

The Battle-Cry

By CHARLES NEVILLE BUCK
Author of "The Call of the Cumberland"

Illustrations by C. D. Rhodes

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Then he crossed the ridge until he came to a point where the thicket grew down close and tangled to the road. He had seen Young Milt going west along that road this morning and by nightfall he would be riding back. The gods of chance were playing into his hands.

So he lay down, closely hugging the earth, and cocked his rifle. For hours he crouched there with unspeakable patience, while his muscles cramped and his feet and hands grew cold under the pelting of a rain which was strangely raw and chilling for the season. The sun sank in an angry bank of thunder-heads and the west grew lurid. The drenching downpour blinded him and trickled down his spine under his clothes, but at last he saw the figure he awaited riding a horse he knew. It was the same roan mare that Bad Anse had restored to Milt McBriar.

When Young Milt rode slowly by, fifty yards away, with his mount at a walk and his reins hanging, he was untroubled by any anxiety, because he was in his own territory and was at heart fearless. The older boy from Tribulation felt his temples throb and the rifle came slowly up and the one eye which was not closed looked point-blank across immovable sights and along a steady barrel into the placid face of his intended victim.

He could see the white of Milt's eye and the ragged lock of hair under the hat-brim which looked like a smudge of soot across his brow. Then slowly Jeb McNash shook his head. A spasm of battle went through him and shook him like a convulsion to the soles of his feet. He had but to crook his finger to appease his blood-lust—and break his pledge.

"I done give Anse my hand ter bide my time 'well I war dead sartain," he told himself. "I hain't quite dead sartain," he told himself. "I hain't quite dead sartain yit. I reckon I've got ter wait a spell."

He uncocked the rifle and the other boy rode on, but young Jeb folded his arms on the wet earth and buried his face in them and sobbed, and it was



The Rifle Came Slowly Up.

an hour later that he stumbled to his feet and went groggily back, drunk with bitterness and emotion, toward the house of Anse Havey. Yet when he arrived after nightfall his tongue told nothing and his features told less.

Juanita, living in the cabin she had built with the girl who had become her companion and satellite, making frequent hard journeys to some house which the shadow of illness had invaded, found it hard to believe that this life had been hers only a few months. Suspense seemed to stretch weeks to years, and she awoke each new day braced to hear the news of some fresh outbreak, and wondered why she did not. A few neighborhood children were already learning their rudiments, and plans for more buildings were going forward.

Sometimes Jeb came over from the brick house to see his sister, and on the boy's face was always a dark cloud of settled resolve. If Juanita never questioned him on the topic that she knew was nearest his heart it was because she realized that to do so would be the surest way to estrange his friendship and confidence.

In one thing she had gained a point. She had bought as much property as she should need. Back somewhere behind the veil of mysteries Anse Havey had pressed a button or spoken a word, and all the hindrance that had lain across her path straightway evaporated. Men had come to her, with no further solicitation on her part, and now it seemed that many were animated by a desire to turn an honest penny

by the sale of land. In every conveyance that was drawn—deeds of ninety-nine-year lease instead of sale—she read a thrifty and careful knowledge of land laws and reservation of mineral and timber rights which she traced to the head of the clan.

As summer spent itself there was opportunity for felling timber, and the little sawmill down in the valley sent up its drone and whine in proclamation that her trees were being turned into squared timbers for her buildings. Once, when Milt McBriar rode up to the sawmill, he found the girl sitting there, her hands clasped on her knees, gazing dreamily across the sawdust and confusion of the place.

"Ye're right smart interested in that thar woodpile, hain't ye, ma'am?" he inquired with a slow, benevolent smile. His kindness of guise invited confidence, and there was no one else with-in earshot, so the girl looked up, her eyes a little misty and her voice impulsive.

"Mr. McBriar," she said, "every one of those timbers means part of a dream to me, and with every one of them that is set in place will go a hope and a prayer."

He nodded sympathetically. "I reckon," he said, "ye kin do right smart good, too."

"Mr. McBriar," she flashed at him in point-blank questioning, "since I came here I have tried to be of use in a very simple and ineffective fashion. I have done what little I could for the sick and distressed, yet I am constantly being warned that I'm not allowed to carry on my work. Do you know of any reason why I shouldn't go ahead?"

He gazed at her for a moment, quizzically, then shook his head. "Oh, pshaw!" he exclaimed, "I wouldn't let no sich talk es fret me none. Folks round hyar hain't got much ter do except ter gossip 'round. Nobody hain't a-goin' ter hinder ye."

