

hospitably received, and regaled with a smoke, after which they began to evince their curiosity by examining every article lying about, ~~and~~ and signifying their wishes that it should be given to them. Finding that their ~~friendly~~ hints were not taken, they laid hold of several things which took their fancies, and, amongst others, of the pot which was boiling on the fire, and with which one of them was about very coolly to walk off, when old Chase, who up to this moment had retained possession of his temper, seized it out of the Indian's hand and knocked him down. One of the others instantly began to draw the buckskin cover from his gun, and would no doubt have taken summary vengeance for the insult offered to his companion, when Mary Chase courageously stepped up to him, and placing her left hand upon the gun which he was in the act of uncovering, with the other pointed a pistol at his breast.

"Whether daunted by the bold act of the girl, or admiring her devotion to her father, the Indian drew himself back, exclaimed 'Howch!', and drew the cover again on his piece, went up to old Chase, who all this time looked <sup>him</sup> sternly in the face, and, shaking him by the hand, motioned at the same time to the other to be peaceable.

"The other whites presently coming into camp, the Indians sat quietly down by the fire, and, when the supper was ready, joined in the repast, after which they gathered their buffalo robes about them, and quietly withdrew. Meanwhile Antoine, knowing the treacherous character of the savages, advised that the greatest precaution should be taken to secure the stock; and before dark, therefore, all the mules and horses were hobbled and secured within the corral, the oxen being allowed to feed at liberty — for the Indians scarcely care to trouble themselves with such cattle. A guard was also set round the camp, and relieved every two hours; the fire was extinguished, lest the savages should aim, by its light, at any of the party, and all slept with rifles ready at their sides. However, the night passed quietly, and nothing disturbed the tranquillity of the camp. The prairie wolves loped hungrily around, and their mournful cry was borne upon the wind as they chased deer and antelope on the neighbouring plain; but not a sign of lurking Indians was seen or heard.

"In the morning, shortly after sunrise, they were in the act of yoking the oxen to the waggons, and driving in the loose animals which had been turned out to feed at daybreak, when some Indians again appeared upon the bluff, and, descending it, confidently approached the camp. Antoine strongly advised their not being allowed to enter; but Chase, ignorant of Indian treachery, replied that, so long as they came as friends, they could not be deemed enemies, and allowed no obstruction to be offered to their approach. It was now observed that they were all painted, armed with bows and arrows, and divested of ~~XXX~~ their buffalo robes, appearing naked to the breech-clout, their legs only being protected by deerskin leggings reaching to the middle of the thigh. Six or seven first arrived, and others quickly followed, dropping in one after the other, until a score or more were collected round the waggons. Their demeanor, at first friendly, soon changed as their numbers increased, and they now became urgent in their demands for powder and lead, and bullying in their manner. A chief accosted Chase, and, through Antoine, informed him 'that unless the demands of his braves were acceded to, he could not be responsible for the consequences; that they were out on the 'war-trail', and their eyes were red with blood, so that they could not distinguish between white and Yuta scalps; that the party, with all their women and waggons, were in the power of the Indian 'braves', and therefore the white chief's best plan was to make the best terms he could; that all they required was that they should give up their guns and ammunition 'on the prairie', and all their mules and horses -- retaining the ~~medicine~~

\*That is, as a free gift. -- F. W. C.]

'medicine' buffaloes (the oxen) to draw their wagons'.

"By this time the oxen were yoked, and the teamsters, whip in hand, only waited the order to start. Old Chase foamed whilst the Indian stated his demands, but, hearing him to the end, exclaimed, 'Darn the red devil! I wouldn't give him a grain of powder to save my life. Put out, boys!' -- and, turning <sup>to</sup> his horse, which stood ready saddled, was about to mount, when the Indians sprang at once upon the waggons and commenced their attack, yelling like fiends.

"One jumped upon old Brand, pulled him back as he was rising in the stirrup, and drew his bow upon him at the same moment. In an instant the old backwoodsman pulled a pistol from his belt, and, putting the muzzle to the Indian's heart shot him dead. Another Indian, flourishing his war-club, laid the old man at his feet; whilst some dragged the women from the waggons, and others rushed upon the men, who made brave fight in their defence.

