



THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

By VAUGHAN KESTER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY D. MELVILLE

Copyright, 1914, The Dobson-Medville Company



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 Bob Yancy, 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 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 rescues 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. 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. 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 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 Jess, a daughter of the overseer, who warns Betty of danger and counsels her to leave Belle Plain at once. Betty, terrified, acts on Jess's advice, and on the way her carriage is stopped by Blossom, the tavern keeper, and a confederate, and Betty and Hannibal are made prisoners. The pair are taken to Hick's place, in an almost inaccessible spot, and there Murrell visits Betty and reveals his part in the plot and his object. Betty spurns his professed 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 one is instituted. Carrington visits the Judge and allies are discovered. Carrington visits Colonel Fentress, where he meets Yancy and Cavendish. Becoming enraged, Price dashes a glass of whisky 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. Betty, 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. Murrell's friends attempt to free him. Judge frustrates plans. The Judge comes into his own and Carrington decides not to leave Belle Plain.

CHAPTER XXXIV (Continued.)

Betty Malroy and Carrington had ridden into Raleigh to take leave of their friends. They had watched the stage from sight, had answered the last majestic salute the judge had given them across the swaying top of the coach before the first turn of the road hid it from sight, and then they had turned their horses' heads in the direction of Belle Plain.

"Bruce, do you think Judge Price will ever be able to accomplish all he hopes to?" Betty asked when they had left the town behind. She drew in her horse as she spoke, and they went forward at a walk under the splendid arch of the forest and over a carpet of vivid leaves.

"I reckon he will, Betty," responded Carrington. Unfavorable as had been his original estimate of the judge's character, events had greatly modified it.

"He really seems quite sure, doesn't he?" said Betty.

"There's not a doubt in his mind."

He was still at Belle Plain, living in what had been Ware's office, while the Cavendishes were domiciled at the big house. He had arranged with the judge to crop a part of that hopeful gentleman's land the very next season; the fact that a lawsuit intervened between the judge and possession seemed a trifling matter, for Carrington had become infected with the judge's point of view, which did not admit of the possibility of failure; but he had not yet told Betty of his plans. Time enough for that when he left Belle Plain.

His silence concerning the future had caused Betty much thought. She wondered if he still intended going south into the Purchase; she was not sure but it was the dignified thing for him to do. She was thinking of this now as they went forward over the rustling leaves, and at length she turned in the saddle and faced him.

"I am going to miss Hannibal dreadfully—yes, and the judge, and Mr. Yancy!" she began.

"I am to be missed, too, am I, Betty?" he inquired, leaning toward her. "You, Bruce?—Oh, I shall miss you, too, dreadfully—but then, perhaps in five years, when you come back—"

"Five years!" cried Carrington, but he understood something of what was passing in her mind, and laughed shortly. "Five years, Betty?" he repeated, dwelling on the numeral.

Betty hesitated and looked thoughtful. Presently she stole a surrepti-

tious glance at Carrington from under her long lashes, and went on slowly, as though she were making careful choice of her words.

"When you come back in three years, Bruce—"

Carrington still regarded her fixedly. There was a light in his black eyes that seemed to penetrate to the most secret recesses of her heart and soul.

"Three years, Betty?" he repeated again.

Betty, her eyes cast down, twisted her rein nervously between her slim, white fingers, but Carrington's steady glance never left her sweet face, framed by its halo of bright hair. She stole another look at him from beneath her dark lashes.

"Three years, Betty?" he prompted.

"Bruce, don't stare at me that way, it makes me forget what I was going to say! When you come back—next year—"

and then she lifted her eyes to his and he saw that they were full of sudden tears. "Bruce, don't go away—don't go away at all—"

Carrington slipped from the saddle and stood at her side.

"Do you mean that, Betty?" he asked. He took her hands loosely in his and relentlessly considered her crimsoned face. "I reckon it will always be right hard to refuse you anything—here is one settler the Purchase will never get!" and he laughed softly.

