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Poetry.

Mother.
Early one summer morning,
I saw two children pass;
Their footsteps, slow yet lightsome,
Scarcely bent the tender grass.
One, lately out of babyhood,
Looked up with eager eyes;
The other watched her visitant,
Oppressed with thoughtful sighs.
"See, mother!" cried the little one,
"I gathered them for you!"
The sweetest flowers and lilies,
And Mable has some too.
"Thank, Nellie!" whispered Mabel,
"Wasn't we not reached it yet?
Wait till we get there, darling,
It isn't far my pet."
"Get where?" asked Nellie. "Tell me."
"To the church-yard," Mabel said.
"Go! no!" cried little Nellie,
And shook her sunny head.
Still Mable whispered softly,
"We must take them to the grave.
Come, darling!" and the childish voice
Tried to be clear and brave.
But Nellie still kept calling
Far up into the blue;
"See, mother, see, how pretty!
We gathered them for you."
And when her sister pleaded,
She cried—and would not go;—
"Angels don't live in church-yards,
My mother don't I know!"
Then Mabel bent and kissed her,
"Be so fit, dear she said;
We'll take them to the altar
And lay them there instead.
"For mother loved it dearly,
It was the sweetest place!"
And the joy that came to Nellie
Shone up in Mabel's face.
I saw them turn and follow,
A path with blossoms bright,
Until the nodding branches
Concealed them from my sight.
But still like sweet music
The words came ringing through;
"See, mother, see, how pretty!
We gathered them for you."
—ST. NICHOLAS.

Select Tale.

A Narrow Escape.

My old friend and schoolmate, Philip Colcord, when he went into the army, left his diary in my possession, at the same time telling me that if I found anything therein worth using, I might put it in shape and give it to the world. I have just opened the diary, and almost the first thing that attracted my attention was the record from which I made the following sketch:
Some years ago my physician told me I must leave the counting house and travel for my health. Let it not be thought from this that I was a weak, puny man. Far from it. In fact, I was too stout and strong for so much confinement, the result of which was a morbid state of the liver, and a weakening of the digestive organs, with accompanying dyspepsia and constipation. I knew the physician was right, and I at once planned a voyage to Europe; but my parents were anxious to know if a horse-back ride through the Southern States would not be as good for me. The doctor said it would be better. Then, cried old Latit, the head of the firm, "you will kill two birds with one stone. The meaning of which was that I could visit a thousand and one correspondents in the Cotton States, and square up a thousand and one accounts while looking after my lost health. I had no objections to this. I steamed it by rail as far as Cincinnati; thence by water to New Orleans. Then I took the river back to Vicksburg, where I bought a horse, and started across the country to the eastward, intending to strike the Atlantic coast at Savannah.
Late one evening I arrived at a small settlement near the Tombigbee, in Alabama, where I found quite a comfortable inn. After supper I sat down in the barroom, and soon discovered that among the guests present were the sheriff of the district and two of his deputies; and by listening to the conversation I learned that they were out on important business. Later, when alone with the landlord, I was informed of the "dealers." That section of the country had for a long time been infested by a gang of desperate villains—river pirates and horse thieves who had robbed and murdered both travelers and citizens, and who had thus far succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the officers sent after them. There was something wonderful in this for the most expert detectives had been upon the track of the marauders many times, and yet not even a clue had been gained to their hiding-places. That they had a hiding place was very evident, and further, it was a place where both men and horse could be safely concealed. The host declared that it was very mysterious, it was past his comprehension. For more than a year plantations have been robbed; travelers have been robbed; boats upon the river have been robbed; and even large settlements have been visited, by these bold outlaws. The politician's idea was that they had a big cove somewhere under the ground; for if there were any there had been above ground the officers would have found it before this.
On the following morning we ate

