



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 place is to be sold, and its history and that of the owners, the Quintards, is the subject of discussion by Jonathan Crossin, 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, 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 Balaam, and is discharged with costs for the plaintiff. Betty Malroy, a friend of the Ferris, 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. Betty 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. Is play for big stakes. Yancy awakes from long dreamless sleep on board the raft. Judge Price makes startling discoveries in looking up land titles. Charles Norton, a young attorney, 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. Betty's uprising of negroes. Judge Price, with Hannibal, visits Betty, and she keeps the boy as a companion. In a storm Betty and Hannibal are separated. Jess Hicks, daughter of the overseer, who warns Betty of danger and counsels her to leave Belle Plain at once. Betty, fearing for their carriage if stopped by Slocum, fled, acts on Betty's advice, and on their 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 aid and swears vengeance, and is aided by Ware, terrified at possible outcome of the crime. Judge Price, hearing of the abduction, plans action. The judge takes charge of the plantation, and search for the missing one is instituted. Carrington visits the judge and alien are discovered. Judge Price visits Colonel Fentress, where he meets Yancy and Cavendish. 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 run fight follows. Yancy appears and assists in the rescue. Bruce Carrington and Betty come to an understanding.

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 sipped 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 un-inspired 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 happen 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 disembodied 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 suspicious. Prob-

ably 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 Fentress 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. This must never happen again!" he told himself remorsefully.

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

He was beginning to experience a great sense of haste; it was two miles to Boggs' and Fentress 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 Fentress' 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 sea-



Pegloe's Black Boy Came Bearing a Gift.

lifeless dust grow warm beneath his feet; and wrapping the quilt closer about him he broke into a labored run. Some twenty minutes later Boggs' came in sight. He experienced a moment of doubt—doubtless Fentress 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, Fentress 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.

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 devout workings of that magnificent mind; he could 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 horrid visions of that great soul, freed from the trammels of restraint, confiding 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 quietly 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 somewhat 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 Fentress.

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 dusk, 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.)

CHAPTER XXXI.

Solomon's Last Night. It had been with no little reluctance that Solomon Mahaffy accompanied Yancy and Cavendish to Belle Plain;

PAIN IN THE ROYAL NOTICE

Composer Had Occasion to Remember Former Time That Maria Theresa Honored Him.

An amusing incident of the healthy boyhood of the great composer, Joseph Haydn, is given by Mary Maxwell Moffat in her biography of the Austrian empress, Maria Theresa.

When von Reutter became choir-master of St. Stephen's cathedral he had Joseph Haydn among his pupils.

During a visit to the Hungarian Prince Esterhazy, in 1773, Maria Theresa took occasion to say a word of praise to Haydn, who had composed the music of the opera given in her honor, and had conducted the performance. She expressed the conviction that she had seen him before, although she could not remember the occasion.

"The last time your majesty was pleased to take notice of me," said Haydn, "you ordered me a good thrashing."

"That does not sound like me," rejoined the empress. "How did it happen?"

Then Haydn told of a Whitsuntide when, with other pupils of von Reutter, he had been brought to Schoenbrunn to sing in the chapel. Between the services the boys took to clambering over the scaffolding of the new wings of the palace. The empress caught sight of them, and sent word forbidding the dangerous sport. But the attraction of the scaffolding was irresistible; on the following day the boys were again risking their necks. When Maria Theresa expostulated with von Reutter, his surmise that the ringleader was "that young scamp, Joseph Haydn," led her to suggest that the rod be used to improve his memory.—Youth's Companion.

Mighty may overcome right, but it can never destroy it.

Red Cross Ball Blue, all blue, best thing value in the whole world, makes the laundress smile. Adv.

A woman has no business with a family if she can't take something old and make it over into something new.

As a summer tonic there is no medicine that quite compares with OXIDINE. It not only builds up the system, but taken regularly, prevents malaria. Regular or tasteless formula at Druggists. Adv.

A Dead One.

"The doctor says that I will live about a year."

"That will be a great change for you."

"What will?"

"Living."

Almost Entirely.

"Dick" Quay, at the Congress hotel in Chicago, was talking about a notorious politician.

"And he's worth eleven millions," Mr. Quay ended.

"And is an entirely self-made man, too, I believe," said a correspondent.

"Entirely so," Mr. Quay answered, "except for nine thick coats of whitewash that have been applied to him by various investigating committees."