"It was the Purchase—you were going there!" she cried.

"No, I wasn't Betty; that notion died its natural death long ago. When we are sure you will be safe at Belle Plain with just the Cavendishes, I am going into Raleigh to wait as best I can until spring." He spoke so gravely that she asked in quick alarm.

"And then, Bruce—what?"

"And then—Oh, Betty, I'm starving!" All in a moment he lifted her slender figure in his arms, gathering her close to him. "And then, this—and this—and this, sweetheart—and more—and—oh, Betty! Betty!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

The End and the Beginning. When Murrell was brought to trial his lawyers were able to produce a host of witnesses whose sworn testi-

mony showed that so simple a thing as perjury had no terrors for them. His fight for liberty was waged in and out of court with incredible bitterness, and as judge and jury were only human, the outlaw escaped with the relatively light sentence of twelve years' imprisonment; he died, however, before the expiration of his term.

The judge, when he returned to Raleigh, resumed his own name of Turberville, and he allowed it to be known that he would not be offended by the prefix of General. During his absence he had accumulated a wealth of evidence of undoubted authenticity, with the result that his claim against the Fentress estate was sustained by the courts, and when The Oaks with its stock and slaves was offered for sale, he, as the principal creditor, was able to buy it in.

One of his first acts after taking possession of the property was to have Mahaffy reentered in the grove of oaks below his bedroom windows, and he marked the spot with a great square of granite. The judge, visibly shaken by his emotions, saw the massive boulder go into place.

"Harsh and rugged like the nature of him who lies beneath it—but enduring, too, as he was," he murmured. He turned to Yancy and Hannibal, and added: "You will lay me beside him when I die."

Then when the bitter struggle came and he was wrenched and tortured by longings, his strength was in remembering his promise to the dead man, and it was his custom to go out under the oaks and pace to and fro beside Mahaffy's grave until he had gained the mastery of himself. Only Yancy and Hannibal knew how fierce the conflict was he waged, yet in the end he won that best earned of all victories, the victory over himself.

"My salvation has been a costly thing; it was bought with the blood of my friend," he told Yancy.

It was Hannibal's privilege to give Cavendish out of the vast Quintard tract such a farm as the earl had never dreamed of owning even in his most fervid moments of imagining; and he abandoned all idea of going to England to claim his title. At the judge's suggestion he named the place Earl's Court. He and Polly were entirely satisfied with their surroundings, and never ceased to congratulate themselves that they had left Lincoln county. They felt that their friends, the Carringtons at Belle Plain, though untitled people, were still of an equal rank with themselves; while as for the judge, they doubted if royalty itself laid it any over him.

Mr. Yancy accepted his changed fortunes with philosophic composure. Technically he filled the position of overseer at The Oaks, but the judge's activity was so great that this position was largely a sinecure. The most arduous work he performed was spending his wages.

Certain trifling peculiarities survived with the judge even after he had entered what he had once been

Hannibal's education and the preparation of his memoirs, intended primarily for the instruction of his grandson, and which he modestly decided to call "The History of My Own Times," which clearly showed the magnificence of his mind and its out look.

THE END.

SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Childish Mind, Groping in Darkness, Is Craving for Information That Is Denied It.

Every trace of useful information is carefully concealed from the very young child. A rattle, or at most a rubber doll, is its only plaything. As it grows older it is very slowly and gradually introduced to the various forms of the animal kingdom. Of the mysteries of numbers and of languages it has as yet no conception. Its constant questions are for the most part answered "humorously" and hence incorrectly, or they are not answered at all. This eternal "humor" is most galling of all. Why should a human infant be such an irresistible joke? The lower animals take their young seriously and train them from the start with a very definite purpose in view. Yet their possibilities are infinitesimal as compared with those of the average baby. And we sit calmly by and enjoy the "humor" of childhood and insist that the child is enjoying itself also, even though its little soul may be thirsting for information which is laughingly denied it. And we continue to put off the inevitable day when the child will have to take life seriously and hence, according to our tradition, sadly.

