

TREASURE TROVE.

MY OWN DEAR DICK,

Your last long and interesting letter did reach us. Being such a doubt about getting our letters, I will merely write to the point to-day. Do not worry, darling, if you do not succeed. What do I care for poverty with you by my side? What I would give to see you at this moment. Do not trust that Spaniard. Remember, gold or no, I long to have you back some where near me.

LINDAU, Bavaria.

Your loving mother.

M. YORK.

SUCH was the welcome missive a young man turned fevered over in his hands as he lay on a bed of sickness. After painfully mastering its contents, tears dropped from his closed eyelids—tears of bitterness and regret, wrung from him in his weakness.

"My own Mater! I will arise—arise and go—"

Then, strange to say, a deep and health-bringing sleep surprised him, lasting many hours; and the stars were fading in the faint dawn of returning day when he awoke.

A year previously, Dick York had come to California to seek his fortune by "gold-digging." His father, passing for a wealthy man, died, leaving his debts to be paid, which burden Dick promptly assumed. Mrs. York and her little daughter Vera went to a remote village in Bavaria, where with economy they could at least live. Dick had intended entering a mercantile house in Munich, but there he met a Spaniard, Diego Composti, who was very friendly, and together they started for the gold fields, where wealth awaited the successful prospector.

Both men roughed it with the rest, and were pretty successful. The camp was full of lawless men; and one night, after six weeks of extraordinary success, Dick York was robbed of all his dust and nuggets, amounting to several thousand dollars.

Unable to right himself and doubting every one, Dick only remained long enough to secure a little gold; then he left the diggings at night, and tramped away into Southern California near the Gulf. He said nothing of his intention to Composti, for he had become as much of a ruffian as the other diggers; in fact he suspected him of robbing him.

Approaching a rocky part, and finding traces of gold, he set to work and dug himself a commodious room in a big sandstone rock, and then managed to scrape a little hoard of nuggets together, which he carefully hid.

One day a young Mexican, almost dead with hunger and evident ill-treatment, came to Dick's cave. He took him in and nursed him back to health, taking a fancy to the handsome stripling, whose name was Juan Mendosi. The boy repaid Dick's kindness by the active services he rendered him. He knew every inch of the country, could find his way anywhere, and proved himself trustworthy.

Having run short of all sorts of necessities, Dick entrusted a few ounces of gold to Juan, who started off for an encampment inland, where there was also a post office.

Dick was changed beyond recognition, being larger, browner, and tanned like a coffee bean. His face was covered with a golden beard, which, with his keen blue eyes, alone proclaimed his nationality. No one ever molested him. Occasionally a stray hunter might pass his way, but the coast was dangerous with swamps and quicksands.

One night, while Juan was away getting supplies, Dick awoke and heard groans outside his canvas door. He lighted a lamp, and going outside found a man lying on his face. Carrying him into the cave and doing what he could for him, he discovered it to be Diego Composti. Why was he there? Dick queried.

He was sick unto death, the man himself saying "swamp fever," and calling for quinine. During five days Dick did all he could for his quondam friend, who by that time had recognized Dick, and appeared grateful to him. He was so surprised at Dick's conduct that he confessed he had robbed him at the diggings; and then finding Dick still tended him as a brother, he told him he would leave him a fortune if he would seek for it.

Dick thought he was wandering, and seeing his end was approaching, tried to turn his thoughts heavenward; but Composti was restless, and desired his long boots to be brought. To humor him, Dick fetched them, and was told by Diego to cut open a certain part, when out fell a black packet. Eagerly grasping it, he asked Dick to let him die with it in his hand, and then he was to take it for himself; adding it was a clue to great wealth, and unable to use it himself, he left it to the only good man he had known. He made Dick promise that if any of the old miners ever came down after him not to divulge his having

died there. As Dick promised, Diego Composti fell back dead.

In the early dawn, Dick, although feeling strangely ill, dug a deep hole in some sandy soil, and with a few incoherent words of prayer, carried down the body and buried it. Stumbling confusedly back to the cave, he fell on his bed and knew no more until some cooling drink was given him by the faithful Juan, whom he managed to warn of the infection. Then he vaguely knew the lad was always by him, and was conscious of a bitter taste in his mouth. The crisis was passed, and as weak as an infant he had received his mother's letter, and then fallen asleep to recover rapidly.

Dick's health was returning, when one day, to his surprise, two miners, friends of Composti, *desperadoes*, made their appearance, never recognizing in the big, gaunt, bearded skeleton their former acquaintance. They inquired curiously after Composti; but Dick, remembering his promise, assured them no man had passed that way for months. They questioned Juan separately, and even then seemed disposed to push further south; but being warned of the many dangers of so doing, they unwillingly returned the way they came. Then Dick also remembered the packet Diego had requested him to take from his hand, and he had buried it with him; nor could he say whereabouts he was interred.

After the miners had been gone some time, Dick told Juan of his visitor and of his death. The lad then told his master how, on his return, finding a strange man's boots and clothes about, he had burned them; all, save the "amulet," which he hastened to place in Dick's wondering hand. It was indeed the packet Diego left to Dick; and biding Juan to secrecy, and promising him a large sum of money, he told what had passed between them.

On opening the slip of parchment it proved to be a sort of chart, the cardinal points being marked with tiny arrows all one way, and the words "plain," "rocks," "swamps," written on broader parts; at the edge was an arrow-marked tree with these words, "Twenty paces forward."

Dick asserted the treasure lay buried twenty paces before the arrow-marked tree, and as he loved puzzles, they arranged to lay in a supply of provisions and a Mexican mule and cart, and steadily hunt for the treasure.

