



THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

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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, 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, the day after 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 accuses 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 rescue Yancy, who is apparently dead. Price breaks jail. Betty and Carrington arrive at Belle Plain. Hannibal rifle discharges some startling things to the Judge. Hannibal and Betty meet again. Murrell arrives in Belle Plain. Price is playing for big stakes. Yancy awakes from long dreamless sleep on board the raft. Judge Price makes startling discoveries in looking up the hills. Charles Norton, a young planter, who assists the Judge, is mysteriously assaulted. Norton informs Carrington that Betty has promised to marry him. Norton is mysteriously slain. More light on Murrell's plot. He plans uprising of negroes. Judge Price, with Hannibal, visits Betty, and she leaves the boy as a companion. In a stroll Betty takes with Hannibal they meet Bess Hicks, daughter of the overseer, who warns Betty of danger and counsels her to leave Belle Plain at once. Betty, terrified, acts on Bess' advice, and on their way their carriage is stopped by Slocum, 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 Ware, terrified at possible outcome of the crime. Judge Price. 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 Fentress, 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 Maliahy 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. The Judge receives an important letter. Solomon Mahaffy's last fight. Fights duel for the Judge, and is killed. Hannibal proves to be Judge's grandson, and told the story of his life.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—(Continued.)

"What does this ridiculous mockery mean?" he demanded harshly. "Mr. Sheriff, as a member of the bar, I protest! Why don't you clear the building?" He did not wait for Betts to answer him, but continued, "Where is this man Hues?"

"Yonder, colonel, by the captain," said Betts.

"I have a warrant for his arrest. You will take him into custody."

"Wait!" cried the judge. "I represent Mr. Hues. I desire to see that warrant!"

But Fentress ignored him. He addressed the crowded benches.

"Gentlemen, it is a serious matter forcibly to seize a man without authority from the courts and expose him to the danger of mob violence—Mr. Hues will learn this before we have done with him."

Instantly there was a noisy demonstration that swelled into a burst of applause, which quickly spent itself. The struggle seemed to have narrowed to an individual contest for supremacy between Fentress and the judge. On the edge of the railed-off space they confronted each other: the colonel, a tall, well-cared for presence; the judge, shabby and unkempt. For a moment their eyes met, while the judge's face purpled and paled, and purpled again. The silence deepened. Fentress' thin lips opened, twitched, but no sound came from them; then his glance wavered and fell. He turned away.

"Mr. Sheriff!" he called sharply.

"All right, colonel!"

"Take your man into custody," ordered Fentress. As he spoke he handed the warrant toward Betts, who looked at it, grinned, and stepped toward Hues. He would have pushed the judge aside had not that gentleman, bowing civilly, made way for him.

"In my profound respect for the law and properly constituted authority I yield to no man, not even to Colonel Fentress," he said, with a gracious gesture. "I would not place the slightest obstacle in the way of its sanctioned manifestation. Colonel Fentress comes here with that high sanction." He bowed again ceremoniously to the colonel. "I repeat, I respect his dependence upon the law!" He whirled suddenly. "Cavendish—Yancy—Carrington—I call upon you to arrest John Murrell! I do this by virtue of the authority vested in me as a judge of the United States federal court. His crime—a mere trifle, my friends—passing counterfeit money! Colonel Fentress will inform you that this is a violation of the law which falls

within my jurisdiction," and he beamed blandly on Fentress.

"It's a lie!" cried the colonel.

"You'll answer for that later!" said the judge, with abrupt austerity of tone.

"For all we know you may be some fugitive from justice!—Why, your name isn't Price!"

"Are you sure of that?" asked the judge quickly.

"You're an impostor! Your name is Turberville!"

"Permit me to relieve your apprehensions. It is Turberville who has received the appointment. Would you like to examine my credentials?—I have them by me—no? I am obliged for your introduction. It could not have come at a more timely moment."

The judge seemed to dismiss Fentress contemptuously. Once more he faced the packed benches. "Put down your weapons!" he commanded. "This man Murrell will not be released. At the first effort at rescue he will be shot where he sits—we have sworn it—his plotting is at an end." He stalked nearer the benches. "Not one chance in a thousand remains to him. Either he dies here or he lives to be taken before every judge in the state, if necessary, until we find one with courage to try him! Make no mistake—it will best conserve the ends of justice to allow the state court's jurisdiction in this case; and I pledge myself to furnish evidence which will start him well on his road to the gallows!" The judge, a tremendous presence, stalked still nearer the benches. Outfacing the crowd, a sense of the splendor of the part he was being called upon to play flowed through him like some elixir; he felt that he was transcending himself, that his inspiration was drawn from the hidden springs of the spirit, and that he could neither falter nor go astray.