One important point which is quite overlooked by the upholders of the brainless child is the fact that nonsense and silliness are just as taxing to the infant mind as useful information would be. It requires no more mental effort to realize that A is A than to grasp the extraordinary fact that a mass of brownish softness is a "fuzzy little Teddy bear, yes it is." In fact, the letter A has a distinct advantage. And at a more advanced age it is certainly less puzzling to be told that five and five make ten than to have one's own respectable pink toes described as a series of pigs going to market or entering into the various other activities of life.—Sigmond Spaeth in Harper's Weekly.

Graceful East Indians.

Describing the women of India, a writer says: "Even the most withered toll-worn hag has a dignity of carriage and a grace of motion that the western woman might envy. The 'sari' is draped in an easy flowing style and adjusted as it slips back with a graceful turn of the silver bangled arm, the skinny legs move rhythmically, and the small feet fall with a silent and pantherlike tread. It is the beauty of natural and untrammelled motion, and says much in favor of the abolition of the corset, for the Indian women retain their uprightness and suppleness of figure till bowed with age.

The commonest type is the coolie woman, who undertakes all sorts of rough work, carrying heavy burdens on her head, and she is, perhaps, the least attractive, for her workaday garments are usually faded and dirty; yet, even among this poor class of burden bearers, we see many with handsome straight features and supple well proportioned figures.

"No matter how poor their garments, jewelry of some sort is worn; necklaces of gold or beads, colored glass or silver bangles and heavy silver anklets."

Poor Nobles of Italy.

Lecturing in London on an out-of-the-way tour in Central Italy, Alexander Keighley said he learned on good authority that a fine medieval castle in good preservation in one of these Italian hill towns had been sold to an Englishman for \$195.

The poverty of the nobles in Italy was sometimes pitiful. He found one majestic pile inhabited by an old woman of aristocratic family but miserably poor. Showing outwardly as much as possible, of its ancient state, the only furniture within it was a deal table, a chair and a battered candlestick.

In the town of Asisi, while he was talking to a priest, some poor little children persisted in begging, and the priest told him they were the children of a count.

Youthful Grandmother.

Probably the youngest grandmother in the world is Mme. Kuni Medzukami, the wife of a farmer in the province of Idza, Japan. The woman, who is now 28 years old, was married when she was 13. She has a daughter fifteen years old who was married a year ago and has given birth to a son. Mme. Medzukami's grandmother is still alive at the age of 92.

- Because of a *Yellow Letter* a beautiful young girl tried to take her life;
- Because of a *Yellow Letter* her father was seized with apoplexy;
- Because of more *Yellow Letters* an aged lawyer took poison;
- A young girl drowned herself and
- An elderly spinster hanged herself in a room of a hotel twenty miles away.



- What are these *Yellow Letters*?
- By whom and to whom were they sent?
- These mystifying mysteries are explained in our new serial story

The
Yellow Letter

- The most clever piece of fiction devoted to amateur detective investigations that you ever read.
- You'll find the first installment in this paper in the near future and

You Can't Afford to Miss It

- Three Clews
- Two Discoveries
- Three Suicides
- Two Disappearances

and a love story, with action from the very beginning of the first chapter to the end of the last, make our new serial story

The Yellow Letter

highly interesting and entertaining. It's a new kind of a detective mystery

By **William Johnston**

a newspaper man of twenty years' experience with all shades and grades of criminality. Read it.

You'll find it the superlative thing in exciting mystery.

Get the opening installment.

In This Paper Only!

The YELLOW LETTER

A fascinating detective story of

Mysteries
Suicides
Clews

Conspiracies

Shortages and Burning of Strange Documents

If you care to read the superlative thing in exciting mystery stories don't fail to get the first chapter of the new serial we have secured.

It's worth the while of anyone who enjoys good fiction.