In a few weeks they started, and were cheered to find they must be on the right track, as the ground was as described on the chart. At the swamp they tethered the mule and left the cart. It was a perilous spot, full of fever, poisonous plants and leeches; but Juan, keen hunter that he was, went straight on a trail and arrived at an arrow-marked tree.

"Now," cried Dick, "I'll count out the twenty paces," preparing to step out on to the shining plain of strange looking sand.

Juan's quick eye, however, noted an awful peril, and seizing Dick's arm, he yelled, "The shifting sands! the shifting sands!" while in a moment a chasm opened at their feet, and the apparently solid plain rose and fell like waves of the sea!

The travellers aghast stood looking at the phenomenon in silence, then threw plumps of wool and earth on to the plain, which instantly were sucked in; Juan had heard of those sands, he said. They rested on a fallen tree and were consulting, when Juan's quick eye caught sight of something, as the sand was again shifting. "See, signor, a chain!" he cried; and there, secured to the arrow-marked tree, was a shining chain.

Leaning down and plunging his arms beneath the perilous sand, Dick seized the chain, which with their united strength took several hours to pull in, although but a few feet in length. At last, almost in despair, and quite exhausted, both gave a final haul, and went over on their backs, landing a strange looking barrel at their sides safely.

In a few minutes they had rolled it on to firm ground and taken out the screws, and on lifting the top, could scarcely believe their eyes, when they found it was almost full of pearls of all sizes.

Dick knew their value better than Juan, though the lad said he had often heard from his relatives of the quantity of pearls to be found in the mouth of some rivers flowing into the Gulf; and years before many Mexicans had made their fortune by pearl-fishing. They emptied the little barrel of its treasures, using two sacks they had brought with them, and then returned the empty vessel and its chain to the omnivorous sand.

Dick never forgot that hissing sound which the treacherous sand made. Delighted at their success

they retraced their footsteps, reaching the edge of the swampland before night. The mule and cart were safe; and a few days more the men were at home with their treasure.

It did not take Dick York long to bring out his precious gold dust and nuggets, at which Juan's eyes glistened appreciatively, and to start toward civilization. In case of robbery, the pearls were hidden in the hay sacks; and in a few weeks they reached a place where they might consider all safe.

Juan, when pressed to say what he wanted, chose a farm in Virginia. Dick purchased a fine one, and left him a handsome balance in the bank, ere turning his honest face homeward.

Reaching New York he paused to write full details to his mother, enclosing her his photograph and such a cheque, the good lady no longer felt safe in primitive Lindau.

Mrs. York and Vera hastened to England, and secured a comfortable home to welcome Dick home to.

How happy they were! Dick paid all his father's debts, and the world saying he had made a great fortune at the gold diggings he not surprised at the magnificent pearls Vera York wore at her first ball. Dick never forgot how he came to be so rich, and never let an opportunity slip of doing good; but in so unostentatious a manner he was always spoken of as "the oldest millionaire!"

Mismated.

"I had a little husband, no bigger than my thumb; I put him in a quart pot, and there I hid him drum."

YOU ought to be ashamed of yourself! What business had you to marry a little man like that? You must have known that he was not up to your ideal of manly stature, yet you deliberately married him! Don't begin to talk to me about fate! You could have controlled your destiny so far as to refuse to be united with a man of such small proportions. Therefore, I say, it was done deliberately. You didn't realize how small he was? Did you take pains to find out all you could about his character and disposition? Perhaps you rushed into matrimony from the foolish fear of being an old maid.

It was your own act, at any rate, and you ought to abide by the consequences.

Perhaps you were dazzled by some shining quality which you imagined he possessed. In the closer acquaintance of daily life you discover that he falls far short of your standard. Well, your first duty certainly is to hide his short comings from the eyes of others, as far as possible. The last thing you ought to do is to proclaim his faults. He is your husband and even if you cannot love, honor and obey him as you promised, you can at least appear to do so. Surely you can refrain from making him a laughing stock.

If he is no bigger than your thumb, you need not keep him under your thumb. You need not hide him drum for the amusement of yourself and your companions.

Ah, that association of ideas that your mention of the quart pot brings up! The unhappy husband and the quart pot. I presume it means the same thing as "in his cup." We have various names for the failing, and whether we speak of it lightly, seriously or with contempt, it conveys the same dreadful idea. You put him in a quart pot, or in other words drove him to seek to drown his woes.

I have your own word for it. You do not say he took to the quart pot, you assert the fact that you put him in it. Isn't that a terrible thing—driven to such a fate by you! By your reproaches and evident lack of esteem.

What of the qualities that won your heart? Were they entirely lacking—assumed merely? Was there not the least good in him which you might have fostered? When you found that you had to make allowances for him you should have done so graciously, and never, never have held him up to ridicule.

"As the husband is, the wife is." Remember that; and be assured that the world is very apt to judge of a woman by her estimate of her husband. The wife who speaks contemptuously of her husband is not wise. It does not raise her in the estimation of her hearers.

That may be a very old-fashioned opinion. I dare say it is, for my grandmother once gave utterance to it in the presence of my father, who was at the time so young that all he recollected of the conversation was that his mother was asked if she did not think a certain new acquaintance was a very pleasant person.

"I cannot think her a very desirable acquaintance, for she spoke very disparagingly of her husband." Which remark proves that my grandmother was a very sensible woman, who knew what she was talking about, it so exactly expresses the sentiments of

MISTRESS MARY, QUITE CONTRARY.