The Call of the Cumberlands

By Charles Neville Buck

With Illustrations from Photographs of Scenes in the Play

(Copyright, 1916, by W. J. Watt & Co.)

CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

Besides being on duty as an officer of militia, Calhoun was a Kentuckian. Interested in the problems of his commonwealth, and, when he went back, he knew that his cousin, who occupied the executive mansion at Frankfort, would be interested in his suggestions. The governor had asked him to report his impressions, and he meant to, after analyzing them.

So, smarting under his impotency, Captain Calhoun came out of the tent one morning, and strolled across the earred bridge to the town proper. He knew that the grand jury was convening, and he meant to set as a spectator in the courthouse and study proceedings when they were instructed.

But before he reached the courthouse, where for a half hour or two the sepoys bell would not clang out its summons to sentiment and witchery, he found fresh food for his wrath.

He was not a popular man with these clansmen, though involuntarily he had been useful in healing old feuds to the daughter. There was a little, but the more that they did not like, and the greatest list of iron laws he had laid down, which, for their minds dominated.

Calhoun was without being told that after the noon hour a series of pertinent rulings. Farms were more million than usual. Men fell into the lists and groups. A clerk at a store where he stopped for tobacco inquired as he made change.

"Heard the news, stranger?"

"What news?"

"This here Wilder Samson fourth cousin hark yonder, an' last evenin' towards sundown, Jesse Perry an' Aaron Hollin was shot dead."

For an instant, the soldier stood looking at the young clerk, his eyes kindling into a wrathful hate. Then he curved under his breath. At the door, he turned on his heel.

"Where was Judge Smithers he killed at this time of day?" he demanded.

CHAPTER XV.

The Honorable Abe Smithers was not the regular judge of the circuit which combined Hilton among its mighty realm. The circuit included was ill, and Smithers had been named as his proxy—successor. Calhoun climbed to the second story of the Hilton bank building and pounded hard on a door which bore the boldly-lettered sign:

"Abe Smithers, Attorney-at-Law."

The temporary judge admitted a caller in uniform whose countenance was stormy with indignant protest. The judge himself was placid and still fat. The lawyer who was for the time being exiled to the bench, hoped to succeed at least permanently the retiring of the Hilton faction, since certain Hiltonian votes were needed in the war a young man of powerful physique with a face ruggedly strong and kind.

Calhoun stood for a moment inside the door and when he spoke it was to demand roughly:

"Well, what are you going to do about this?"

"About what, captain?" inquired the other, mildly.

"Is it possible you haven't heard?" cried Calhoun. "Men from two corners have been added to the tobacco! You remember the courts of law. I guess we had the military arm of the state. Are you going to venture that far and no farther?"

The judge shook his head, and his visage was stormy thoughtful and concerned. "I guess you don't know I had just had a long phone conversation with the Hilton bank," he explained, explain that the sector he had driven from the top down had been a little hard, but I guess I'm not to be blamed for that."

"Until the grand jury sets I don't see what it was you gain by coming," said the disgusted Captain Calhoun.

Abe Smithers, the former grand jurors, he down to the grand jury room. Mr. Hilton, I'm sure, is overanxious, more to your equity, of course, than the other side of the case. Well, I'm sorry, Judge Smithers, have detained you. If he was a sound coward, he was a sound coward, he was a sound coward,