The Call of the Cumberlands

By Charles Neville Buck

With Illustrations from Photographs of Scenes in the Play

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On Misery creek, at the foot of a rock from which he has fallen, Sally Miller finds George Lescott, a landscape painter, unconscious, and after reviving him, goes for assistance Samson South and Sally, taking Lescott to Samson's home, are met by Spicer South, head of the family, who tells them that Jesse Purvy has been shot and that Samson is suspected of the crime. Samson denies it. The shooting of Jesse Purvy breaks the truce in the Hollman-South feud.

CHAPTER IV-Continued.

He sauntered down the road, but, when he had passed out of vision, he turned sharply into the woods, and began climbing. His steps carried him to the rift in the ridge where the white oak stood sentinel over the watch tower of rock. As he came over the edge from one side his bare feet making no sound, he saw Sally sitting there, with her hands resting on the moss and her eyes deeply troubled She was gazing fixedly ahead and her lips were trembling. At once Samson's face grew black. Some one had been making Sally unhappy. Then he saw beyond her a standing figure. which the tree trunk had hitherto concealed. It was the loose-knitted figure of young Tamarack Spicer.

"In course," Spicer was saying, "we don't 'low Samson shot Jesse Purvy, but them Hollmans 'll 'spicion him, an' I heered just now that them dawgs was trackin' straight up hyar from the mouth of Misery. They'll git hyar against sundown."

Samson leaped violently forward. With one hand he roughly seized his cousin's shoulder and wheeled him about.

"Shet up!" he commanded. "What d-n fool stuff hev ye been tellin' Sally?'

For an instant the two clansmen stood fronting each other. Samson's face was set and wrathful. Tamarack's a mile below." was surly and snarling. "Hain't I got a license ter tell Sally the news?" he demanded.

"Nobody hain't got no license," retorted the younger man in the quiet of cold anger, "ter tell Sally nothin'

"She air bound ter know hit all pretty soon. Them dawgs-"

"Didn't I tell ye ter shet up?" Sam son clenched his fists, and took a step forward. "Ef ye opens yore mouth again, I'm a-goin' ter smash hit. Now,

Tamarack Spicer's face blackened, and his teeth showed. His right hand swept to his left arm-pit. Outwardly he seemed weaponless, but Samson knew that concealed beneath the hickory shirt was a holster, worn mountain fashion.

"What air ye a-reachin' atter. Tam'rack?" he inquired, his lips twisting in amusement.

"Thet's my business." "Well, git hit out-or git out yeself,

afore I throws ye offen the clift." Sally showed no symptoms of alarm. Her confidence in her hero was abso-

lute. The boy lifted his hand, and pointed off down the path. Slowly and with incoherent muttering, Spicer took himself away. Then only did Sally rise. She came over, and laid a hand on Samson's shoulder. In her blue eyes, the tears were welling. "Samson," she whispered, "ef they're

atter ye, come ter my house. I kin hide ye out. Why didn't ye tell me Jesse Jurvey'd done been shot?" "Hit tain't nothin' ter fret about,

Sally," he assured her. He spoke awkwardly, for he had been trained to regard emotion as unmanly. "Thar hain't no danger."

She gazed searchingly into his eyes, and then, with a short sob, threw her arms around him, and buried her face on his shoulder.

"Ef anything happens ter ye, Samson," she said, brokenly, "hit'll jest kill me. I couldn't live withouten ye, Samson. I jest couldn't do hit!"

The boy took her in his arms, and twitched. He drew his features into two men turned toward the house. a scowl, because that was the only expression with which he could safeguard his feelings. His voice was

"I reckon, Sally," he said, "I couldn't

live withouten you, neither." at morning from Jesse Purdy's store had spent a hard day. The roads followed creek-beds, crossing and recrossing waterways in a fashion that two nights ago. gave the bloodhounds a hundred bafand whined, and halted in perplexity. Samson South-who should, by their but each time they came to a point prejudiced convictions, be hiding out raised his muzzle skyward, and gave top step of the stile, smoking his pipe,

voice. The party halted for a moment's rest, pered conference, the Lexington man

put a question: "What do you call this creek?" "Hit's Misery."

er-that you might suspect?"