breakfast at an early hour, and shortly afterwards the Sheriff and his deputies started off to the southward, toward a bend in the river, where the crew of a flatboat had been robbed only a few days before. My course lay to the eastward, as I had business at Cahawba.
"You'd a made it better," said my host, "if you'd crossed the river at Bluffpost. In that case you'd a had a direct road to Cahawba; but now you've got to take nearly half the distance in a wild out road and mule path. However, if you've got a good horse, you'll make out I reckon, that is, if you don't get picked up by the pirates."
I had been aware of the character of the road that lay before me, and had rather preferred it to the better route to the northward. I had plenty of time, and I liked to see plenty of the way plantations, and as far as hospitality, it was all alike. I was at home everywhere. With one or two exceptions it seemed to be the chief aim of the planters to make my stay with them as agreeable as possible; and I found more difficulty in getting away from their doors than I did in gaining entrance.
I sat out of the settlement at eight o'clock, and at the distance of some five or six miles I met a man who informed me that the water was too high for a comfortable fording at Linden Creek, and that I would find it pleasant to turn to the southward, and go below the Big Brake; referring to a cane brake not far distant which covered several hundred acres of the rich bottom land. This was a route but little traveled, but I minded not that so long as there was a plain path; so I jogged along upon this new way, which I found to be dreary and lonesome enough. I had no fear of robbers, but still the character of the road was calculated to excite one's caution, and I instinctively drew out my revolver and examined the charges, and the caps; and when I had done this I slipped it into the side-pocket of my sack, where I could reach it most handily. After this I whistled, and then I sang a few verses of an old song, for the purpose, I suppose, of convincing the birds that I was very cheerful and easy.
By and by I reached a point where the path crossed a little stream, and here I was joined by a horseman who had come out from the timber to the eastward. As his beast had been drinking, I did not notice him until I was close upon him. He was a middle-aged man, of medium size, dressed in a common hunting garb, and carrying a rifle before him upon his saddle-bow. If this man was really a hunter, I thought he was entirely different from other hunters I had met in that country. His clothes were vastly better, and he lacked the free and easy off-hand way of your genuine forester. He hailed me as though he was surprised to see me there, and I could not divest myself of the impression that he regarded me as an interloper. He looked at me sharply, and as he drew up near my side he asked:
"Do you belong in these parts?"
It struck me then that he might be an officer looking after the river pirates. I told him that I was a stranger in that section, traveling partly for my health, and partly on business; furthermore told him that I was on my way to Cahawba.
He looked at me again, taking a careful survey of my whole figure, and then remarked, as we started away from the brake:
"Is 'pose the Creek is full?"
"Ye's, said I.
"An' so you have to come this way?"
I said "yes," again.
"That's partly the case with me," he said, "though I ain't going exactly your way for any great distance. Rather a lonesome road, isn't it?"
"It is, certainly."
"Not a very pleasant place to meet robbers," he suggested.
I admitted he was correct.
"Have you heard anything about those chaps?"
"You mean the robbers?"
"Ye's."
I now felt sure that my companion was a detective, and I told him what I had seen and heard at the inn where I had last stopped. He was deeply interested—very deeply interested; and I ventured to suggest that he might be searching after those very villains.
"Do you really think so?" he asked.
I told him I thought so from the first.
"Zounds!" he muttered, with a smile "I must be more careful, or I shall expose myself too much."
Then he acknowledged that he was an officer, and as we rode on I told him all I had heard concerning the outlaws.
In the course of half an hour we left the timber, and soon afterwards we came in sight of the cane brake. It was a curious sight, that maze of canes stretching away almost as far as the eye could reach; and as I came nearer I wondered not that even experienced hunters sometimes lost their way and starved to death in the trackless depths of such a labyrinth. For the distance of some two miles we rode along close by the edge of the brake, and then we were forced to turn to the right on

account of the softness of the soil, and pretty soon we came to where a body of water lay between us and the canes. This water seemed to be a sort of bayou, fed by some stream beyond my sight, and it certainly had a swampy, dismal look, suggestive of snakes and alligators. We had passed a point of wood that made close down to the water, when I fancied that I heard the sound of horses' feet behind me, and upon turning I beheld four horsemen just emerging from the wood. My companion certainly endeavoring to make some sign to them, but they did not see him. They kept straight on to the edge of the bayou; went into the water as though it were a continuation of the road, the horses moving with perfect assurance, and finally disappeared within the depths of the cane brake.
I looked at my companion, and he looked at me.
"That's rather curious, isn't it?" he said. And he looked into my face very sharply.
"Curious enough," I replied.
"Wasn't d'ye a 'pose it means?" he queried.
It had naturally occurred to me that within the cane-brake might be the hidden retreat of the robbers, and that the place of passage across the bayou was known only to themselves, but I did not speak my mind to my companion. I intimated to him that I had no idea of its meaning.
"It isn't impossible," he pursued, "with his eyes still upon me, that the rascals we've been speaking of have a haunt in there somewhere."
I told him I thought it quite likely.
We rode on a short distance further, and close by a spur of the timber he told me that he must leave me.
"I should like to keep on with you," he said, "but I must take the rest of my way alone. Here is my path."
He bade me good-bye; hoped we should meet again, gave me some directions touching my route, and then turned toward the timber. Dear reader, did you ever, either while standing in the street, or in some crowded assembly, grow nervous and uneasy under the impression that some one was gazing upon you?—and have you not, under such circumstances, looked around and found a pair of bright, electric eyes fixed upon you?—Something so felt I as I rode away from that stranger.
At length the feeling became oppressive and I stopped and turned. In another instant I should have been a dead man! The seeming hunter had dismounted, and his keen black eye was glancing along over the barrel of his rifle directly at my heart. Quick as thought I slipped from my saddle, and on the same second a bullet came vizzing over my shoulder close by my ear. I think the tenth part of a second lost to me at that time would have been fatal. The villain supposed, of course, that he had shot me, and leaving his horse behind he hurried toward me. Under such circumstances I could have no hesitation. I waited until he had arrived within a few paces, and then I leveled my pistol and shot him through the heart. He kept on toward me, and I fired a second time; but the first shot had been sufficient.
"You're a fine traveling companion, aren't ye?" said I as I bent over him.
He started to his knees, raised his hand toward the cane brake, and tried to cry out, either for help, or else to warn his companions there hidden but his voice had failed him, and he sank back dead without having spoken a word.
With as little delay as possible I dragged the body up into the timber, and having remounted my own horse and taken the rein of the dead man's horse over my arm, I started back. I did not follow the road over which I had come, but kept to the southward, toward Brickett's Ford, where the Sheriff had talked of going. By the middle of the afternoon I was on the track of the officers, though I did not find them until evening. I told them what I had discovered, and early on the following morning, with fifty or sixty well armed citizens, we set off toward the Big Brake. I remembered the place where the horseman had taken to the water, and upon entering here and following carefully along, we found a hard road, where some peculiar movement of the flood had thrown up a ridge of gravel. Having gained the cane brake our way was clear enough, for we found an open path, cut through the canes, and at a distance of a quarter of a mile where the ground was high and dry, we came upon the robbers' camp. Twelve of the desperadoes were there, and were easily captured; and the amount of property which fell into the hands of the officers was large. Some of the villains were away, and probably made their escape. The chief of the gang, a Texan rascal, of the name of Bastrop, was the individual who had overtaken me on the road, and whom I had shot. Had he been content to let me depart in peace I doubt if I should have been the cause of trouble to him. As I have already said, it had occurred to me that the hunt of the robbers was in the cane brake; but as I had no

