



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 the property of the Barony, and that of the owners, the Quintards, is the subject of discussion by Jonathan Crossway, a business man, a stranger known as Bladen, and Bob Yancy, a farmer, when Hannibal Wayne Hamard, a mysterious child of the old southern family, makes his appearance. Yancy tells how he adopted the boy, Nathaniel Ferris, who he calls the Barony, but the Quintards deny any knowledge of the boy. Yancy appears before Judge Carrington, a friend of the Quintards, and asks questions about the Barony. Trouble at Barony Hill, when Hannibal is kidnapped by Dave Blount, Captain Murrell, a friend of the Quintards, appears and asks questions about the Barony. Trouble at Barony Hill, when Hannibal is kidnapped by Dave Blount, Captain Murrell, a friend of the Quintards, appears and asks questions about the Barony. Trouble at Barony Hill, when Hannibal is kidnapped by Dave Blount, Captain Murrell, a friend of the Quintards, appears and asks questions about the Barony.

pushed open by Betty and the boy, and again he called to them to escape by the skiff. The fret of the current had grown steadily and from beneath the wide-spreading branches of the trees which here met above his head, Carrington caught sight of the star-specked arch of the heavens beyond. They were issuing from the bayou. He felt the river snatch at the keel boat, the buffeting of some swift eddy, and saw the blunt bow swing off to the south as they were plunged into the black shore shadows.

But what he did not see was a big muscular hand which had thrust itself out of the impenetrable gloom and clutched the side of the keel boat. Coincident with this there arose a perfect babel of voices, high-pitched and shrill.

"Sho—I bet it's him! Sho—it's Uncle Bob's nevy! Sho, you can hear 'em! Sho, they're shootin' guns! Sho!"

Carrington cast a hurried glance in the direction of these sounds. There between the boat and the shore the dim outline of a raft was taking shape. It was now caped by a wealth of pale gray smoke that faded from before his eyes as the darkness lifted.

The light increased. From the flat stone hearth of the raft ascended a tall column of flame which rendered visible six pigmy figures, tow-headed and wonderfully vocal, who were toiling like mad at the huge sweeps. The light showed more than this. It showed a lady of plump and pleasing presence smoking a cob-pipe while she fed the fire from a tick stuffed with straw. It showed two bark shanties, a line between them decorated with the never-ending Cavendish wash. It showed a rooster perched on the ridge-pole of one of these shanties in the very act of crowing lustily.

Hannibal, who had climbed to the roof of the cabin, shrieked for help, and Betty added her voice to his.

"All right, Nevy!" came the cheerful reply, as Yancy threw himself over the side of the boat and grappled with Slosson.

"Uncle Bob! Uncle Bob!" cried Hannibal.

Slosson uttered a cry of terror. He had a simple but sincere faith in the supernatural, and even with the Scratch Hiller's big hands gripping his throat, he could not rid himself of the belief that this was the ghost of a murdered man.

"You'll take a dog's licking from me, neighbor," said Yancy grimly. "I been saving it for you!"

Meanwhile Mr. Carrington, whose proud spirit never greatly inclined him to the practice of peace, had prepared for battle. Springing aloft he knocked his heels together.

"Whoop! I'm a man as can slide down a thorny locust and never get scratched!" he shouted. This was equivalent to setting his triggers; then he launched himself nimble and with enthusiasm into the thick of the fight. It was Mr. Bunker's unfortu-

nate privilege to sustain the onslaught of the Earl of Lambeth.

The fight from the Cavendish hearth continued to brighten the scene, for Polly was recklessly sacrificing her best straw tick. Indeed her behavior was in every way worthy of the noble alliance she had formed. Her cob-pipe was not suffered to go out and with Connie's help she kept the six small Cavendishes from risking life and limb in the keel boat, toward which they were powerfully drawn. Despite these activities she found time to call to Betty and Hannibal on the cabin roof.

"Jump down here; that ain't no fit'n' place for you-all to stop in with them gentlemen fightin'!"