"Mary, when she saw her father struck to the ground, sprang with a shrill cry to his assistance; for at that moment a savage, frightful as red paint could make him, was standing over his prostrate body, brandishing a glittering knife in the air, preparatory to thrusting it into the old man's breast. For the rest, all was confusion: in vain the small party of whites struggled against overpowering numbers. Their rifles cracked but once, and they were quickly disarmed; whilst the shrieks of the women and children, and the loud yells of the Indians, added to the scene of horror and confusion. As Mary flew to her father's side, an Indian threw his lasso at her, the noose falling over her shoulders, and, jerking it tight, he uttered a delighted yell as the poor girl was thrown back violently to the ground. As she fell, another deliberately shot an arrow at her body, whilst the one who had thrown the lasso rushed forward, his scalping-knife flashing in his hand, to seize the bloody trophy of his savage deed. The girl rose to her knees, and looked wildly ~~about~~ towards the spot where her father lay bathed in blood; but the Indian pulled the rope violently, dragged her some yards upon the ground, and then rushed with a yell of vengeance upon his victim. He paused, however, as at that moment a shout as fierce as his own sounded at his very ear; and, looking up, he saw La Bonté galloping madly down the bluff, his long hair and the fringes of his hunting shirt and leggings flying in the wind. His right arm supporting his trusty rifle, whilst close behind him came Kill-buck and the stranger. Dashing with loud hurrahs to the scene of the action, La Bonté, as he charged down the bluff caught sight of the girl struggling in the hands of the ferocious Indian. Loud was the war-shout of the mountaineer, as he struck his heavy spurs to the rowels in his horse's side, and bounded like lightning to the rescue. In a single stride he was upon the Indian, and thrusting the muzzle of his rifle into his very breast, he pulled the trigger, driving the savage backward by the blow itself, at the same moment that the bullet passed through his heart, and tumbled him over stone-dead. Throwing down his rifle, La Bonté wheeled his obedient horse, and drawing a pistol from his belt, again charged the enemy, among whom Kill-buck and the stranger were dealing death-giving blows. Yelling for victory, the mountaineers rushed at the Indians; and they panic stricken at the sudden attack, and thinking this was but the advanced guard of a large band, fairly turned and fled, leaving five of their number dead upon the field.

"Mary, shutting her eyes to the expected death-stroke, heard the ~~loud~~ shout La Bonté gave in charging down the bluff, and again looking up, saw the wild-looking mountaineer rush to her rescue, and save her from the savage by his timely blow. Her arms were still pinned by the lasso, which prevented her from rising to her feet; and La Bonté was the first to run to ~~aid~~ aid her, as soon as the fight was fairly over. He jumped from his horse, cut the skin rope which bound her, raised her from the ground, and, upon her turning up her face to thank him, beheld his never-to-be-forgotten Mary Chase; whilst she, hardly believing her senses, recognised in her deliverer her former lover, and still well-~~loved~~ loved La Bonté.

"'What, Mary! can that be you?' he asked, looking intently upon the trembling woman.

"'La Bonté, you don't forget me!' she answered, and threw herself sobbing into the arms of the sturdy mountaineer.

"There we will leave her for the present, and help Killbuck and his companions to examine the killed and wounded. Of the former, five Indians and two whites lay dead, grandchildren of old Chase, fine lads of fourteen and fifteen, who had fought with the greatest bravery, and lay pierced with arrows and lance wounds. Old Chase had received a severe buffet, but a <sup>cold</sup> handful of water from the creek, sprinkled over his face, soon restored him. His sons had not escaped scot-free, and Antoine was shot through the neck, and, falling, had actually been half scalped by an Indian, whom the timely arrival of La Bonté had caused to leave his work unfinished. Shortly, and with sad hearts, the survivors of the family saw the bodies of the two boys buried on the river bank; and the spot marked with a pile of loose stones, procured from the rocky bed of the creek. The carcasses of the treacherous Indians ~~were~~ were left to be devoured by wolves, and their bones to bleach in the sun and wind — a warning to their tribe, that such foul treachery as they had meditated had met with a merited retribution.