"We hain't such bad people, after all," he said, "but she felt that from the McBriars she had gained official sanction, and her resentment against Anse Havey grew because of his scornful ungraciousness.

The last weeks of the summer were weeks of drought and plague. Ordinarily, in the hills storms brew swiftly and frequently and spend themselves in violent outpourings and cannonading of thunder, but that year the clouds seemed to have dried up, and down in the tablelands of the Blue Grass the crops were burned to worthless stalk and shrunken ear. Even up here, in the birthplace of waters, the corn was brown and sapless, so that when a breeze strayed over the hill-side fields they sent up a thirsty, dying rasp of rattling whisper.

It was not only in the famished forests and seared fields that the not-breath of the plague breathed, carrying death in its fetid nostrils. Back in the cabins of the "branch-water folks," where little springs diminished and be-

came polluted, all those who were not strong enough to throw off the touch of the specter's finger sickened and died, and typhoid went in and out of Havey shack and McBriar cabin white-poring, "a pest on both your houses."

The widow McNash had not been herself since the death of Fletch. She who had once been so strong over her drudgery, sat day long on the doorstep of her brother's hovel and, in the language of her people, "jest sickened an pined away."

So, as Juanita Holland and Good Anse Talbot rode sweating mules about the hills, receiving calls for help faster than they could answer them, they were not astonished to hear that the widow was among the stricken. Though they fought for her life, she refused to fight herself, and once again the Eastern girl stood with Dawn in the brier-choked "buryin'-ground," and once more across an open grave she met the eyes of the man who stood for the old order.

But now she had learned to set a lock on her lips and hold her counsel. So, when she met Anse and Jeb afterward, she asked without rancor: "May I take little Jesse back with me, too? He's too young," she added, with just a heart-sick trace of her old defiance, "to be useful to you, Mr. Havey, and I'd like to teach him what I can."

Anse and Jeb conferred, and the elder man came back and nodded his head. "Jesse can go back with ye," he said. "I'm still aimin' to give ye all the rope ye wants. When ye've had enough an' quits, let me know, an' I'll take care of Fletch's children."

And on her farm, as folks called Juanita's place, that September saw many changes. Near the original cabin was springing up a new structure, larger than any other house in that neighborhood, except, possibly, the strongholds of the chiefs, and as it grew and began to take form it imparted an air of ordered trimness to the countryside about it. It was fashioned in such style as should be in keeping with its surroundings and not give too emphatic a note of alien strangeness.

Juanita wished that her cabin could house more occupants, for the plague had left many motherless families, and many children might have come into her fold. As it was, she had several besides the McNashes as her nucleus, and while the weather held good she was rushing her work of timber-felling and building which the winter would halt.

CHAPTER XII.

One day in early October young Milt McBriar happened upon Dawn and Juanita walking in the woods.

The gallant colors and the smoky mists of autumn wrapped the forests and brooded in the sky. An elixir went into the blood with each deep-drawn breath and set to stirring fer-

gotten or hitherto unawakened emotions. And in this heady atmosphere of quickened pulses the McBriar boy halted and gazed at the Havey girl.

Juanita saw Young Milt's eyes flash with an awakened spirit. She saw a look in his face which she was woman enough to interpret even before he himself dreamed what its meaning might be.

Dawn was standing with her head up and her lids half closed looking across the valley to the Indian summer haze that slept in smoky purple on the ridges. She wore a dress of red calico, and she had thrust in her belt a few crimson leaves from a gum tree and a few yellow ones from a poplar.

Juanita Holland did not marvel at the fascinated, almost rapt look that came into Young Milt's eyes, and Young Milt, too, as he stood there in the autumn woods, was himself no mean figure. His lean body was quick of movement and strong, and his bronzed face wore the straight-looking eyes that carried an assurance of fearless honesty. He had been away to Lexington to college and was going back. The keen intelligence of his face was marred by no note of meanness, and now, as he looked at the girl of the enemy, his shoulders came unconsciously erect with something of the pride that shows in men of wild blood when they feel in their veins the strain of the chieftains.

But Dawn, after her first blush, dropped her lids a little and tilted her chin, and without a word snubbed him with the air of a Havey looking down on a McBriar.

Milt met that gaze with a steady one of his own and banteringly said: "Dawn, 'pears like ye mought 'a' got tangled up with a rainb'ow."

Her voice was cool as she retorted: "I reckon that's better than gittin' mixed up with some other things."

"I was jest a-thinkin', es I looked at ye," went on the boy gravely, "thet hit's better then gittin' mixed up with anything else."