The Hollmans laughed. "This creek is settled with Souths

thicker'n hops." The Lexington man looked up. He knew what the name of South meant to a Hollman.

might have a particular grudge?" "The Souths don't need no parti'lar grudge, but thar's young Samson South. He's a wildcat."

"He lives this way?" "These dogs air a-makin' a bee-line alibi."

The Lexington man lighted his pipe, a flask cup.

"He'd be apt to say that," he commented, "These dogs haven't any prejudice in the matter. I'll stake my life on their telling the truth."

An hour later, the group halted again. The master of hounds mopped his forehead.

"Are we still going toward Samson South's house?" he inquired. "We're about a quarter from hit now, an' we hain't never varied from

the straight road." "Will they be apt to give us trouble?"

Jim Hollman smiled. "I hain't never heered of no South submittin' ter arrest by a Hollman." The trailers examined their fire-

arms, and loosened their holster-flaps.

CHAPTER V.

The dogs went forward at a trot.

From time to time that day, neigh bors had ridden up to Spicer South's stile, and drawn rein for gossip. These men brought bulletins as to the progress of the hounds, and near sundown, as a postscript to their information, a volley of gunshot signals sounded from a mountain top. No word was spoken. but in common accord the kinsmen rose from their chairs, and drifted toward their leaning rifles.

"They're a-comin' hyar," said the head of the house, curtly. "Samson ought ter be home. Whar's Tam'rack?" No one had noticed his absence until that moment, nor was he to be step of the stile. There was a half-mofound. A few minutes later, Samson's ment of terrific suspense, then the figure swung into sight, and his uncle

met him at the fence. "Samson, I've done asked ye all the questions I'm a-goin' ter ask ye," he ended. They sniffed indifferently about said, "but them dawgs is makin' fer the trouser legs of the men who saunthis house. They've jest been sighted

Samson nodded. hain't a-goin' ter ask ye no questions. love ter prove ter these hyar men thet onward. us Souths don't break our word. We invite 'em in, an' let them damn dawgs sniff round the feet of every man in my house-an' then, when they're plumb teetotally damn satisfied, I'd like ter tell 'em all ter go ter hell. Thet's the way I feels, but I'm a-goin' ter do jest what ye says."

Lescott did not overhear the conversation in full, but he saw the old man's face work with suppressed passion, and he caught Samson's louder reply

"When them folks gets hyar, Uncle Spicer, I'm a-goin' ter be a-settin'



"They Have Followed Their Noses Here."

pressed her close. His eyes were gaz right out thar in front. I'm plumb ing off over her bent head, and his lips willin' ter invite 'em in." Then, the

Already the other clansmen had disappeared noiselessly through the door or around the angles of the walls.

Fifteen minutes later, Lescott, standing at the fence, saw a strange caval- stiffened. He started to speak, but cade round the bend of the road. Sev-The party of men who had started eral travel-stained men were leading mules, and holding two tawny and impatient dogs in leash. In their number, the artist recognized his host of Samson beckoned to the owner of the

They halted at a distance, and in Toward evening, they were working absence of interest. Such a calm re-

> envoy, unarmed, hands unnecessarily far away from his better advise cm ter move on."

"Does anybody live on Misery that sides, and walked with an ostentatious show of peace.

"Evenin', stranger," hailed the old man. "Come right in."

"Mr. South," began the dog-owner, been employed to furnish a pair of bloodhounds to the family of Jesse "Is there any special South, who Purvy, who has been shot."

"I heerd tell thet Purvy was shot," said the head of the Souths in an af- and Jim Hollman seized it. fable tone, which betrayed no deeper note of interest than neighborhood gossip might have elicited.

"I have no personal interest in the fer his house." Jim Hollman was matter," went on the stranger, hastily, speaking. Then he added: "I've done as one bent on making his attitude been told that Samson denies doin' the clear, "except to supply the dogs and rect their course; I merely follow."

made the remark. "A dawg jest natcher'ly follers his own nose."

"Exactly-and they have followed their noses here." The Lexington man found the embarrassment of his posttion growing as the colloquy proceeded. "I want to ask you whether, if these dogs want to cross your fence. I have your permission to let them?"

