The Call of the Cumberlands

By Charles Neville Buck

With Illustrations from Photographs of Scenes in the Play

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SYNOPSIS.

Oh Misery creek Judge Billie Rose conducts court, plays poker and settles neighborhood feuds after the manner of the mountains. Forrest Smith, head of the Smith clan, is suspected of the murder of Tom Foster, the head of the Fosters, but no one is suspected of the crime. Jasmine Rose, daughter of the judge, is loved by Tom Foster, the slain man's brother, and by Lemuel Smith, a member of the hostile clan. Jasmine promises Tarzarah Spicer that she will marry Lemuel if Forrest Smith is acquitted. Forrest is acquitted, and Jasmine refuses to marry Lemuel. Lemuel, angered, starts for Louisville with Lawyer Lee on the mountain train. Tarzarah Spicer, who has been jilted by Lemuel, determines to follow him on the train. Jasmine, who has been visiting in Louisville, is returning to the mountains with Lawyer Lee. Tarzarah, disguised as a mountain girl, boards the train at Cumberland Gap. Jasmine, who has been reading a book, which the mountaineer gave her, looks up from it and sees Tarzarah.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

"That's a-goin' ter be a dandy party over ter Wile McCagar's mill some Saturday, but you ain't never a-goin' ter go, I reckon, 'cause you ain't a-goin' with me, won't ye, Sally?"

He waited for her usual delighted assent, but Sally only told him absently and without enthusiasm that she would "study about it." At last, however, her interest broke, and looking up, she abruptly demanded:

"Air ye spoilt sweet, Samson?"

"Whey been a-talkin' ter ye?" demanded the boy, angrily.

For a moment, the girl sat silent. Finally she spoke in a brave voice:

"Hit hain't nothin' ter git mad about, Samson. The artist man he knowed ye an' he had a right ter go down thar, an' gin an explanation." She thought a long gesture toward the great beyond.

"He hadn't ought ter call me Sally. If I'd been plumb sartain he was a-goin' ter, I would 'a' put on my best, an' what I knows," he hastily amended, "that he mought 'a' a-liked."

"Air ye a-goin'?"

"I'm studyin' about hit."

He awaited expectation, but none came. Then, with a pleying of his masculine vanity, he demanded:

"Hain't ye a-keerin', Sally, whether I goes, or not?"

The girl grew rigid. Her fingers on the crumbling plank of the stile's top tightened and gripped hard. Her face did not betray her, nor her voice though she had to gulp down a rising lump in her throat before she could answer calmly.

"I think ye had ought ter go, Samson."

The boy was astonished. He had avoided the subject for fear of her opposition—and he knew.

Then, slowly, she went on.

"There hain't nothin' in these here hills fer ye, Samson. Down thar, ye'll see lots of things that ye don't—yer eyes'll tired an' beautiful! Ye'll see lots of gals that kin read an' write, gals dressed up in all kinds of fancy fixin's. Her gift words ye out and ended in a sort of inward gasp.

Compliment came hardly and awkwardly to Samson's lips. He reached for the girl's hand and whispered:

"I reckon I won't see no gals that's as purty as you be, Sally. I reckon ye know, whether I goes or stays, we're a-goin' ter git married."

She drew her hand away, and laughed, a little bitterly. The boy, for all he had ceased to be a child, and become a woman with all the amazing possibilities of a woman's intuitions, knew.

Samson, she said, "hain't a-goin' ter be make over by no schools, nor nothin' ter even them others' gals—gals that kin read an' write!" Then she added, with a little diffident pride, "I hain't hardly spelt out print'n in the last year."

Her lover's scorn was forgetful of the long-used dangers, as a perfect knowledge of the battle terrain, before he goes to war, under fire. He stepped back a short pace and drew himself up to his full height.

"Hister," he said, "ye needn't fret about that Eastern air man. He ain't ter make no difference fer a while. He's a-goin' ter paint my picture, an' then he's a-goin' back ter Louisville."

Across a gulch far thick different, and yet awhile, she insisted. "When ye git back a-goin' ter be ready ter git married?"

"I reckon I won't be ready fer a-goin' ter be ready fer that—the preachin' an' the weddin'—fer a right smart spell. Hit'll be a-goin' ter be a right big weddin', Sally. Ye'll be a-goin' ter have a right big weddin' dress, an' a right big weddin' cake, an' a right big weddin' ring, an' a right big weddin' veil, an' a right big weddin' everything, an' I'm a-goin' ter have a right big weddin' suit, an' a right big weddin' hat, an' a right big weddin' boots, an' a right big weddin' everything, an' I'm a-goin' ter have a right big weddin' everything, an' I'm a-goin' ter have a right big weddin' everything, an' I'm a-goin' ter have