"The next day the party continued their route to the Platte. Antoine and the stranger returned to the Arkansas, starting in the night to avoid the Indians; but Killbuck and La Bonté lent the aid of their rifles to the solitary caravan, and, under their experienced guidance, no more Indian perils were encountered. Mary no longer sat perched up in her father's Conestoga, but rode a quiet mustang by La Bonté's

side; and no doubt they found a theme with which to while away the monotonous journey over the dreary plains. South Fork was passed, and <sup>[Fork]</sup> Laramie was reached. The Sweet Water mountains, which hang over the 'pass' to California, were long since in sight; but when the waters of the North Fork of Platte lay before their horses' feet, and the broad trail was pointed out which led to the great valley of Columbia and their promised land, the heads of the oxen were turned down the stream where the shallow waters flow on to join the great Missouri — and not up towards the mountains where they leave their spring-heads, ~~the <sup>whose</sup> springs flow several miles / some / crossing their way to~~ ~~the~~ ~~southward, continuing, in their route to the Atlantic, the lands of~~ "These were the routes to choose between; and, whatever was the ~~the~~ cause, the oxen turned their yoked heads away from the rugged mountains; the teamsters joyfully cracked their ponderous whips, as the waggons rolled lightly down the Platte; and men, women, and children waved their hats and bonnets in the air, and cried out lustily, 'Hurray for home!' "

"La Bonté looked at the dark sombre mountains as he turned his back upon them for the last time. He thought of the many years he had ~~spent~~ spent beneath their rugged shadow, of the many hardships he had suffered, of all his pains and perils in ~~the~~ ~~those~~ those wild regions... The most exciting episodes of his adventurous career, his tried companions in scenes of fierce fight and bloodshed, passed in review before him. A feeling of regret was creeping over him, when Mary laid her hand gently on his shoulder. One single tear rolled unbidden down his cheek, and he answered her inquiring eyes: 'I'm not sorry to leave it Mary', he said; 'but it's hard to turn one's back upon old friends'.

"They had a hard battle with Killbuck, in endeavouring to persuade him to accompany them to the settlements. The old mountaineer shook his head. 'The time', he said, 'was gone by for that. He had often thought of it, but, when the day arrived, he hadn't heart to leave the mountains. Trapping now was of no account, he knew; but beaver was bound to rise, and then the good times would come again. What could he do in the settlements, where there wasn't room to move, and where it was hard to breathe -- there were so many people?'

"He accompanied them a considerable distance down the river, ever and anon looking cautiously back, to ascertain that he had not gone out of sight of the mountains. Before reaching the forks, however, he finally bade them adieu; and, turning the head of his old grizzled mule westward, he heartily wrung the hand of his comrade La Bonté; and, cry-

ing Yep! to his well-tried animal, disappeared behind a roll of the prairie, and was seen no more — a thousand good wishes for the welfare of the sturdy trapper speeding him on his solitary way.

"Four\* months from the day when La Bonté so opportunely appeared to rescue Chase's family from the Indians on Black ~~House~~ Creek, that worthy and the faithful Mary were duly and lawfully united in the township church of Chaseville, Memphis county, State of Tennessee. We cannot say, in the concluding words of nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand novels, that 'numerous pledges of mutual love surrounded and cheered them in their declining years', &c. &c.; because it was only on the 24th of July, in the year of our Lord 1847, that La Bonté and Mary Chase were finally made one, after fifteen long years of separation".

Thus we come to the end of what is acknowledged by many authorities to be the first wild west tale, the ancestor of a long line of "Westerns" coming down even to our own times.

#### The Tale Of Dick Wootton;

In his autobiography Dick Wootton tells us that a weekly express was established over the Old Divide Trail in 1842 between Bent's Fort and Fort St Vrain and that as expressman he once conveyed \$60,000 between the two posts by means of pack animals. About this same time he tells us there was a regular weekly express for the conveyance of correspondence, money and other valuable valuables between the two posts, - a sort of "pony express" as the frontier carriers of a later day would perhaps call it, but rather slower generally than the pony express of the sixties as the horseman was often encumbered with one or two pack-animals when a considerable quantity of merchandise or specie was to be transmitted. It was established, says "Uncle Dick" Wootton (who for a while was one of the express-messengers) in 1842 and was continued through the winter of '42-'43 and possible through the winter next following.

We have already seen that owing to the freezing to death and burial of James Fagin in May 1858, at Point of Rocks (the sandstone bluff where the Old Divide Trail crossed the head of West Kiowa creek and from the south entered the Divide pinery), that much used camping place was afterwards commonly known as Fagin's Grave. The grave was on the west side of the road and about twenty yards from the "Point Of Rocks" where the road crossed West Kiowa creek. Mr Jerome Weir, who for many years and at several successive localities in the divide pineries operated Weir's Mill, told me that Fagin's Grave had an upright stone set at each end was also covered with slabs or fragments of stone. \* This is probable an error for three. Four months could not have intervened between a date in April and the 24th of July. F.W.C.