An instant later Betty and Hannibal stood on the raft with the little Cavendishes flocking about them. Mr. Yancy's quest of his nevy had taken an enduring hold on their imagination. For weeks it had constituted their one vital topic, and the fight became merely a satisfying background for this interesting restoration.

"Sho, they'd got him! Sho—he wa'n't no bigger than Richard! Sho!"

"Oh!" cried Betty, with a fearful glance toward the keel boat. "Can't you stop them?"

"What fo'?" asked Polly, opening her black eyes very wide. "Bless yo' tender heart!—you don't need to worry none, we got them strange gentlemen licked like they was a passel of children! Connie, you-all mind that fire!"

She accurately judged the outcome of the fight. The boat was little better than a shambles with the havoc that had been wrought there when Yancy and Carrington dropped over its side to the raft. Cavendish followed them, whooping his triumph as he came.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Raft Again.

Yancy and Cavendish threw themselves on the sweeps and worked the raft clear of the keel boat, then the turbulent current seized the smaller craft and whirled it away into the night; as its black bulk receded from before his eyes the Earl of Lambeth spoke with the voice of authority and experience.

"It was a good fight and them fellows done well, but not near well enough." A conclusion that could not be gainsaid. He added, "No one ain't hurt but them that had ought to have got hurt. Mr. Yancy's all right, and so's Mr. Carrington—who's mighty welcome here."

"Mr. Carrington's kin to me, Polly," explained Yancy to Mrs. Cavendish. His voice was far from steady, for Hannibal had been gathered into his arms and had all but wrecked the stolid calm with which the Scratch Hiller was seeking to guard his emotions.

Polly smiled and smiled at the Kentuckian. Trained to a romantic

point of view she had a frank liking for handsome, stalwart men. Cavendish was neither, but none knew better than Polly that where he was most lacking in appearance he was richest in substance. He carried scars honorably earned in those differences he had been prone to cultivate with less generous natures; for his scheme of life did not embrace the millennium.

"Thank God, you got here when you did!" said Carrington.

"We was some pushed for time, but we done it," responded the earl modestly. He added, "What now?—do we make a landing?"

"No—unless it interferes with your plans not to. I want to get around the next bend before we tie up. Later we'll all go back. Can I count on you?"

"You shorely can. I consider this here as sociable a neighborhood as I ever struck. It pleases me well. Folks are up and doing hereabout."

Carrington looked eagerly around in search of Betty. She was sitting on an upturned tub, a pathetic enough figure as she drooped against the wall of one of the shanties with all her courage quite gone from her. He made his way quickly to her side.

"La!" whispered Polly in Chills and Fever's ear. "If that pore young thing yonder keeps a widow it won't be because of any encouragement she gets from Mr. Carrington. If I ever seen marriage in a man's eye I seen it in his this minute!"

"Bruce!" cried Betty, starting up as Carrington approached. "Oh, Bruce, I am so glad you have come—you are not hurt?" She accepted his presence without question.

"We are none of us hurt, Betty," he said gently, as he took her hand.

He saw that the suffering she had undergone during the preceding twenty-four hours had left its record on her tired face and in her heavy eyes. She retained a shuddering consciousness of the unchecked savagery of those last moments on the keel boat; she was still hearing the oaths of the men as they struggled together, the sound of blows, and the dreadful silences that had followed them. She turned from him, and there came the relief of tears.

"There, Betty, the danger is over now and you were so brave while it lasted. I can't bear to have you cry!"

"I was wild with fear—all that time on the boat, Bruce," she faltered between her sobs. "I didn't know but they would find you out. I could only wait and hope—and pray!"

"I was in no danger, dear. Didn't the girl tell you I was to take the place of a man Slosson was expecting? He never doubted that I was that man until a light—a signal it must have been—on the shore at the head of the bayou betrayed me."

"Where are we going now, Bruce? Not the way they went—" and Betty glanced out into the black void where the keel boat had merged into the gloom.