"You don't know what you are meddling with! This man has plotted to lay the south in ruins—he has been arming the negroes—it is incredible that you should all know this—to such I say, go home and thank God for your escape! For the others"—his shaggy brows met in a menacing frown—"if they force our hand we will toss them John Murrell's dead carcass—that's our answer to their challenge!"

He strode out among the gun muzzles which wavered where they still covered him. He was thinking of Mahaffy—Mahaffy, who had said he was still a man to be reckoned with. For the comfort of his own soul he was proving it.

"Do you know what a servile insurrection means?—you men who have wives and daughters, have you thought of their fate? Of the monstrous savagery to which they would be exposed? Do you believe he could limit and control it? Look at him! Why, he has never had a consideration outside of his own safety, and yet he expects you to risk your necks to save his! He would have left the state before the first blow was struck—his business was all down river—but we are going to keep him here to answer for his crimes! The law, as implacable as it is impartial, has put its mark on him—the shadow in which he sits is the shadow of the gallows!"

The judge paused, but the only sound in that expectant silence was the heavy breathing of men. He drew his unwieldy form erect, while his voice rumbled on, aggressive and threatening in its every intonation.

"You are here to defend something that no longer exists. Your organization is wrecked, your signals and passwords are known, your secrets have become public property—I can even produce a list of your members; there are none of you who do not stand in imminent peril—yet understand, I have no wish to strike at those who have been misled or coerced into joining Murrell's band!" The judge's sudden old face glowed now with the magnanimity of his sentiments. "But I have no feeling of mercy for your leaders, none for Murrell himself. Put down your guns!—you can only kill us after we have killed Murrell—but you can't kill the law! If the arch conspirator dies in this room and hour, on whose head will the punishment fall?" He swung round his ponderous arm in a sweeping gesture and shook a fat but expressive fore-finger in the faces of those nearest him. "On yours—and yours—and yours!"

Across the space that separated them the judge grinned his triumph at his enemy. He had known when Fentress entered the room that a word or a sign from him would precipitate a riot, but he knew now that neither this word nor this sign would be given. Then quite suddenly he strode down the aisle, and foot by foot Fentress yielded ground before his advance. A murderous light flashed from the judge's bloodshot eyes and his right hand was stealing toward the frayed tails of his coat.

"Look out—he's getting ready to shoot!" cried a frightened voice.

Instantly by doors and windows the crowd, seized with inexplicable panic, emptied itself into the court-house yard. Fentress was caught up in the rush and borne from the room and from the building. When he reached the graveled space below the steps he turned. The judge was in the doorway, the center of a struggling group; Mr. Bowen, the minister, Mr. Saul and Mr. Wesley were vainly seeking to pinion his arm.

"Draw—damn you!" he roared at Fentress, as he wrenched himself free, and the crowd swayed to right and left as Fentress was seen to reach for his pistol.

Mr. Saul made a last frantic effort to restrain his friend; he seized the judge's arm just as the latter's finger pressed the trigger, and an instant later Fentress staggered back with the judge's bullet in his shoulder.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Good Times Coming.

It was not strange that a number of gentlemen in and about Raleigh yielded to an overmastering impulse to visit newer lands, nor was it strange that the initial steps looking toward the indulgence of their desires should have been taken in secrecy. Mr. Pegloe was one of the first to leave; Mr. Saul had informed him of the judge's declared purpose of shooting him on sight. Even without this useful hint the tavern-keeper had known that he should experience intense embarrassment in meeting the judge; this was now a dreary certainty.

"You reckon he means near all he says?" he had asked, his fat sides shaking.

"I'd take his word a heap quicker than I would most folks," answered Mr. Saul with conviction.

Pegloe promptly had a sinking spell. He recalled the snuffing of the candles by the judge, an extremely depressing memory under the circumstances; also the reckless and headlong disregard of consequences which had characterized so many of that gentleman's acts, and his plans

shaped themselves accordingly, with this result; that when the judge took occasion to call at the tavern, and the hostile nature of his visit was emphasized by the cautious manner of his approach, he was greatly shocked to discover that his intended victim had sold his business overnight for a small lump sum to Mr. Saul's brother-in-law, who had appeared most opportunely with an offer.

