speak of it again," he said.

"Wait, Bruce, and some time—Oh, don't make me say it," she gasped, "or I shall hate myself!" for in his presence she was feeling the horror of her past experience grow strangely remote, only the dull ache of her memories remained, and to these she clung. They were silent for a moment, then Carrington said:

"After I'm sure you'll be safe here perhaps I'll go south into the Choctaw Purchase. I've been thinking of that recently; but I'll find my way back here—don't misunderstand me—I'll not come too soon for even you, Betty. I loved Norton. He was one of my best friends, too," he continued gently. "But you know—and I know—dear, the day will come when no matter where you are I shall find you and not lose you!"

Betty made no answer in words, but a soft and eloquent little hand was slipped into his and allowed to rest there.

Presently a light wind stirred the dead dense atmosphere, the mist lifted and enveloped the shore, showing them the river between plied-up masses of vapor. Apparently it ran for their raft alone. It was just twenty-four hours since Carrington had looked upon such another night, but this was a different world the gray fog was unmasking—a world of hopes, and dreams, and rich content. Then the thought of Norton—poor Norton—who had had his world, too, of hopes and dreams and rich content—

The calm of a highly domestic existence had resumed its interrupted sway on the raft. Mr. Cavendish, associated in Betty's memory with certain ear-splitting manifestations of ferocious rage, became in the bosom of his family low-voiced and genial and helplessly impotent to deal with his five small sons; while Yancy was again the Bob Yancy of Scratch Hill, violence of any sort apparently had no place in his nature. He was deeply absorbed in Hannibal's account of those vicissitudes which had befallen him during their separation. They were now seated before a cheerful fire that blazed on the hearth, the boy very close to Yancy, with one hand clasped in the Scratch Hiller's, while about them were ranged the six small Cavendishes sedately sharing in the reunion of uncle and neveu, toward which they felt they had honorably labored.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Judge Receives a Letter.

After he had parted with Solomon Mahaffy the judge applied himself diligently to shaping that miracle-working document which he was preparing as an offset to whatever risk he ran in meeting Pentress. As sanguine as he was sanguinary he confidently expected to survive the encounter, yet it was well to provide for a possible emergency—had he not his grandson's future to consider? While this occupied he saw the afternoon stage arrive and depart from before the City Tavern.

Half an hour later Mr. Wesley, the postmaster, came sauntering up the street. In his hand he carried a letter.

"Howdy," he drawled, from just beyond the judge's open door.

The judge glanced up, his quill pen poised aloft.

"Good evening, sir; won't you step inside and be seated?" he asked graciously. His dealings with the United States mail service were of the most insignificant description, and in personally delivering a letter, if it was what had brought him there, he felt Mr. Wesley had reached the limit of official courtesy and despatch.

"Well, sir; it looks like you'd never told us more than two-thirds of the truth!" said the postmaster. He surveyed the judge curiously.

"I am complimented by your opinion of my veracity," responded that gentleman promptly. "I consider two-

said Hannibal with a deep breath, viewing Yancy unmistakably in the flesh.

"Never once. I been floating peacefully along with these here titled friends of mine; but I was some anxious about you, son."

"And Mr. Slosson, Uncle Bob—did you smack him like you smacked Dave Blount that day when he fled to steal me?" asked Hannibal, whose childish sense of justice demanded reparation for the wrongs they had suffered.

Mr. Yancy extended a big right hand, the knuckle of which was skinned and bruised.

"He were the meanest man I ever felt obliged to hit with my fist, Nevvy; it appeared like he had teeth all over his face."

"Sho—where's his hide, Uncle Bob?" cried the little Cavendishes in an excited chorus. "Sho—did you forget that?" They themselves had forgotten the unique enterprise to which Mr. Yancy was committed, but the allusion to Slosson had revived their memory of it.

"Well, he begged so piteous to be allowed to keep his hide, I hadn't the heart to strip it off," explained Mr. Yancy pleasantly. "And the winter's comin' on—at this moment I can feel a chill in the air—don't you all reckon he's going to need it to keep the cold out? Sho, you mustn't be bloody-minded!"

"What was it about Mr. Slosson's hide, Uncle Bob?" demanded Hannibal. "What was you a-goin' to do to that?"

"Why, Nevvy, after he beat me up and throwed me in the river, I was some peevish fo' a spell in my feelings fo' him," said Yancy in a tone of gentle regret. He glanced at his bruised hand. "But I'm right pleased to be able to say that I've got over all them oncharitable thoughts of mine."

"And you seen the judge, Uncle Bob?" questioned Hannibal.

"Yes, I've seen the judge. We was together fo' part of a day. Me and him gets on fine."

"Where is he now, Uncle Bob?"