Dawn turned away and went stalking along the woodland path without a backward glance, and Milt followed at her heels, with Juanita, much amused, bringing up the rear. The easterner thought that these two young folks made a splendid pair, specimens of the best of the mountains, as yet unbroken by heavy harness. Then, as the younger girl passed under a swinging rope of wild grapevine, stooping low, a tendril caught in her hair.

Without a word Young Milt bent forward and was freeing it, tingling through his pulses as his fingers touched the heavy black mass, but as soon as she was loose the girl sprang away and wheeled, her eyes blazing. "How dast ye tech me?" she demanded, panting with wrath. "How dast ye?"

The boy laughed easily. "I dast do anything I wants," he told her.

For a moment they stood looking at each other, then the girl dropped her eyes, but the anger had died out of them, and Juanita saw that, despite her condescending air, she was not displeased.

Juanita, of course, knew nothing of Jeb's suspicions that had led him into the laurel, but even without that information, when Young Milt met them more often than could be attributed to chance on their walks and fell into the habit of strolling back with them, strong forebodings began to trouble her.

And one morning these forebodings were verified in crisis, for while the youthful McBriar lounged near the porch of Juanita's cabin talking with Dawn, another shadow fell across the sunlight: the shadow of Jeb McNash. He had come silently, and it was only as Young Milt, whose back had been turned, shifted his position, that the two boys recognized each other.

Juanita saw the start with which Jeb's figure stiffened and grew taut. She saw his hands clench themselves and his face turn white as chalk; saw his chest rise and fall under heavy breathing that hissed through clenched teeth, and her own heart pounded with wild anxiety.

But Milt McBriar's face showed nothing. His father's masklike calmness of feature had come down to him, and as he read the meaning of the other boy's attitude he merely nodded and said casually: "Howdy, Jeb."

Jeb did not answer. He could not answer. He was training and punishing every fiber cruelly simply in standing where he was and keeping his hands at his sides. For a time he remained stiff and white, breathing spasmodically; then, without a word, he turned and stalked away.

That moon a horseman brought a note across the ridge, and as Juanita Holland read it she felt that all her dreams were crumbling—that the soul of them was paralyzed.

It was a brief note, written in a copybook hand, and it ran:

I'll have to ask you to send the McNash children over to my house. Jeb doesn't want them to be consorting with the McBriars, and I can't blame him. He is the head of his family.
Respectfully,
ANSE HAVEY.

A stronger thing to Juanita Holland than the personal disappointment which had driven her to this work was now her eager, fiery interest in the undertaking itself. In these months she had disabused herself of many prejudices. There remained that lingering one against the man with whom she had not made friends.

The thing she had set out to do was a hundredfold more vital now than it had been when it stood for carrying out a dead grandfather's wish. She had been with these people in child-birth and death, in sickness and want; she had seen summer go from its tender beginning to a vagabond end with

its tattered banners of ripened corn; autumn had blazed and flared into high carnival.

As young Jeb had turned on his heel and stalked away, even before the coming of the note she knew what would happen, and what would happen not only in this instance, but in others like it. This would not be just losing Dawn, bad as that was. It would be paralysis and death to the school; it would mean the leaving of every Havey boy and girl.

So she stood there, and afterward said quietly: "Milt, I guess you'd better go," and Milt had gone gravely and unquestioningly, but with that in his eye which did not argue brightly for restoration of peace between his house and that of his enemy.

When the two girls had gone together into the cabin Dawn stood with a face that blanched as she began to realize what it all meant, then slowly she stiffened and her hands, too, clenched and her eyes kindled.

She came across to the chair into which the older girl had dropped listlessly and, falling to her knees, seized both Juanita's hands. She seized them tightly and fiercely, and her eyes were blazing and her voice broke from her lips in turgid vehemence.

"I hain't a-goin' ter leave ye!" cried Dawn. "I hain't a-goin' ter do it." No word had been spoken of her leaving, but in this life they both knew that certain things bring certain results, and they were expecting a note from Bad Anse.

"I hope not, dear," said Juanita, but without conviction.

Then the mountain girl sprang up and became transformed. With her rigid figure and blazing eyes she seemed a torch burning with all the pent-up heritage of her past.

"I tells ye I ain't a-goin' ter leave ye!" she protested, and her utterance swelled to fiery determination. "Es fer Milt McBriar, I wouldn't spit on him. I hates him. I hates his murderin' breed. I hates 'em like—" she paused a moment, then finished tumultuously—"like all hell. I reckon I'm es good a Havey as Jeb. I hain't seen Jeb do nothin' yit."

