



THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

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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, a stranger known as Bladen, and 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. Hannibal 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 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 rescue 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. 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 Hess Hicks, daughter of the overseer, who warns Betty of danger and counsels her to leave Belle Plain at once. Betty, terrified, acts on Hess' advice, and on their way their carriage is stopped by Slosson, the tavern keeper, and a confederate, and Betty and Hannibal are made prisoners. The pair are taken to Slosson's cabin, in an almost inaccessible spot, and there Murrell visits Betty and reveals his part in the plot and his object.

CHAPTER XX (Continued).

"Let me go!" she panted. He laughed his cool laugh of triumph. "Let you go—ask me anything but that, Betty! Have you no reward for patience such as mine? A whole summer has passed since I saw you first—"

There was the noisy shuffling of feet on the stairs, and releasing Betty, Murrell swung about on his heel and faced the door. It was pushed open an inch at a time by a not too confident hand and Mr. Slosson thus guardedly presented himself to the eye of his chief, whom he beckoned from the room.

"Well?" said Murrell, when they stood together on the landing.

"Just come across to the keel boat!" and Slosson led the way down stairs and from the house.

"Damn you, Joe, you might have waited!" observed the outlaw. Slosson gave him a hardened grin. They crossed the clearing and boarded the keel boat which rested against the bank. As they did so the cabin in the stern gave up a shattered presence in the shape of Tom Ware. Murrell started violently. "I thought you were hanging out in Memphis, Tom!" he said, and his brow darkened, as, sinister and forbidding, he stepped closer to the planter. Ware did not answer at once, but looked at Murrell out of heavy bloodshot eyes, his face pinched and ghastly. At last he said, speaking with visible effort.

"I stayed in Memphis until five o'clock this morning."

"Damn your early hours!" roared Murrell. "What are you doing here? I suppose you've been showing that dead face of yours about the neighborhood—why didn't you stay at Belle Plain, since you couldn't keep away?"

"I haven't been near Belle Plain; I came here instead. How am I going to meet people and answer questions?" His teeth were chattering. "Is it known she's missing?" he added.

"Hicks raised the alarm the first thing this morning, according to the instructions I'd given him."

"Yes!" gasped Ware. He was dripping from every pore and the sickly color came and went on his unshaven cheeks. Murrell dropped a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"You haven't been at Belle Plain, you say, but has any one seen you on the road this morning?"

"No one, John," cried Ware, panting between each word. There was a moment's pause and Ware spoke again. "What are they doing at Belle Plain?" he demanded in a whisper. Murrell's lips curled.

"I understand there is talk of suicide," he said.

"Good!" cried Ware.

"They are dragging the bayou down below the house. It looks as though you were going to reap the rewards of the excellent management you have given her estate. They have been trying to find you in Memphis, so the sooner you show yourself the better," he concluded significantly.

"You are sure you have her safe, John; no chance of discovery? For God's sake get her away from here as soon as you can; it's an awful risk you run!"

"She'll be sent down river tonight," said Murrell.

"Captain," began Slosson, who up to this had taken no part in the conversation, "when are you going to cross to t'other side of the bayou?"

"Soon," replied Murrell. Slosson laughed.

"I didn't know but you'd clean forgot the Clan's business. I want to ask another question—but first I want to say that no one thinks higher or more frequent of the ladies than just me; I'm genuinely fond of 'em, and I've never lifted my hand ag'in 'em except in kindness." Mr. Slosson looked at Ware with an exceedingly virtuous expression of countenance. He continued: "Yo' orders are that we're to slip out of this a little afore midnight, but suppose there's a hitch—here's the lady knowing what she knows and here's the boy knowing what he knows."

"There can be no hitch," rasped out Murrell arrogantly.

"I never knew a speculation that couldn't go wrong; and by rights we should have got away last night."

"Well, whose fault is it you didn't?" demanded Murrell.

"In a manner it were mine, but the ark got on a sandbank as we were fetching it in and it took us the whole damn night to get clear."

"Well?" prompted Murrell, with a sullen frown.