The master of the house crossed the stile, the low sun shining on his shock of gray hair, and stood before the manhunter. He spoke so that his voice carried to the walting group in the road

"Ye're plumb welcome ter turn them dawgs loose, an' let 'em ramble, stranger. Nobody hain't a-goin' ter hurt 'em. I sees some felfers out thar with ye thet mustn't cross my fence. Ef they does"-the voice rang metiacingly-"hit'll mean that they're a-bustin' the truce-an' they won't never go out ag'in. But you air safe in hyar. I gives yer my hand on thet. Ye're welcome, an' yore dawgs is wel-I hain't got nothin' 'gainst dawgs thet comes on four legs, but I shore bars the two-legged kind."

There was a murmur of astonishment from the road. Disregarding it, Spicer South turned his face toward the house

"You boys kin come out," he shout-

er, "au' leave yore guns inside." The leashes were slipped from the dogs. They leaped forward, and made directly for Samson, who sat as unmoving as a lifeless image on the top beasts clambered by the seated figure, passing on each side and circled aimlessly about the yard-their quest untered indolently out of the door. They trotted into the house and out again. and mingled with the mongrel home "Now"-Spicer South's face hard pack that snarled and growled hosened-"I owns down thar ter the road | tility for this invasion. Then, they No man kin cross that fence withouten came once more to the stile. As they I choose ter give him leave. Ef ye climbed out, Samson South reached bad invariably met hostility with hoswants ter go indoors an' stay thar, ye up and stroked a tawny head, and the tility, had so willingly courted the acid kin do hit-an' no dawg ner no man bloodhound paused a moment to wag test of guilt or innocence. its tail in friendship, before it jumped

"I'm obliged to you, sir," said the done agreed ter this truce. I'd like ter man from the Bluegrass, with a voice of immense relief.

clash, the master of hounds forgot couragement of recovery. that his dogs stood branded as false features of Jim Hollman in particular ing wrath.

the kinsman of the man who had been | hand on the painter's shoulder. Then shot, "whar the other feller's at?"

Lexington man. Jim Hollman's voice rose truculently, and his words drifted, as he had already crouched and become im-

of Spicer South. "Them dawgs of your'n come up etly from tree to tree below them. Misery a-hellin'. They hain't never hyar now? Who is ther feller thet absolutely expressionless.

got out afore we come hyar?" At this veiled charge of deceit the ters at their sides. It seemed that, meanor became friendly. after all, the incident was not closed. The man from Lexington, finding himself face to face with a new difficulty. the Hollman leader. But Jim Hollman, whose eyes were fixed on Sam- bones. son, refused to talk in a modulated

tone, and he shouted his reply: "I hain't got nothin' ter whisper about," he proclaimed. "Go ax 'em who hit war thet got away from hyar." Old Spicer South stood leaning on his fence and his rugged countenance Samson rose from the stile and said,

in a composed voice: "Let me talk to this feller, Unc' Spicer." The old man nodded and

"We hain't got nothin' ter say ter fling difficulties. Often, their noses their faces the artist read dismay, for, them fellers with ye," he announced, along Misery es ter go a-crouchin' lost the trail, which had at first been while the dogs were yelping confident briefly. "We hain't axin' 'em no quesso surely taken. Often, they circled ly and tugging at their cords, young tions, an' we hain't answerin' none. I knows jest whar ye've been all the cents today, but greatly more in those Ye done come hyar with dawgs an' where, at the end, one of them again in some secret stronghold—sat at the swered all the questions them dawgs in' hyar, ever since Jesse Purvy got hes axed. We done treated you an' and regarded them with a lack-luster yore houn's plumb friendly. Es fer watched yerself. I reckon hit'll be pretty girl who can bake good biscuits. them other men, we hain't got nothin' up Misery along a course less broken. ception was uncanny. After a whis- ter say to em. They done come hyar tother side of the ridge. I reckon yer the parior chandeller or in the soft and, as the bottle was passed, the man came forward aione. Old Spicer South in trouble. They done failed. Thet we're watchin' ye." from Lexington, who had brought the had been looking on from the door, road belongs ter the county. They Jim Asberry's face darkened, but he fewer can set before the hungry men dogs and stayed to conduct the chase, and was now strolling out to meet the got a license ter travel hit, but this said nothing. There was nothing to at breakfast a plate of appetizing hot strip right hyar hain't the healthlest say. He was discovered in the ene- biscuits, and for the one who can the And the envoy, as he came, held his section they kin find I reckon ye'd my's country and must accept the boys are searching the world of

