

**ROMANCE DUST
FROM THE
HISTORIC PLACER**

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Romance Dust from the Historic Placer by William Starbuck Mayo

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WILLIAM STARBUCK MAYO

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BY

WILLIAM STARBUCK MAYO, M. D.

AUTHOR OF "KALOOLAH," "THE BERRER," "ILLUSTRATIONS OF
NATURAL PHILOSOPHY," &c. &c. &c.

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P R E F A C E .



“Romance Dust from the Historic Placer! A far-fetched title!”

True, it was brought, after many excursions of fancy round the world, and round the world in search of a name that would exactly hit every reader's taste, from no less distant a land than the new El Dorado. If you knew how difficult it is sometimes to find an expressive and original title for a book of this kind—a book which does not necessarily suggest a title from itself—you would not object to the distance. Picking up perfectly fitting and taking titles, is about as easy as picking up gold purses and diamond rings from the pavements of New-York or London: such things do exist, but fifty chances to one, you will find some sharp-eyed or quick-fancied fellow is before-hand

with you, and has them snugly stowed away in his pockets or pages.

But, perhaps, it is not the distance from which my unlucky specimen comes, that you object to! No; it is not so much that, but "you don't like to see an author rush across the Isthmus of propriety, in his agony to avoid the Atlantic of common place, and plunging into the Pacific of novelty, bring up some miserable metaphorical nondescript, instead of a pearl of purity and price." Certainly not, but it must be recollected—still sticking to a California figure—that the best divers in the Gulf cannot always be sure of their oysters, and that when they find no pearls, they content themselves with the *nacre*—they bring home the shells—and the shells "pay." Now, this specimen may not be of the clearest water, but I am induced to think, that upon opening the following pages, you will open the metaphor, and find, if not a true pearl, at least mother 'o' pearl enough for a very decent handle to the book.

So much for the name, about which I should have said nothing, had I not received an intimation from a most distinguished literary authority, that my title

smacked of affectation, and was therefore not in the best taste. Unluckily, it was already printed in the running head to the pages, and could not be changed.

Two or three of the shorter articles were prepared long ago; the others have been recently written, partly to use up a portion of the historical materials left over from *Kaloolah* and *The Berber*; partly as a diversion to more serious labor, and partly to keep afloat in the ocean of print until such time as a bark of more pretension is ready to be launched.