Again she paused, panting with passionate rage, then swept on while Juanita looked at her sudden metamorphosis into a fury and shuddered.

"When I wasn't nothin' but a baby I fatched victuals ter my kinfolks a hidin' out from revenuers. I passed right through them ter war a-trailin' 'em. I've done served my kinfolks afore, an' I'd do it agin, but I reckon I hain't a-goin' ter let 'em take me away from ye."

Juanita could think of only one step to take, so she sent Jerry Everson for Brother Talbot, whom she had seen riding toward the shack hamlet in the valley.

"Thar hain't but one thing that ye kin do," said Good Anse slowly when he and Juanita sat alone over the prob-

lem with the note of Havey commanding lying between them. "An' I hain't no ways sartain that hit'll come ter nothin'. Ye've got ter go over thar an' have speech with Anse."

Juanita drew back with a start of distaste and repulsion. Yet she had known this all along.

"Ye see," she heard the missionary saying, "thar's jest one way Anse kin handle Jeb, an' nobody else kaint handle him at all. He thinks he's right. I reckon ef ye kin persuade Anse ter reason with him ye'll lay ter promise that Young Milt hain't a-goin' ter hang round hyar."

"I'd promise almost anything. I can't give them up—I can't—I can't!"

"Ef Anse didn't perfect little Dawn from the McBriars, Jeb would, ter a God's certainty, kill Young Milt," went on the preacher, and the girl nodded miserably.

"I don't 'low ter blame ye none," he said slowly, almost apologetically, "but I've got ter say hit. Hit's a pity ye've seen fit ter say so many bitter things ter Anse. Mountain folks air mighty



"Will You Go With Me?" She Asked a Little Weakly.

easy hurt in their pride, an' no one hain't never dared ter cross him afore."

"No," she cried bitterly, "he will welcome the chance to humiliate and to refuse my plea. He has been waiting for this; to see me come to him a suppliant on bended knee, and then to laugh at me and turn me away." She paused and added brokenly: "And yet I've got to go to him in surrender—to be refused—but I'll go."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CORN CLUB BOYS TO GROW BERRIES

New Work Undertaken by Some of State's Alert Young Farmers.

SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS

Clemson College Has Sent Boys Directions for Strawberry Culture That Will Be Useful to Adult Farmers and Suburban Dwellers as Well.—Advice on All Steps, From Preparing Soil to Packing Crates.

Eighty South Carolina corn club boys, eighty of the best in the State, are adding strawberry culture to their work. These are the boys who by their corn club work last year, won scholarships to Clemson College for the summer course. During the course they were promised that instructions for growing strawberries would be sent to them in the fall and the boys expressed themselves as eager to try small patches of the luscious fruit as part of their club work.

F. J. Crider, associate professor of horticulture at Clemson College, has prepared and sent the boys a set of instructions for strawberry culture. These instructions are simple and brief, but cover the subject in all important branches. They will be useful to any who desire to grow strawberries and this should include a large number of suburban dwellers as well as farmers. Prof. Crider's directions are as follows:

Soil for Strawberries. Any kind except bottom land and stiff clay.

Preparation of Land. Break deeply, smooth the surface well, and lay off rows as for cotton. When ready to plant, knock the bed down to a level.

Fertilizing. Fertilize heavily with stable manure, either broadcast or in the furrow, before planting. Each fall, just before mulching, apply broadcast a mixture of about 250 pounds cottonseed meal, 400 pounds kainit, and 250 pounds acid phosphate these being the amounts per acre.

Setting Plants. Set plants in straight line, 18 inches apart in row. Place plants in rather large holes with roots spread apart and pack soil firmly about them. Keep roots of plants moist until planting. Place name of variety on a stake at end of row.

Mulching. As soon as plants are set, cover ground all about plants with heavy coating of pine needles or oak straw. This holds moisture and keeps berries clean in spring. Apply this mulch each year thereafter in September.

Cultivating. Begin cultivation just after berries are gathered. Cultivate as for cotton, keeping a loose layer of soil on top and all weeds and grass removed.

Treatment of Runners First Summer. Let runners take root along rows so as to get plants for a new patch.

Setting a New Patch. In September use new plants in setting out a new patch, following same method as before.

Treatment for Second Summer. Give same treatment as first summer, except that all runners must be cut off (unless more new plants are wanted). Repeat this the third summer.

Treatment for Third Fall. Plow up your old strawberry patch. Strawberry plants will not produce desirable berries after the third crop.

Gathering Fruit. Pinch berries from stalks without bruising, leaving stems on. Go over patch every other day, sometimes every day. Pick berries when they are red, while yet firm. Gather in standard quart strawberry baskets. The basket is sold with the berries.

