

**CRESSY; IN TWO
VOLUMES,
VOLUME I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649186594

Cressy; In two Volumes, Volume I by Bret Harte

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

BRET HARTE

**CRESSY; IN TWO
VOLUMES,
VOLUME I**

CRESSY

BY
BRET HARTE

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1889

The Right of Translation and Reproduction is Reserved

RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BUNGAY.

CRESSY.

CHAPTER I.

As the master of the Indian Spring school emerged from the pine woods into the little clearing before the school-house, he stopped whistling, put his hat less jauntily on his head, threw away some wild flowers he had gathered on his way, and otherwise assumed the severe demeanour of his profession and his mature age—which was at least twenty. Not that he usually felt this an assumption; it was a firm conviction of his serious nature that

he impressed others, as he did himself, with the blended austerity and *ennui* of deep and exhausted experience.

The building which was assigned to him and his flock by the Board of Education of Tuolumne County, California, had been originally a church. It still bore a faded odour of sanctity, mingled however with a later and slightly alcoholic breath of political discussion, the result of its weekly occupation under the authority of the Board as a Tribune for the enunciation of party principles and devotion to the Liberties of the People. There were a few dog-eared hymn-books on the teacher's desk, and the black-board but imperfectly hid an impassioned appeal to the citizens of Indian Spring to "Rally" for Stebbins as Supervisor. The master had been struck with

the size of the black type in which this placard was printed, and with a shrewd perception of its value to the round wandering eyes of his smaller pupils, allowed it to remain as a pleasing example of orthography. Unfortunately, although subdivided and spelt by them in its separate letters with painful and perfect accuracy, it was collectively known as "Wally," and its general import productive of vague hilarity.

Taking a large key from his pocket the master unlocked the door and threw it open, stepping back with a certain precaution begotton of his experience in once finding a small but sociable rattlesnake coiled up near the threshold. A slight disturbance which followed his intrusion showed the value of that precaution, and the fact that the room had been

already used for various private and peaceful gatherings of animated nature. An irregular attendance of yellow-birds and squirrels dismissed themselves hurriedly through the broken floor and windows, but a golden lizard stiffened suddenly into stony fright on the edge of an open arithmetic, touched the heart of the master so strongly by its resemblance to some kept-in and forgotten scholar who had succumbed over the task he could not accomplish, that he was seized with compunction.

Recovering himself, and re-establishing as it were the decorous discipline of the room by clapping his hands and saying "Sho!" he passed up the narrow aisle of benches, replacing the forgotten arithmetic, and picking up from the desks here and there

certain fragmentary pieces of plaster and crumbling wood that had fallen from the ceiling, as if this grove of Academus had been shedding its leaves overnight. When he reached his own desk he lifted the lid and remained for some moments motionless, gazing into it. His apparent meditation however was simply the combined reflection of his own features in a small pocket-mirror in its recesses and a perplexing doubt in his mind whether the sacrifice of his budding moustache was not essential to the professional austerity of his countenance. But he was presently aware of the sound of small voices, light cries and brief laughter scattered at vague and remote distances from the school-house—not unlike the birds and squirrels he had just dispossessed. He recognized by these signs,