"No, no—but we can't get the raft back up-stream against the current, so the best thing is to land at the Bates' plantation below here; then as soon as you are able we can return to Belle Plain," said Carrington.

There was an interval broken only by the occasional sweep of the great steering oar as Cavendish coaxed the raft out toward the channel. The thought of Charley Norton's murder rested on Carrington like a pall. Scarcely a week had elapsed since he quitted Thicket Point, and in that week the hand of death had dealt with them impartially, and to what end? Then the miles he had traversed in his hopeless journey up-river translated themselves into a division of time as well as space. They were just as much further removed from the past with its blight of tragic terror. He turned and glanced at Betty. He saw that her eyes held their steady look of wistful pity that was for the dead man; yet in spite of this, and in spite of the bounds beyond which he would not let his imagination carry him, the future, enriched with sudden promise, unfolded itself. The deep sense of recovered hope stirred within him. He knew there must come a day when he would dare to speak of his love, and she would listen.

"It's best we should land at Bates' place—we can get teams there," he went on to explain. "And, Betty, wherever we go we'll go together, dear. Cavendish doesn't look as if he had any very urgent business of his own, and I reckon the same is true of Yancy, so I am going to keep them with us. There are some points to be cleared up when we reach Belle Plain—some folks who'll have a lot to explain or else quit this part of the state! And I intend to see that you are not left alone until—until I have the right to take care of you for good and all—that's what you want me to do one of these days, isn't it, darling?" and his eyes, glowing and infinitely tender, dwelt on her upturned face.

He launched himself nimble and with enthusiasm into the fight.

N.C. CONGRESSMEN SPEND VERY LITTLE

TO GET THEIR SEATS ACCORDING TO THEIR STATEMENTS TO COMMITTEE.

SINCLAIR THE BIG SPENDER

Compared to the Other Candidates in This State—Sixth Brought Most of the Money—Small Spent Nothing in His Campaign.

Raleigh.—A special from Washington states that North Carolina ranks near the foot of the list of states by her congressional candidates in securing their nomination, as determined from the sworn statements of the candidates themselves, which, in accordance with the law, has been filed with the secretary of the Senate. The ten Democrats who are candidates to succeed themselves in North Carolina and their Democratic opponents spent a total of \$829,25, of which N. A. Sinclair, who was defeated for the nomination from the Sixth District, spent more than one-third.

All of the North Carolina candidates have the statements in safely ahead of time. A number of candidates in other states, however, have not yet complied with the law, and it is understood that election contests may result from their failure.

Three Tar Heel congressmen—John H. Small, of the First, J. M. Gudger, of the Tenth, and R. L. Doughton, of the Eight—reported that they spent nothing for their nomination. Yates Webb, of the Ninth, reported that his cost him only \$5. Major Charles M. Stedman, of the Fifth, and Robert N. Page, of the Seventh, reported expenditures of \$10 each. Edwards W. Pou, of the Fourth district, reported he had spent \$154.20. John M. Faison, of the Third, reported \$96.50.

To Be World Wide Celebration.

Sunday, October 20, will mark a world-wide celebration for the Baraca and Philaetha Bible classes, this being the 22nd birthday of the movement. Programs and addresses for the occasion are being sent out to hundreds of classes that have expressed a desire to celebrate. The offerings taken will go to the Baraca-Philaetha Temple, which will be the home of the movement at Syracuse, N. Y. The growth of these class organizations has been great. Hundreds of young men and women outside of the Sunday school have been brought in by the classes that have been organized in all Protestant denominations. There are more than 800 Baraca and Philaetha classes in North Carolina, 98 of these having been organized during the past six months.

Another Student Expelled.

The faculty investigation into the hazing of both present and past revealed the expulsion of another student, totaling the list of expelled and suspended to date up to twenty-one. The student asked to withdraw from the institution, was Robert H. Parker, of Enfield, a law student. The history of the fact leading up to Parker's expulsion dates back to the spring of 1911, when in his junior year he engaged in a hazing escapade and was expelled at the time by the student council, but for some reason that cannot be ascertained, he was reinstated and permitted to register as a law student this year.