The old Rocky Mountain frontiersman, Richens Lacey Wootton, has left us, through Conard\* the following story of an adventure of his, in 1863, at Fagin's Grave.

"Having been born in Virginia, and raised in southern Kentucky, I was essentially a southern man, and naturally enough, I think, was strongly in sympathy with the Southern states. Those who know me well, know I have never hesitated to express my opinions, and so I came to be looked upon as rather a pronounced 'rebel'.

"At one time in 1863, when the war feeling was very bitter, I had occasion to go up to Denver from Pueblo, on some business. Before I had been long in the city, I was warned by friends, that I was looked upon by the authorities there as an enemy of the government, and was likely to be taken into custody and held as a prisoner. I wasn't at all pleased with the idea of being locked up in jail. In-door life never did agree with me, and besides I had a family to look after down at Pueblo.

"I got through with my business as quickly as possible, and started for home on horseback, just as the news was brought to me that a posse had been started out to hunt me up, and put me under arrest.

"I started early in the morning and rode all day, reaching the head of Kiowa Creek at night-fall. This was one of the places which the mountain men, or at least a good many of them, avoided, and here's where my ghost story comes in.

"A soldier named Wagan, belonging to Captain Marcy's [Col. Loring's] ~~company~~ company, had dropped dead while standing guard one night when the company was in camp here, several years before, and the place had come to be known as "Wagan's Camp".

"The lonely grave, which was miles away from any human habitation, had probably moved some superstitious hunter or trapper, to start the story that the spirit of the unfortunate soldier materialized every

night, and dressed in full uniform, with musket in hand, tramped all night in a circle about the grave, to guard the resting place of the body which it had once inhabited.

"I had heard the story, but did not know the exact location of "Wagan's Camp", although it would have made no difference if I had, as superstition ~~has~~ never been one of my weaknesses.

\* Howard Louis Conard to whom Mr. Wootton entrusted the writing of his biography, entitled "Uncle Dick Wootton". This was published by W.E. Dibble & Co. Chicago, 1890. It is a book of adventures and at the same time a valuable source of information on matters of the Early Far West. "Uncle Dick" came to the Rocky Mountains in 1836.

"When I got down off my horse, and went into camp for the night,-- if I may call it going into camp, for one man to build a fire and sit down by it alone-- it chanced that I dismounted, without knowing it, inside the circle around which it had been alleged the ghostly sentry paced every night, and when I kindled my fire, it was at the head, or the foot, I don't know which, of Pagan's grave.

"When I lay down to rest, I stretched myself alongside of this same little mound of earth, which served to protect me to some extent from the cold, raw night wind. Tired as I was, after my long <sup>hard</sup> ride, I doffed asleep, and had slept something like two or three hours, when I was awoken,-- as I always was by the slightest noise-- by the tramping of horses, some distance from me.

"I had left my own horse scattered in a canon not far away, and leaving my camp-fire, I hastened to the horse, thinking it possible that the Denver posse had followed my trail, and that there might be necessity for immediate and hasty flight.

"My fire, which had not been a big one to begin with, had burned down, so that when I left it, the few dying embers remaining, sent up only a sort of 'will o' the wisp' blaze, which would scarcely have been noticed twenty yards away.

"I stood by my horse, ready to mount and gallop away, if occasion had required it, but having a fancy to see who my visitors were before starting or becoming seriously alarmed. By and by, they came ~~up~~ close enough to me to enable me to hear their conversation, and although I could not make out who they were, I knew there were several men in the party.

"Presently I heard one of the men say: 'Look sharp now for ghosts. This is 'Pagan's camp'; and they say the dead soldier's ghost stands guard over his grave every night'.

"'I'd a heap rather see Dick Wootton', said another member of the party, whose voice I recognized as that of a friend. 'We've kept on his trail, and he must be some place in these mountains'.

"'We'll find him if he's ~~here~~', said the first speaker, 'though I tell you I don't much like prowling round a dead man's camp. If Pagan's ghost is running these parts, as I've heard lots of 'em say it is, I want to camp some place else. What the devil is that!'

<sup>had</sup>  
"They caught sight of my little camp fire, which would blaze up now and then, just enough to throw a pale glare over its surroundings, and make the outlines of the grave distinctly visible, when it would apparently die out again so completely that hardly a spark could be seen.