"Suppose they get shut of that notion of theirs that the lady's done drowned herself; suppose they take to watching the river? Or suppose the whole damn bottom drops out of this deal? What then? The lady, good looking as she is, knows enough to make west Tennessee mighty on-healthy for some of us. I say, suppose it's a flash in the pan and you have to crowd the distance in between you and this part of the world, you can't tell me you'll have any use for her then." Slosson paused impressively. "And here's Mr. Ware feeling bad, feeling like hell," he resumed. "Him and me don't want to be left in no trap with you gone God only knows where."

"I'll send a man to take charge of the keel boat. I can't risk any more of your bungling, Joe."

"That's all right, but you don't answer my question," persisted Slosson, with admirable tenacity of purpose.

"What is your question, Joe?"

"A lot can happen between this and midnight—"

"If things go wrong with us there'll be a blaze at the head of the bayou; does that satisfy you?"

"And what then?"

"What about the girl?" insisted Slosson, dragging him back to the point at issue between them. "As a man I wouldn't lift my hand ag'in no good looking woman except, like I said, in kindness; but she can't be turned loose; she knows too much. What's the word, Captain—you say it!" he urged. He made a gesture of appeal to Ware.

"Look for the light; better still, look for the man I'll send." And with this Murrell would have turned away, but Slosson detained him.

"Who'll he be?"

"Some fellow who knows the river."

"And if it's the light?" asked the tavern-keeper in a hoarse undertone. Again he looked toward Ware, who, dry-lipped and ashen, was regarding him steadfastly. Glance met glance, for a brief instant they looked into each other's eyes and then the hand Slosson had rested on Murrell's shoulder dropped at his side.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Judge Meets the Situation.

The Judge and Mr. Mahaffy's celebration of the former's rehabilitated credit had occupied the shank of the evening, the small hours of the night, and that part of the succeeding day which the southwest described as soon in the morning; and as the stone jug, in which were garnered the spoils of the highly confidential but entirely misleading conversation which the Judge had held with Mr. Pegioe after his return from Belle Plain, lost in weight, it might have been observed that he and Mr. Mahaffy seemed to gain in that nice sense of equity which should form the basis of all human relations. The Judge watched Mr. Mahaffy, and Mr. Mahaffy watched the Judge, each trustfully placing the regulation of his private conduct in the hands of his friend, as the one most likely to be affected by the rectitude of his acts.

Probably so extensive a consumption of Mr. Pegioe's corn whiskey had never been accomplished with greater high-mindedness. They honorably split the last glass.

The Judge sighed deeply. He took up the jug and inverted it. A stray drop or so fell languidly into his glass. "Try squeezing it, Price," said Mahaffy.

The Judge shook the jug, it gave

forth an empty sound, and he sighed again; he attempted to peer into it, closing one watery eye as he tilted it toward the light.

"I wonder no Yankee has ever thought to invent a jug with a glass bottom," he observed.

"What for?" asked Mahaffy.

"You astonish me, Solomon," exclaimed the Judge. "Coming as you do from that section which invented the wooden nutmeg, and an eight-day clock that has been known to run as much as four or five hours at a stretch. I am aware the Yankees are an ingenious people; I wonder none of 'em ever thought of a jug with a glass bottom, so that when a body holds it up to the light he can see at a glance whether it is empty or not. Do you reckon Pegioe has sufficient confidence to fill the jug again for us?"

But Mahaffy's expression indicated no great confidence in Mr. Pegioe's confidence.

"Credit," began the Judge, "is proverbially shy; still it may sometimes be increased, like the muscles of the body and the mental faculties, by judicious use. I've always regarded Pegioe as a cheap mind. I hope I have done him an injustice." He put on his hat, and tucking the jug under his arm went from the house.

Ten or fifteen minutes elapsed. Mahaffy considered this a good sign; it didn't take long to say no, he reflected. Another ten or fifteen elapsed. Mahaffy lost heart. Then there came a hasty step beyond the door, it was thrown violently open, and the Judge precipitated himself into the room. A glance showed Mahaffy that he was laboring under intense excitement.