Two Men Arrested as Deserters.

Acting upon advices from Wilmington, the Chief of Police, of Goldsboro, arrested two men and one woman on the arrival of the train from that city. The police here received a request from the police of Wilmington to stop Harry Miller and B. F. Murry, young white men, charged with desertion, also a young girl, Ruth Willoughby, supposed to be with the men. The men were placed under arrest while the girl was taken in charge by her grandfather.

Large Sum of Money Stolen.

Claud Murry, union ticket agent lost or had stolen from him at Wilmington, a sack containing \$806.12, which he was taking to the general office of the Coast Line to be deposited with the treasurer of the road. He had the money with him down town, and visited a barber shop, the post-office and the Murchison National Bank, and started toward the Coast Line office before he missed the money. Police and county officers been working on the case but so far no clue has been found.

For Duty in North Carolina.

Sergeant William B. Cady, of company "B", Fourth United States Infantry, has been assigned by the war department for duty in North Carolina to take the place of Sergeant John Waddington. Sergeant Cady is now stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and will report at Raleigh to the acting adjutant general about the fifteenth of this month. He is detailed as instructor of the regular duties of a soldier, pitching tent and general field work in the North Carolina National Guard.

LOWER RATES FOR SHIPPERS

Corporation Commission Secures Reduction — Intended to Benefit Growers and Consumers.

Raleigh.—In the interest of better distribution of apples, cabbage, onions and potatoes from western North Carolina to central and eastern Carolina points, the corporation commission has secured an agreement with the Southern Express company to make reductions on these products equal to twenty per cent. for the longer distances. The reduction was made in the interest of the apple producers of the mountains and the apple consumers in the central and eastern section of the state. On shipments passing over two or more railroads the rate will be the joint mileage rate plus 15 per cent.

A circular issued by the corporation commission gives this information, the rates effective from October 7. The rate for sixty miles and under is 30 cents a hundred; over sixty miles and not over eighty miles, 35 cents a hundred; over eighty miles and not over 100 miles, 40 cents; over 100 miles and not over 150 miles, 50 cents; over 150 miles and not over 180 miles, 55 cents; over 180 miles and not over 250 miles, 60 cents; over 250 and not over 350 miles, 70 cents, and over 350 and not over 400 miles 80 cents.

Farm Demonstrators to Meet.

During the week of the state fair, sixty-five men who are in charge of the farm demonstration work in as many counties in the state, will assemble at Raleigh in the rooms of the chamber of commerce to receive special instructions. It will really be a school of agriculture. It will be in charge of Prof. C. R. Hudson, who has the state agency for North Carolina. Several experts from the United States Department will attend and will take prominent part in conducting the school, among these being the well known Bradford Knapp and W. W. Long, the latter being the field agent in charge of the work in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. There will also be at the same time extensive exhibits of corn at the state fair grounds in the special department, covering exhibits made by about five hundred growers. With this exhibit will be statements as to the cost of production of each crop.

High Point Convention City.

High Point is becoming a convention city. This year already have met here the Daughters of Liberty, the Western North Carolina Dental Association, the Junior Order, the Baptist Association, and other important bodies. Now comes, the latter part of this month, October 30 and 31, the seventh annual state convention for the prevention of tuberculosis. Nearly two hundred of the state's most representative physicians will be in attendance and High Point will throw open wide its doors of welcome. In November comes the Western North Carolina Methodist conference. This will be a great occasion for High Point, though it is not the first time the city has had the conference as a guest.

North Carolina New Enterprises.