Pegloe's flight created something of a sensation, but it was dwarfed by the sensation that developed a day or so later when it became known that Tom Ware and Colonel Fentress had likewise fled the country. Still later, Fentress' body, showing marks of violence, was washed ashore at a wood-

yard below Girard. It was conjectured that he and Ware had set out from The Oaks to cross the river; there was reason to believe that Fentress had in his possession at the time a considerable sum of money, and it was supposed that his companion had murdered and robbed him. Of Ware's subsequent career nothing was ever known.

These were, after all, only episodes in the collapse of the Clan, sporadic manifestations of the great work of disintegration that was going forward and which the judge, more than any other, perhaps, had brought about. This was something no one questioned, and he quickly passed to the first phase of that unique and peculiar esteem in which he was ever after held. His fame widened with the succeeding suns; he had offers of help which impressed him as so entirely creditable to human nature that he quite lacked the heart to refuse them, especially as he felt that in the improvement of his own condition the world had benefited itself and was moving nearer those sound and righteous ideals of morality and patriotism which had never lacked his indorsement, no matter how inexpedient it had seemed for him to put them into practice. But he was not diverted from his ultimate purpose by the glamour of a present popularity; he was able to keep his bearded eyes resolutely fixed on the main chance, namely the Fentress estate and the Quintard lands. It was highly important that he should go east to South Carolina to secure documentary evidence that would establish his own and Fentress' identity; to Kentucky, where Fentress had lived prior to his coming to Tennessee.

Early in November the judge set out by stage on his journey east; he was accompanied by Yancy and Hannibal, from neither of whom could he bring himself to be separated; and as the woods, flaming now with the torch of frost, engulfed the little town, he turned in his seat and looked back. He had entered it by that very road, a beggar on foot and in rags; he was leaving it in broadcloth and fine linen, visible tokens of his altered



"Draw, Damn You!" He Roared at Fentress.

Consent Always Obtained.

A court of common council of London, England, found after informal investigation of charges made that "no officer of the corporation ever played golf in business hours without the consent of the head of the department."

Pure From Start to Finish.

There is perhaps nothing in daily use in the home in which purity is so important as it is in baking powder. On its purity depends the success of the bakings, etc. And possibly the one thing that has served to make Calumet Baking Powder so much of a favorite with the critical cooks of the country, is the fact that Calumet is pure from start to finish. You can rely on Calumet's purity for the simple reason that every ounce of the material used is first tested by experienced chemists and then mixed with the utmost care to insure its uniformity. And standing in the can of changes of weather, etc., cannot alter it in any respect.

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Mother Goose in Poultry Trade.

"It is reported that the following occurred in a small poultry store kept by the widow of the deceased merchant.

"I should like to see a nice fat goose," said a customer, entering the shop.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy. "Mother will be down directly."—Woman's Home Companion.

No doubt many a woman's happiness would bubble over if she could only get thin worrying about how fat she is.

A Woman's Way.

"What sort of woman is she?"

"Why, she's the sort of woman that finds delight in reading all the stuff that's printed about the new babies of the idle rich."

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A man whose face is heavily pitted through a case of smallpox in his infancy, has been able to extract amusement from his appearance. Once he gave an explanation of it by saying that he had fallen down a shot tower.

Asked how he was able to shave himself, he answered:

"With a bell punch."

Sine Die.

Hub (in a lecturing mood)—You never hear me putting things off till tomorrow.

Wife—No, indeed; you put them off indefinitely.

Big Difference.

"Did you have any osculatory entertainment at your party?"

"No; only some kissing games."

Easily Remembered.

He—I haven't the heart to kiss you.

She—Well, take mine.—Ulk.

Never judge a man by his coat; he may owe the tailor.

Mooted Question.

"How's Willie getting on at that free thought Sunday school you're sending him to?"

"First rate, from last accounts. He asked his pretty lady teacher who it was that first bit the apple in the Garden of Eden. Willie says she looked him straight in the eye and said nobody knew; that they'd been trying to figure it out for the last 6,000 years."

Usual One.

"What is the latest thing which Mrs. Cooke had in the way of a pickle?"

"I guess it is her husband."

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