

**A WAIF OF  
THE PLAINS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649205943

A waif of the plains by Bret Harte & Stanley L. Wood

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**BRET HARTE & STANLEY L. WOOD**

**A WAIF OF  
THE PLAINS**





'I'LL GIVE A HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR HIM AS HE STANDS'

(See A. 164)

# A WAIF OF THE PLAINS

BY

BRET HARTE, 1839-1902

AUTHOR OF 'THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP' ETC.



WITH SIXTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY STANLEY L. WOOD

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1890

*(All rights reserved)*

F855

.1  
H327w  
x

PRINTED BY  
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
LONDON

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
'I'LL GIVE A HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR HIM AS HE STANDS'	
ONLY THE TEAM ITSELF . . . . .	3
AN OPULENT AND EXTRAVAGANT CUSTOMER . . . . .	6
THE BOY CLAMBERED TO THE FRONT . . . . .	8
IT WAS A CLEVER SHOT . . . . .	14
HE WAS POINTING TO A LIGHT CLOUD OF DUST . . . . .	17
HE CONTINUED TO WAVE HIS HAT . . . . .	32
HE HAD REINED UP BESIDE CLARENCE . . . . .	34
SHE RAN EAGERLY FORWARD . . . . .	42
THE LEADER LOOKED AT THE BOY CURIOUSLY . . . . .	45
'IT'S ONLY A SPLIT SPOON!' . . . . .	49
THE DANCE OF HIGH JAMBOOREE . . . . .	56
'HOLD ON!' SAID THE EXPERT . . . . .	61
THE DOOR OPENED ON MR. PEYTON . . . . .	70
'LOOK HERE!' . . . . .	75
MARVELLOUS AND UNPRECEDENTED IN HORSEMANSHIP . . . . .	81
THE HELPLESS RIDER HANGING BY A SINGLE STIRRUP . . . . .	85
'I KEPT MY HOLT O' THE STIRRUPS' . . . . .	86
EXECUTING A DOUBLE SHUFFLE IN THE DUST . . . . .	90
THIS SMALL EYE HAD BEEN TEMPTED . . . . .	94
'BUFFALO CHIP' . . . . .	99
GOADING IT ONWARD WITH HIS CLASP-KNIFE . . . . .	101
'WHY, THEY'RE HUNTIN' US!' . . . . .	105



	PAGE
HE PULLED AGAIN HOPELESSLY . . . . .	109
EAGERLY GATHERED ROUND A PASSING STRANGER . . . . .	116
WEDGED IN BETWEEN TWO SILENT MEN . . . . .	122
THE HEALTH WAS DRUNK SOLEMNLY . . . . .	129
'YOU SPENT TWENTY DOLLARS FOR DRINKS?'	138
THE CAPTAIN PAUSED WITH A LETTER IN HIS HAND . . . . .	142
HE HAD SECURED A PAN, A BLANKET, A SHOVEL, AND PICK.	147
'KEEP IT, OLD MAN, AND RUN HOME?'	152
HE WAS FORCED TO QUENCH HIS THIRST . . . . .	155
IN THIS BOYISH PICNIC HE MISSED SUSY . . . . .	158
ONE OF THOSE PIECES CLARENCE PICKED UP . . . . .	161
'DO YOU KNOW THAT I KINDER BRING LUCK?'	172
BURSTING WITH A SHOUT OF LAUGHTER HE GALLOPED AHEAD	179
THEY WERE IN TIME TO SNATCH A HASTY MEAL. . . . .	183
IT WAS FLYNN . . . . .	186
THE BOY UTTERED A DESPAIRING SHOUT . . . . .	192
'IT IS TRUE,' SAID CHUCHA OF THE MILL . . . . .	197
'IT'S TIME THAT YOU SHOULD THINK OF YOUR FUTURE' . . . . .	201
IT CONTAINED A FEW WORDS IN A SCHOOLGIRL'S HAND . . . . .	210
'THEY'LL SAY I'VE JUST RUN AHEAD' . . . . .	213
'YOU REMEMBER JIM HOOKER' . . . . .	217
CLARENCE LINGERED FOR A MOMENT TO LOOK . . . . .	222
FATHER SOBRIENTE PACED THE APARTMENT . . . . .	226
THE BOY DREW BACK WITH A WHITE FACE . . . . .	232
THE BOY SLOWLY SANK UPON HIS KNEES AT HIS FEET . . . . .	235
HE TOOK OUT A BANK-BOOK, AND PLACED IT IN THE HANDS OF THE WONDERING BOY . . . . .	237

# A WAIF OF THE PLAINS

## CHAPTER I.



LONG level of dull grey that further away became a faint blue, with here and there darker patches that looked like water. At times an open space, blackened and burnt in an irregular circle, with a shred of newspaper, an old rag, or broken tin can lying in the ashes. Beyond these always a low dark line that seemed to sink into the ground at night, and rose again in the morning with the first light, but never otherwise changed its height and distance. A

sense of always moving with some indefinite purpose, but of always returning at night to the same place—with the same surroundings, the same people, the same bedclothes, and the same awful black canopy dropped down from above. A chalky taste of dust on the mouth and lips, a gritty sense of earth on the fingers, and an all-pervading heat and smell of cattle.

This was 'The Great Plains' as they seemed to two children from the hooded depth of an emigrant waggon above the swaying heads of toiling oxen, in the summer of 1852.

It had appeared so to them for two weeks, always the same, and always without the least sense to them of wonder or monotony. When they viewed it from the road, walking beside the waggon, there was only the team itself added to the unvarying picture. One of the waggons bore on its canvas hood the inscription, in large black letters, 'Off to California!' on the other 'Root Hog, or Die,' but neither of them awoke in the minds of the children the faintest idea of playfulness or jocularly. Perhaps it was difficult to connect the serious men,