The charters issued by the secretary of state carry a total of \$155,000 which is divided into four different new enterprises. They are as follows: The Sullivan Lumber Company of Plymouth, to engage in a general lumber business, with R. H. Sullivan, Lula Sullivan and E. J. Conklin as incorporators; authorized capital is \$5,000, with \$2,000 paid in. Beaufort Oyster Company, of Wit, Carteret county, to conduct the business of canning oysters, fish, etc., to operate steam and sailing vessels and to deal in merchandise, real estate, etc.; authorized capital \$100,000, with \$20,000 subscribed for.

State W. C. T. U. Hold Convention.

The meeting of the state convention of the W. C. T. U. was featured by the election of officers, all the old officers being re-elected. The program of the day was carried out, with the addition of a greeting from Mrs. Branner of Waynesville. The addresses by the superintendents were continued and there were several reports, after which election of officers was held.

No Bull Moose For Wilson County.

The Bull Mooseers met in the courthouse at Wilson for the purpose of nominating a county ticket and candidates for both branches of the legislature. The court house bell rang and the sounds were doleful to the handful who responded—only nine all told. This is the second or third time this most extinct party in Wilson county have attempted to name a ticket, and each time have given up in disgust. They are fast learning that a Democratic nomination down this way is equivalent to an election.

Cavalry Troop B Mustered In.

Cavalry Troop B, named the Governor's Horse Guards in honor of Locke Craig, was mustered in at Asheville by Maj. Lawrence W. Young, assisted by Capt. C. I. Bard and J. H. Koon. The officers elected were: Captain, Robert B. Reynolds; first lieutenant, V. Buren Bostic; second lieutenant, Rulo Fitzpatrick; first sergeant, E. J. Burns; sergeants, Ed Stevens, John Erakine, Harley Coffey and Grover Glenn; corporals, B. C. Sorrella, J. L. Williamson, Burt Nichols and O. M. Rodgers; trumpeter, A. Hale Weaver.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—(Continued.)

"What have we between here and the river?" inquired the latter. It was best, he felt, not to give Slosson an opportunity to ask questions.

"It narrows considerably, pardner, but it's a straight course," said Slosson. "Black in yonder, ain't it?" he added, nodding ahead.

The shores drew rapidly together; they were leaving the lake-like expanse behind. In the silence, above the rustling of the trees, Carrington heard the first fret of the river against its bank. Slosson yawned prodigiously.

"I reckon you ain't needing me?" he said.

"Better go up in the bow and get some sleep," advised Carrington, and Slosson, nothing loath, clambered down from the roof of the cabin and stumbled forward.

The ceaseless murmur of the rushing waters grew in the stillness as the keel boat drew nearer the hurrying yellow flood, and the beat of the Kentuckian's pulse quickened. Would he find the raft there? He glanced back over the way they had come. The dark ranks of the forest walled off the clearing, but across the water a dim point of light was visible. He fixed its position as somewhere near the head of the bayou. Apparently it was a lantern, but as he looked a ruddy glow crept up against the skyline.

From the bow Bunker had been observing this singular phenomenon. Suddenly he bent and roused Slosson, who had fallen asleep. The tavern-keeper sprang to his feet and Bunker pointed without speaking.

"Mebby you can tell me what that light back yonder means?" cried Slosson, addressing himself to Carrington; as he spoke he snatched up his rifle.

"That's what I'm trying to make out," answered Carrington.

"Hell!" cried Slosson, and tossed his gun to his shoulder.

What seemed to be a breath of wind lifted a stray lock of Carrington's hair, but his pistol answered Slosson in the same second. He fired at the huddle of men in the bow of the boat and one of them pitched forward with his arms outspread.

"Keep back, you!" he said, and dropped off the cabin roof.

His promptness had bred a momentary panic, then Slosson's bull-like voice began to roar commands; but in that brief instant of surprise and shock Carrington had found and withdrawn the wooden peg that fastened the cabin door. He had scarcely done this when Slosson came tramping aft supported by the three men.

Calling to Betty and Hannibal to escape in the skiff which was towing astern the Kentuckian rushed toward the bow. At his back he heard the door creek on its hinges as it was



He Launched Himself Nimble and With Enthusiasm into the Fight.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)