Nothing More to Live For.

Without question, the Scots courier of whom Lord Lyveden tells in Fry's Magazine, placed the proper value on his sport.

During a recent curling-match in Switzerland, the skip of one of the teams, who happened to be a Scotsman, was so delighted with the accurate shot of one of his team, that he was heard to address him in the following manner: "Lie down and die, man; lie down and die. Ye'll never lay a finer stone nor that if ye live to be a hundred."

Wanted a Bit.

Oh, yes; it was raining—had been all day. But they didn't mind that so much; you see, they were fishermen. All the same, they were trudging home, with weary steps and very weary-looking faces.

Their baskets were empty, and, to be candid, they were in a very bad temper.

As they entered the little village a large dog ran at one of the party. The dog had a ferocious look and was barking furiously. But the fisherman did not take much alarm at the animal. He just kicked it away carelessly.

"Aren't you afraid he'll go for you?" inquired another of the party, somewhat anxiously.

The one who had kicked at the dog looked at his companion in a sorrowful manner.

"I only wish he would!" he replied. "I'd chance almost anything to be able to go home and say I'd had a bite!"

HARD TO SEE.

Even When the Facts About Coffee are Plain.

It is curious how people will refuse to believe what one can clearly see. Tell the average man or woman that the slow but cumulative poisonous effect of caffeine—the alkaloid in tea and coffee—tends to weaken the heart, upset the nervous system and cause indigestion, and they may laugh at you if they don't know the facts.

Prove it by science or by practical demonstration in the recovery of coffee drinkers from the above conditions, and a large per cent of the human family will shrug their shoulders, take some drugs and—keep on drinking coffee or tea.

"Coffee never agreed with me nor with several members of our household," writes a lady. "It enervates, depresses and creates a feeling of languor and heaviness. It was only by leaving off coffee and using Postum that we discovered the cause and way out of these ills.

"The only reason, I am sure, why Postum is not used altogether to the exclusion of ordinary coffee is, many persons do not know and do not seem willing to learn the facts and how to prepare this nutritious beverage. There's only one way—according to directions—boil it fully 15 minutes. Then it is delicious." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

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

BACKACHE A SIGNAL OF DISTRESS

Pain in the back is the kidney's signal of distress. If this timely warning is ignored, there is grave danger of dropsy, gravel, uric poisoning, or Bright's disease.

When you have reason to suspect your kidneys, use a special kidney medicine.

Doan's Kidney Pills relieve weak, congested kidneys—cure backache—regulate the urine. Good proof in the following statement.

CONVINCING TESTIMONY

George L. Cotter, Elm St., Danvers, N.H., says: "Two years ago I suffered from kidney trouble. My back was often so lame that I could hardly get home from business. Nothing helped me until I used Doan's Kidney Pills. They entirely removed the pains and I have never had any further trouble."

Get Doan's at Any Drug Store, 50c a Box
DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS
FOSTER-MILBURN CO., Buffalo, New York

Mighty may overcome right, but it can never destroy it.

Red Cross Ball Blue, all blue, best thing value in the whole world, makes the laundress smile. Adv.

A woman has no business with a family if she can't take something old and make it over into something new.

As a summer tonic there is no medicine that quite compares with OXIDINE. It not only builds up the system, but taken regularly, prevents malaria. Regular or tasteless formula at Druggists. Adv.

A Dead One.

"The doctor says that I will live about a year."

"That will be a great change for you."

"What will?"

"Living."

Almost Entirely.

"Dick" Quay, at the Congress hotel in Chicago, was talking about a notorious politician.

"And he's worth eleven millions," Mr. Quay ended.

"And is an entirely self-made man, too, I believe," said a correspondent.

"Entirely so," Mr. Quay answered, "except for nine thick coats of whitewash that have been applied to him by various investigating committees."

Nothing More to Live For.

Without question, the Scots courier of whom Lord Lyveden tells in Fry's Magazine, placed the proper value on his sport.

During a recent curling-match in Switzerland, the skip of one of the teams, who happened to be a Scotsman, was so delighted with the accurate shot of one of his team, that he was heard to address him in the following manner: "Lie down and die, man; lie down and die. Ye'll never lay a finer stone nor that if ye live to be a hundred."

Wanted a Bit.

Oh, yes; it was raining—had been all day. But they didn't mind that so much; you see, they were fishermen. All the same, they were trudging home, with weary steps and very weary-looking faces.