Sorting. While picking, place the larger berries in one basket, the second size in another, and the smallest size (which should not be marketed) in a third. This is very important.

Naming the Grades. Name the first grade "Extra Fancy" and the second grade "Fancy." Write name of grade, variety, and your own name on each basket. Use quart size strawberry baskets, 32 to the crate, and see to it that they are neat and clean. Get prices on crates and baskets from manufacturers and have supplies reach you in ample time.

Arrangement of Berries in Basket. Have every basket well filled and arrange the berries on top in rows. Carry baskets to market in neatly packed crates. They will command attention and bring the highest prices.

DRAGGING WITH AUTO

A Western farm paper suggests that farmers keep up their roads by hitching a drag to their automobiles. The idea is to take the drag along behind the auto for a mile or two when on a trip to town, then to leave the drag by the roadside, to pick it up on the return trip, and to drag the other side of the road. It has been tried with success.

WRITE HOME TO MOTHER.

Don't go to a theatre, lecture or ball. But stay in your room tonight. Denying yourself to the friends that call.

And a good long letter write. Write to the sad old folks at home. Who sit when the day is done. With folded hands and downcast eyes. And think of their absent son.

Don't selfishly scribble, excuse my haste. I have hardly time to write. Lest their brooding thought go wondering.

Back to many a bygone night. When they lost their needed sleep. And rest, and every breath was a prayer. That God would bring their son back. To their love and care.

Don't let them feel you no more need. Their love and counsel advice. For the heart grows strongly sensitive. When age has dimmed the sight. It might be well to let them believe. You never forgot them quite. That you deem it a pleasure when far away. Long letters home to write.

Don't think that the girls and boys. Who make your pastime gay. Have half the anxious thought for you. That the old folks have today. For the sad old folks at home. With locks fast turning white. Are thinking of their absent son. So give them a surprise and come home tonight.

—W. A. Murphy (Rags.)

ONE TREAD FOR VEHICLES.

Manufacturers Announce Fifty-six Inch as Standard to Be Used in the Future.

Florence, Dec. 10.—The vehicle dealers of Florence are discussing the recent announcement, which has not so far as your correspondent has seen, been published in the daily papers, that after January the automobile, wagon and buggy manufacturers of the country are going to stop making vehicles with 60-inch tread. Everything, it is said, will after the stocks made up to the close of this year, will be made 56 or standard tread. This announcement gives a great deal of satisfaction to the dealers and to many users of vehicles who have considered the inconvenience of having two sizes of vehicles, and one of those sizes sold only in a small territory, part of Virginia, the two Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama and a part of Mississippi. There have been so many threats that such a step would be taken in the past that dealers have been skeptical, but most of them are convinced that the change, so much desired, will be made in 1916.

The purchasers of vehicles in this section have had to pay for just that much more iron and wood than they needed, and in many instances have had to bear the cost of the manufacturer using two sets of machines, one to supply that small part of the South, and the other to supply the rest of the world. The change, if made, will be welcomed, and while it will require some time for the conservative people of this section to get used to it, it will eventually be highly satisfactory to every one.

Florence dealers say that they have had notice of the proposed change and that they may expect it.

SUMTER COTTON MARKET.

Corrected Daily by Ernest Field, Cotton Buyer.

Good Middling 11 3-8.
Strict Middling 11 1-4.
Middling 11 1-8.
Strict Low Middling 10 5-8.
Low Middling 10 1-8.
Staple cotton 13 to 16c.

ENDORSED AT HOME.

Such Proof as This Should Convince Any Sumter Citizen.

The public endorsement of a local citizen is the best proof that can be procured. None better, none stronger can be had. When a man comes forward and testifies to his fellow citizens, addresses his friends and neighbors, you may be sure he is thoroughly convinced or he would not do so. Telling one's experience when it is for the public good is an act of kindness that should be appreciated. The following statement given by a resident of Sumter adds one more to the many cases of Home Endorsement which are being published about Doan's Kidney Pills. Read it.

J. A. Whittemore, 14 Harby Ave., Sumter, says: "My kidneys got badly disordered and my back ached. I also suffered from rheumatic pains in my limbs. The kidney secretions passed freely, too. Friends recommended Doan's Kidney Pills and I got some at Hearon's Pharmacy. They have done me a world of good."

Price 50c., at all dealers. Don't simply ask for a kidney remedy—get Doan's Kidney Pills—the same that Mr. Whittemore had. Foster-Milburn Co., Props., Buffalo, N. Y. 16