"I reckon he's back at Belle Plain by this time. You see we left him in Raleigh along after noon to 'tend to some business he had on hand. I never seen a gentleman of his weight so truly sly on his legs—and all about you, Nevvy; while as to mind! Sho—why, words flowed out of him as naturally as water out of a branch."

Of Hannibal's relationship to the judge he said nothing. He felt that was a secret to be revealed by the judge himself when he should see fit.

"Uncle Bob, who'm I going to live with now?" questioned Hannibal anxiously.

"That pint's already come up, Nevvy—him and me's decided that there won't be no friction. You-all will just go on living with him."

"But what about you, Uncle Bob?" cried Hannibal, lifting a wistful little face to Yancy's.

"Oh, me?—well, you-all will go right on living with me."

"And what will come of Mr. Mahaffy?"

"I reckon you-all will go right on living with him, too."

"Uncle Bob, you mean you reckon we all are going to live in one house?"

"I 'low it will have to be fixed that a-ways," agreed Yancy.

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"Well, sir; it looks like you'd never told us more than two-thirds of the truth!" said the postmaster. He surveyed the judge curiously.

"I am complimented by your opinion of my veracity," responded that gentleman promptly. "I consider two-

thirds an enormously high per cent. to have achieved."

"There is something in that, too," agreed Mr. Wesley. "Who is Colonel Slocum Price Turberville?"

The judge started up from his chair.

"I have that honor," said he, bowing.

"Well, here's a letter come in addressed like that, and as you've been using part of the name I am willing to assume you're legally entitled to the rest of it. It clears up a point that off and on has troubled me considerable. I can only wonder I wa'n't smarter."

"What point, may I ask?"

"Why, about the time you hung out your shingle here, some one wrote a letter to General Jackson. It was mailed after night, and when I seen it in the morning I was clean beat. I couldn't locate the handwriting, and yet I kept that letter back a couple of days and give it all my spare time. It ain't that I'm one of your spying sort—there's nothing of the Yankee about me!"

"Certainly not," agreed the judge.

"Candid, judge. I reckon you wrote that letter, seeing this one comes under a frank from Washington. No, sir—I couldn't make out who was corresponding with the president, and it worried me, not knowing, more than anything I've had to contend against since I came into office. I calculate there ain't a postmaster in the United States takes a more personal interest in the service than me. I've frequently set patrons right when they was in doubt as to the date they had mailed such and such a letter." As Mr. Wesley sometimes canceled as many as three or four stamps in a



"I Was Quite Peevish After He Threw Me in the River."

single day he might have been pardoned his pride in a brain which thus lightly dealt with the burden of official business. He surrendered the letter with marked reluctance.

"Your surmise is correct," said the judge with dignity. "I had occasion to write my friend, General Jackson, and unless I am greatly mistaken I have my answer here." And with a fine air of indifference he tossed the letter on the table.

"And do you know Old Hickory?" cried Mr. Wesley.

"Why not? Does it surprise you?" inquired the judge. It was only his innate courtesy which restrained him from kicking the postmaster into the street, so intense was his desire to be rid of him.

"No, I don't know as it does, judge. Naturally a public man like him is in the way of meeting with all sorts. A politician can't afford to be too blame particular. Well, next time you write you might just send him my regards—G. W. M. de L. Wesley's regards—there was considerable contention over my getting this office; I reckon he ain't forgot. There was speeches made, I understand the lie was passed between two United States senators,

and that a quid of tobacco was thrown in anger." Having thus clearly established the fact that he was a more or less national character, Mr. Wesley took himself off.

When he had disappeared from sight down the street, the judge closed the door. Then he picked up the letter. For a long minute he held it in his hand, uncertain, fearful, while his mind slipped back into the past until his inward searching vision ferreted out a handsome soldierly figure—his own.

"That's what Jackson remembers if he remembers anything!" he muttered, as with trembling fingers he broke the seal. Almost instantly a smile overspread his battered features. He hitched his chin higher and squared his ponderous shoulders. "I am not forgotten—no, damn it—no!" he exulted under his breath. "Recalls me with sincere esteem and considers my services to the country as well worthy of recognition—" the judge breathed deep. What would Mahaffy find to say now! Certainly this was well calculated to disturb the sour cynicism of his friend. His bleared eyes brimmed. After all his groping he had touched hands with the realities at last! Even a federal judgeship, though not an office of first repute in the south, had its dignity—it signified something! He would make Solomon his clerk! The judge reached for his hat. Mahaffy must know at once that fortune had mended for them. Why, at that moment he was actually in receipt of an income!

He sat down, the better to enjoy the unique sensation. Taxes were being levied and collected with no other end in view than his stipend—his ardent fancy saw the whole machinery

Tale of Treasure Trove; Hans Sure Was a Bird



NEW YORK.—Here is a tale of treasure trove. Not the treasure trove of pirates bold, but a yarn of the sea, just the same.