The Lexington man went back. For a minute or two Jim Hollman sat scowling down in indecision from his tryin' like all h-l ter keep this truce. saddle. Then he admitted to himself But ye must stay on yore side or that he had done all he could do with else ride the roads open. How is with some embarrassment, "I have out becoming the aggressor. For the Purvy terday?" moment he was beaten. He looked up and from the road one of the hounds raised its voice and gave cry. That baying afforded an excuse for leaving

"Go on," he growled. "Let's see what them d-d curs hes ter say

now.' Mounting, they kicked their mules into a jog. From the men inside the lost in the undergrowth. "Some day fence came no note of derision, no I'm a-goin' ter git him." hint of triumph. They stood looking shootin', an' claims he kin prove an manage them. I do not in any way di- out with expressionless, masklike reappear, and when one of the Souths faces until their enemies had passed "Ye can't hardly fo'ce a dawg." Old out of sight around the shoulder of dialogue would be: "Heered anything and poured a drink of red whisky into Spicer sagely nodded his head as he the mountain. The Souths had met and of Tamarack?" . . . fronted an accusation made after the "No, nary a word." enemy's own choice and method. A

Jim Hollman.

Days passed uneventfully after that. But, of ye sees fit ter face hit out, I'd down to the road, and trotted gingerly The kinsmen dispersed to their scattered coves and cabins. Now and again came a rumor that Jesse Purvy was dying, but always hard on its heels came another to the effect that The moment of suspense seemed the obdurate fighter had rallied, past, and, in the relief of the averted though the doctors held out small en-

One day Lescott, whose bandaged trailers. But when he rejoined the arm gave him much pain, but who was group in the road he found himself able to get about, was strolling not far looking into surly visages, and the from the house with Samson. They were following a parrow trail along were black in their scowl of smolder- the mountain side, and, at a sound no louder than the falling of a walnut. "Why didn't ye ax him," growled the boy halted and laid a silencing followed an unspoken command in his "What other fellow?" echoed the companion's eyes. Lescott sank down behind a rock, cloaked with glistening rhododendron leafage, where Samson meant them to, across to the ears of movable and noiseless. They had the clansmen who stood in the yard been there only a short time when they saw another figure slipping qui-

For a time the mountain boy turned aside, an' onless they're plumb watched the figure and the painter ornery, no count curs thet don't know saw his lips draw in a straight line their business, they come for some and his eyes narrow with a glint of reason. They seemed mighty inter tense hate. Yet, a moment later, with ested in gittin' hyar. Ax them fellers a nod to follow, the boy unexpectedly in thar who's been hyar thet hain't rose into view and his features were

"Mornin', Jim," he called. The slinking stranger whirled with faces of the Souths again blackened a start and an instinctive motion as and the men near the door of the though to bring his rifle to his shoulhouse drifted in to drift presently out der. But, seeing Sameon's peaceable again, swinging discarded Winches | manner, he smiled and his own de-"Mornin', Samson."

"Kinder stranger in this country, hain't ye, Jim?" drawled the boy who turned and argued in a low voice with lived there, and the question brought a sullen flush to the other's cheek

"Jest a-passin' through," he vouchsafed.

"I reckon ye'd find the wagon road more handy," suggested Samson. "Some folks might 'spicion ye fer stealin' 'long through the timber." The skulking traveler decided to lie plausibly. He laughed mendaciously. from his mouth. But alas for fancy! "That's the reason, Samson. I was The haddock is not found in the Sea kinder skeered ter go through this of Galilee! Most of the fish there becountry in the open." Samson met his eye steadily and

said slowly:

"I reckon, Jim, hit mought be half es risky fer ye ter walk upstandin' Ye thinks ye've been a shadderin' me. time. Ye lies when ye talks 'bout we hain't stopped ye. We've done an- passin' through. Ye've done been spyshot, an' all thet time ye've done been healthier fer ye ter do yore spyin' from because they hoped they could git me allowin' ter git me ef Purvy dies, but

enemy's terms.