Their baskets were empty, and, to be candid, they were in a very bad temper.

As they entered the little village a large dog ran at one of the party. The dog had a ferocious look and was barking furiously. But the fisherman did not take much alarm at the animal. He just kicked it away carelessly.

"Aren't you afraid he'll go for you?" inquired another of the party, somewhat anxiously.

The one who had kicked at the dog looked at his companion in a sorrowful manner.

"I only wish he would!" he replied. "I'd chance almost anything to be able to go home and say I'd had a bite!"

HARD TO SEE.

Even When the Facts About Coffee are Plain.

It is curious how people will refuse to believe what one can clearly see. Tell the average man or woman that the slow but cumulative poisonous effect of caffeine—the alkaloid in tea and coffee—tends to weaken the heart, upset the nervous system and cause indigestion, and they may laugh at you if they don't know the facts.

Prove it by science or by practical demonstration in the recovery of coffee drinkers from the above conditions, and a large per cent of the human family will shrug their shoulders, take some drugs and—keep on drinking coffee or tea.

"Coffee never agreed with me nor with several members of our household," writes a lady. "It enervates, depresses and creates a feeling of languor and heaviness. It was only by leaving off coffee and using Postum that we discovered the cause and way out of these ills.

"The only reason, I am sure, why Postum is not used altogether to the exclusion of ordinary coffee is, many persons do not know and do not seem willing to learn the facts and how to prepare this nutritious beverage. There's only one way—according to directions—boil it fully 15 minutes. Then it is delicious." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

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

BEST EXERCISE FOR WOMEN

Popularity of Fencing Justified in Results That Follow Its Persistent Practice.

Fencing is always popular with women who have the leisure and the opportunity to go through with the required training, and lately it has become even more the fashion with women prominent in society. Even during the summer, while they were away at their country or seaside homes, many women kept up their fencing lessons, having the instructor come to their homes for the purpose.

All experts in physical training rate fencing as the best possible means of exercise for women. It ranks with swimming and rowing in that it gives all the development needed without making the muscles too heavy, as do some of the other sports. For the woman of today who longs above everything else to be slender and supple, it is the ideal exercise. Those women who are so faithful to their fencing lessons have discovered that a brisk half hour with the foils is more effective in keeping their figures girlishly lithe and slender than a half day spent at heavier and less graceful forms of exercise.

Work of Chemical Engineer.

Great is the debt that the new south owes to the chemical engineer, whose contributions are enumerated by a writer: "The utilization of the formerly wasted cotton seed in oil making and the employment of the pressed hulls as a cattle feed; the production of glycerin from cotton seed oil; the use of the vast clay and shale beds in brick and tile manufacture; and the opening up of deposits of phosphates and phosphate rock that yield commercial fertilizers. Through his experiments and advice the pine forests formerly destroyed in obtaining turpentine may now be saved; while lumber, as it has been pointed out that turpentine can be obtained from waste sawdust slabs and old trees or stumps cut down or blown down by storms. High grade oak ties for railroad use may be made to last longer than before and low grade lumber (such as loblolly pine) can be made as efficient as untreated oak by simply impregnating the timber with creosote oil, and it is now a thriving industry throughout the south."

"Going Out to See a Man."

Artemus Ward, about half through his lecture, announced a recess for fifteen minutes, so as to go out and "see a man." H. R. Tracey, a Washington editor, seeing an opportunity to improve upon the joke, sent these lines to the platform:

"Dear Artemus: If you will place yourself under my guidance, I'll take you to 'see a man,' without crossing the street."

A restaurant keeper at that time in Washington was named Aman, to whom Ward was taken, and found Aman luxuriating at the well-laden refreshment board. Everybody "caught on" to the phrase, and, getting up between the acts and "going out to see Aman" became contagious.

Oyster Can Change Its Sex.

At the Academy of Science in Paris recently Edmund Perrier, director of the Museum of Natural History, submitted a series of singular researches by M. Danton, who has discovered that the sex of an oyster often varies in the same subject without apparent cause.

Another fact ascertained by M. Danton is the triumph of femininity among oysters, the male being the inferior and weaker sex, and as food conditions change for the better or worse, they transform themselves from one sex to the other.

Promises.

A man usually wants the preacher to furnish proof that what he promises is going to come true, but he is willing to take the glib proprietor's word for it.