particular desire to be mixed up in such a mess, I might have kept on my way and left the officers to attend to the finding of the outlaws. The cowardly attempt upon my life however, determined me otherwise; and the last act of John Bastrop's career, instead of saving his gaug from arrest, as he had intended, proved the signal of destruction of both him and them.
The Question of Deserted Farms.
Much has been said by poet and writer on the subject of deserted farms; and still there is abundant room for more before the truth of the matter is reached. It is a true and much regretted fact that during the past five or eight years many farms have been given up; and many young men, had they had a chance offered them on the farm, would have been far better off than they now are in the callings they almost reluctantly chose. I say reluctantly; yes, and mean it; for I know young men who are anxious to "farm it," but their parents not being willing, they are forced to go into a store, or some other establishment. Any why? Is it because their parents do not regard farming as honorable—as an industry beneath them? Not that; but in conversation with one whose son do lights in the wealth and freedom of the farm, he said: "Farming is all right, but I believe my boy can obtain a livelihood easier than on the farm; and although he desired a farm I wish him to try a merchant's life." I shall differ with this gentleman; for every young man who has a desire and a relish for farming should be gratified, if possible.
What causes so many failures and makes so many bankrupts? It is forcing—oftentimes—people into a branch of business they have no interest in other than the money in vested; who cannot enter into it with their whole soul and purpose.
Older persons are suffered the freedom of choice; why not, I ask, allow the young man the same rightful privilege?
Again, why do so many young men leave the farm? Because, nine times out of ten, the boy's colt is the father's horse; the boy's steers the father's oxen. They are the boy's so long as they are kept, but when they are sold, the money goes into the father's pockets and there stays.
Why not encourage your boy by presenting him a bank note of the amount? Why not treat him as one who will occupy your place in a few years? Why not encourage him by giving him an interest in the old farm? Why not show, by word and deed, that farming is honorable, and that you wish to encourage him to continue, and not, by withholding all these, force him to the conclusion that farming dries up all the kindness and parental affection of a parent, and obliges him to believe that he must try something where he can obtain a livelihood and more, or lose his best days delving with discouragement, waiting for "dead men's shoes"?
This is nothing more nor less than a self evident truth; and in view of this truth, can we wonder as we look over our state and find so many farms, once occupied, but now deserted?
A young man of ordinary ability and keen intelligence, when he arrives at the age of twenty or twenty-one is not going to remain on the farm unless an interest of some kind is offered, for it is natural for him to think he can do better.
We knew of an active agriculturist once, who now through infirmity of years, is unable to work on the farm, who has been blessed with a large family of children, but now in his last days he and his wife are alone—failing to so encourage any one of the many sons and daughters sufficiently to remain with them during their declining days.
For the reasons named, many I do not say all, of our smartest boys on arriving at the age of manhood strike out in the world in a new direction, either in our cities or the West, and if we wish to retain them here, and witness, instead of deserting, thriving farms, we must pay some heed to that maxim "Do as you would be done by," and on the other hand, the son has an interest in common with the father, if rightly encouraged, and rights that should receive some respect; and we shall have less cause to fret over deserted farms, and the abandoning of them by our young men.—Jefferson, in Mirror and Farmer.
An Oakland buckster bought a fine mule at auction on California street last week. He paid \$140 for it, and christened it Martin Luther. After trying for three days to put its harness on from a second story window, the owner resold it for \$14, on long time, and under the style and title of "Sara." It was purchased by the city government, and will henceforth be used to suppress riots. It is calculated that when backed gently but firmly into a mob the business end of this faithful animal will be equal to four Gatling guns and a howitzer.
Satan was the original "dead-head." He got into the Garden free, and then caused trouble by his talking.
Book

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