"Solomon, I bring shocking news. God knows what the next few hours may reveal!" cried the Judge, mopping his brow. "Miss Malroy his disappeared from Belle Plain, and Hannibal has gone with her!"

"Where have they gone?" asked Mahaffy, and his long jaw dropped.

"Would to God I had an answer ready for that question, Solomon!" answered the Judge, with a melancholy shake of the head. He gazed down on his friend with an air of large tolerance. "I am going to Belle Plain, but you are too drunk. Sleep it off, Solomon, and join me when

seer had just fetched the news into town."

Again they were silent, all their energies being absorbed by the physical exertion they were making. The road danced before their burning eyes, it seemed to be uncoiling itself serpent-wise with hideous undulations. Mr. Mahaffy was conscious that the Judge, of whom he caught a blurred vision now at his right side, now at his left, was laboring painfully in the heat and dust, the breath whistling from between his parched lips.

"You're just ripe for apoplexy, Price!" he snarled, moderating his pace.

"Go on," said the Judge, with stolid resolution.

Two miles out of the village they came to a roadside spring; here they paused for an instant. Mahaffy scooped up handfuls of the clear water and sucked it greedily. The Judge dropped on his stomach and buried his face in the tiny pool, gulping up great thirsty swallows.

"If anything happens to the child, the man responsible for it would better never been born—I'll pursue him with undiminished energy from this moment forth!" he panted.

"What could happen to him, Price?" asked Mahaffy.

"God knows, poor little lad!"

"Will you shut up!" cried Mahaffy savagely.

"Solomon!"

"Why do you go build'g on that idea? Why should any one harm him—what earthly purpose—"

"I tell you, Solomon, we are the pivotal point in a vast circle of crime. This is a blow at me—this is revenge, sir, neither more nor less! They have struck at me through the boy, it is as plain as day."

"What did the overseer say?"

"Just that they found Miss Malroy gone from Belle Plain this morning, and the boy with her."

"This is like you, Price! How do you know they haven't spent the night at some neighbor's?"

"The nearest neighbor is five or six miles distant. Miss Malroy and Hannibal were seen along about dusk in the grounds at Belle Plain; do you mean to tell me you consider it likely that they set out on foot at that hour,



"Try Squeezing It, Price," Said Mahaffy.

your brain is clear and your legs steady."

Mahaffy jerked out an oath, and lifting himself off his chair, stood erect. He snatched up his hat.

"Stuff your pistols into your pockets, and come on, Price!" he said, and stalked toward the door.

He fitted up the street, and the Judge puffed and panted in his wake. They gained the edge of the village without speech.

"There is mystery and rascality here!" said the Judge.

"What do you know, Price, and where did you hear this?" Mahaffy shot the question back over his shoulder.

"At Pegioe's; the Belle Plain over-

and without a word to any one, to make a visit?" inquired the Judge; but Mahaffy did not contend for this point.

"What are you going to do first, Price?"

"Have a look over the grounds, and talk with the slaves."

"Where's the brother—wasn't he at Belle Plain last night?"

"It seems he went to Memphis yesterday."

They plodded forward in silence; now and again they were passed by some man on horseback whose destination was the same as their own, and then at last they caught sight of Belle Plain in its grove of trees.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Too Eager.
Fred Poyner, a Chicago dentist, was recently at a banquet given by the Dental association.

He said: "On one side is the right of things and on the other is wrong; sometimes the difference between the two is slight. As the following story shows: A gypsy upon release from jail met a friend. 'What were you in for?' asked the friend.

"I found a horse," the gypsy replied.

"Found a horse? Nonsense! They would never put you in jail for finding a horse."

"Well, but you see I found him before the owner lost him."

Only in a Business Way.
"So Clara rejected the plumber."
"Do you know why?"
"Somebody told her to be careful about encouraging him, as he hit the pipe."

According to an old bachelor, real luck in love consists in being able to avoid facing the person.

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MADE BIG PROFIT FOR STATE

Purely Business Argument for the Establishment of Sanatoriums for the Tuberculosis.