"This hyar time I lets ye go back," said Samson, "fer the reason thet I'm

"He's mighty porely," replied the other, in a sullen voice, "All right. Thet's another reason why hit hain't healthy fer ye over

hyar." The spy turned and made his way over the mountain.

"D-n him!" muttered Samson, his face twitching, as the other was

Tamarack Spicer did not at once met another in the road the customary

As Lescott wandered through the jury of two hounds had acquitted hills, his unburt right hand began crythem. It was not only because the ing out for action and a brush to dogs had refused to recognize in Sam- nurse. As he watched, day after day, son a suspicious character that the the unveiling of the monumental hills enemy rode on grudgingly convinced, and the transitions from hazy, wraithbut, also, because the family, which like whispers of hues to strong, flaring riot of color, this fret of restlessness became actual pain. He was wasting wonderful opportunity and the creative instinct in him was clamoring.

One morning, when he came out just after sunrise to the tin wash basin at the well, the desire to paint was on him with compelling force. The hills ended near their bases like things bitten off. Beyond lay limitless streamers of mist, but, while he stood at gaze. the filmy veil began to lift and float higher. Trees and mountains grew taller. The sun, which showed first as a ghost-like disk of polished aluminum, struggled through orange and vermillon into a sphere of living flame. Lescott heard a voice at his side

"When does ye 'low ter commence paintin'?"

It was Samson. For answer the artist, with his unhurt hand, impatiently tapped his bandaged wrist. "Ye still got yore right hand, hain't

ye?" demanded the boy. The other laughed. It was a typical question. Se long as one had the trigger finger left one should not admit disqualification. "You see, Samson," he explained, 'this isn't precisely like handling a gun. One must hold the palette; mix the colors; wipe the brushes and do half a dozen equally necessary things.

It requires at least two perfectly good hands. Many people don't find two enough. "But hit only takes one ter do the paintin', don't hit?"

"Yes." "Well"-the boy spoke diffidently but with enthusiasm-"between the two of us we've got three hands. I reckon ye kin larn me how ter do them other things fer ye." Lescott's surprise showed in his

face and the lad swept eagerly on. "Mebby hit hain't none of my business, but, all day yestiddy an' the day befo', I was studyin' 'bout this here thing, an' I hustled up an' got thet corn weeded an' now I'm through. Ef I kin help ye out I thought mebby-" He paused and looked appealingly at the artist.

Lescott whistled and then his face lighted into contentment. "Today, Samson," he announced, Lescott, South and Company get

busy." It was the first time he had seen Samson smile, and, although the expression was one of sheer delight, in-

herent somberness loaned it a touch of the wistful When, an hour later, the two set out, the mountain boy carried the paraphernalia and the old man standing at the door watched them off with a

half-quizzical, half-disapproving glance. As the boy, with remarkable aptitude, learned how to adjust the easel and arrange the paraphernalia, Lescott sat drinking in through thirsty eyes the stretch of landscape he had determined to paint. Then, while he painted, the boy held

the palette, his eyes riveted on the canvas, which was growing from a blank to a mirror of vistas-and the boy's pupils became deeply hungry. The day of painting was followed

by others like it. The disabling of Lescott's left hand made the constant companionship of the boy a matter that needed no explanation or apology, though not a matter of approval to his uncle.

Another week had passed without the reappearance of Tamarack Spicer. One afternoon Lescott and Samson were alone on a cliff-protected shelf, and the painter had just blocked in with umber and neutral tint the crude sketch of his next picture.

(TO BE CONTINUED.) Tribute Money.

Fancy long ago said that the black marks on either side of the head of the. haddock were made by the Apostle's finger and thumb as they held him, while extracting the tribute money long to the barbel family, and no one has ever told us authoritatively what particular variety the tribute bearing fish belonged to. The "half shekel" of the tribute was 112 grains Troy weight of silver, say nearly a quarter of an ounce, worth about thirteen days.

The Girl Who la in Demand. There is a price on the head of every Most any girl can look pretty under moonlight, but, ah, how few will do to look at next morning at 6:30, and atill girls.-Hamilton Record.

AT FORNEYS.

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