The good ship Cincinnati set sail at one o'clock the other afternoon from her pier at Hoboken.

On the second class deck at the rail stood a comely German woman. She was Mrs. Anna Luupp of Wilkesbarre, Pa. On the dock stood Rudolph, her husband. Fifteen years ago they came to this country, and by their thrift and industry amassed a snug income, and now the wife was returning for a visit to the home of her girlhood. Their happy union had not been blessed with any branches of the family tree.

Longing for prattling babes at the hearth, they compromised on the adoption of a green parrot. They called the big bird Hans, and that he is a bird, all right, all right, you shall see.

Mrs. Anna couldn't think of parting with Hans, so it was decided

that she would take Hans across the sea. As she stood at the rail, a wet handkerchief in her right hand, she swung Hans over the rail in a newly gilded cage. "Goodby, papa," she cried, and waved to Herr Luupp.

"Goodby, papa," repeated Hans, who talks English with a slight German accent.

As they were about to cast off the stern line, Frau Anna got mixed in her gesticulations. Her right hand was raised to her eyes to dash the tears away. She forgot that she held the parrot, and disengaged her left hand from the cage to help her right hand out. With fluttering feathers and indignant screams Hans went tumbling to the dock in his gilded cage.

"Donner und blitzen!" yelled the enraged bird.

Two longshoremen put a pole through the ring in the top of the cage and hoisted it to a porthole.

"Donner und blitzen!" yelled the bird again as the cage was dented in against the ship's side. "Pretty Hans," cooed Frau Luupp, stretching forth her hands.

"Pretty h—!" returned the pious bird. "Donner und blitzen! Goodby, papa! Goodby, papa!"

"Goodby, Hans," shouted Rudolph. "Goodby, Mamma."

TEXT TAKEN TOO LITERALLY

Ten-Year-Old Julia Gets Into Bad Grades of Mother by Giving Tramp a Half-Dollar.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

The foregoing quotation is from chapter xiii, verse 2, Book of Hebrews, and it is introduced solely because it constitutes a vital part of this story. Julia is ten years old and she goes to Sunday school. It appears that on a recent occasion the Sunday school teacher had considerable to say about this matter of "entertaining angels unawares." Anyway, it made a deep impression with Julia.

A few days after the lesson Julia's mother left her in charge of the house for a few hours. When the mother returned she went to a particular cup in the cupboard to extract therefrom one-half dollar. In this cup is kept the family pin money, and Julia's mother knew that she had put 50 cents there before she had gone out. But the half dollar was gone. There was an expression of anxiety on Julia's face and mother scented mischief.

"Did you take that money?" asked the mother, somewhat severely.

Julia broke into tears. "I gave it to a man that came to the back door," sobbed the little girl.

"Gave it to a man!" exclaimed the mother. "What for?"

"I thought he might be God," tearfully replied Julia.—Kansas City Star.

Move for Change in Time.

The French ministry of public works is endeavoring to have the government adopt the system of reckoning time on railways by the use of the hours from 1 to 24, instead of 12 noon to 12 midnight. This system has already been adopted by many continental railways and has been in operation for years on the Canadian Pacific railway.

American Tools Preferred.

A favorite sport in New Zealand, and also in Australia and Tasmania, is competition in wood chopping and sawing; and in these contests, which attract a great deal of interest, the championships are always won through the use of American tools. In fact, the expert woodman working for a prize would never think of using any other kind of tools.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children.

Use the man behind the plow makes more of a stir in the world than the chap behind the hoe.

The world is full of the sort of friends who take to the woods when trouble shows up.

CURES BURNS AND CUTS.

The political candidate who "also ran" is unable to see wherein the world is growing wiser.

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

Anyway, a rolling stone is a smooth proposition.

W.L. DOUGLAS SHOES

\$3.00 \$3.50 \$4.00 \$4.50 AND \$5.00

FOR MEN AND WOMEN
Buy your W. L. Douglas shoes for \$3.00, \$3.50 and \$4.00 because one pair will positively outwear two pairs of ordinary shoes, same as the man's shoe.

W.L. Douglas makes and sells more \$3.00, \$3.50 and \$4.00 shoes than any other manufacturer in the world.

THE STANDARD OF QUALITY FOR OVER 30 YEARS.

The workmanship which has made W. L. Douglas shoes famous the world over is maintained in every pair.

Ask your dealer to show you W. L. Douglas latest fashions for fall and winter wear, notice the short pamps which make the foot look smaller, points in a shoe particularly desired by young men. Also the conservative styles which have made W. L. Douglas shoes a household word everywhere.



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