According to figures contained in the annual report of Dr. H. L. Barnes, superintendent of the Rhode Island state sanatorium, the earnings of the patients of that institution during the year 1911 would amount to over \$266,000. This is a sum three times as large as that spent each year for maintenance of the institution, including four per cent. interest and depreciation charges.

The actual earnings in 1911 of 170 ex-patients were obtained by Dr. Barnes. These ranged from \$2 to \$31 per week, the total earnings for the year amounting to \$102,752. On this basis, Dr. Barnes computes the figures above given. He says, however: "While institutions for the cure of tuberculosis are good investments, there is good reason for thinking that institutions for the isolation of far-advanced cases would be still better investments.

Out of a total of 46,450 hospital days' treatment given, 39,147, or 84 per cent., were free, the treatment costing the state on an average \$200 per patient. Out of 188 free cases investigated, 56 had no families and no income on admission to the sanatorium. Out of 132 patients having homes, the number in the family averaged 5.2, and the average family earnings were \$5.46. In 59 cases the families had no income, and in only five cases were there any savings, none of which amounted to as much as \$100.

The Middle-Aged Woman.

Of the many ways in which the middle-aged woman may vary the effect of her afternoon gowns none is simpler than the use of a collar and cuffs of white voile edged with scalloping and embroidery in a floral design. Another change may be the frock set of white chiffon with border of black malines, and still another is the one of black net hemstitched with silver thread. Some of these collars are so long in front that they terminate only at the waist line, where they cross in surplice effect and are tucked away under the girdle. An excellent model of this sort is of light blue lawn embroidered with black dots, and a second is of white agoric trimmed with tiny folds of broadcloth, alternating with eponge.

To Protect the Flowers.

Edelweiss and other characteristic Swiss flowers are said to be in danger of total extinction because of the craze of tourists for collecting them. Women tourists especially are always anxious to take away souvenirs in the way of a plant, and do not simply pull the flowers, but dig up the plant. It is proposed to introduce a law that will prevent the buying, selling or digging of edelweiss, fire lily, Siberian spring crocus, Alpine columbine, the Daphne, Alpine violet or other national flowers.

Laying a Foundation.

Little Bobby (the guest)—Mrs. Skimper, when I heard we were going to have dinner at your house I started right in trainin' fer it.

Mrs. Skimper (the hostess)—By saying up your appetite, Bobby?

Little Bobby—No'm. By eatin' a square meal first.

Bait.

First Suffragette—If we want to get the young girls interested in our meetings we must have something to attract them.

Second Suffragette—Which would it better be—refreshments or men?—Life.

Persuasion.

"What made Mr. Chuggins buy an automobile?"

"His wife persuaded him by calling his attention to the economy of having gasoline on hand to clean gloves with."—Washington Star.

Height of Selfishness.

Some men are so selfish that if they were living in a haunted house they wouldn't be willing to give up the ghost.—Florida Times Union.

Goodness does not more certainly make men happy than happiness makes them good.—Landon.

Pittsburg Chivalry.

"What's going on here?" demanded a man as he came upon two little boys battling in a vacant lot on the South side. The lad who was on top was rubbing weeds over the face of the under one.

"Stop it," said the man, grabbing the victor by the neck and pulling him away. "What in the world are you trying to do to his face with those weeds?"

"Do? Why, he swore in front of some girls, and I rubbed some smartweed in his eyes to become a great man like Abraham Lincoln."—Pittsburg Sun.

Her Error.

Mrs. Stranger—Can you tell me who that stout man is over there? He is the worst softsooper I ever met.

Dowager—Yes. He is my husband.—Judge.

Old friends are best, but many a woman deludes herself with the idea that she is too young to have any old friends.

Old Michigan's wonderful batter
Eats Toasties, 'tis said, once a day,
For he knows they are healthful and wholesome
And furnish him strength for the fray.

His rivals have wondered and marvelled
To see him so much on the job,
Not knowing his strength and endurance
Is due to the corn in TY COBB.

Written by J. F. MAUER,
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One of the 20 Jingles for which the Postum Co.,
Battle Creek, Mich., paid \$100.00 in May.