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## Contentment.

Renown or fame I do not crave  
Nor ask a pensioner to be,  
This bounteous store which heaven gave  
Must needs for them be used: Not me,  
For I, an alien, in the desert born  
Could not this rich Italian life  
Endure. The dawn of smiling morn  
Breaks forth with greater beauties rife  
Where I my early childhood past.  
And though on every battle-field  
Where clanging steel in carnage flash'd  
I served the state that now would yield  
Me praise and glory evermore  
I leave it all for him who holds  
A foreign land than native shore  
More blessed.

—GEO. N. PORTER.

## The Price of a Melon.

"Lets' elime de hill, 'Drew, an' see if de ole man am a-watchin de patch."

"Dat's right Pete, if de ole sinner ketched us in his melons I reckon he'd shoot de life out of us."

The moon was at its full and shone out over the great corn field till the white light reflected from the tassels and new born ears with a vivid brightness. Far up the valley, the white gables of the old farm house could be seen between the tree tops. To the left of the fields, the river glistened in the moonlight.

It was a beautiful sight, but the two who had reached the top of the small hill cared nothing for all this. They had seen the same thing fifty times before. Their eyes were fixed on a spot far over in the middle of the field. There was no corn there and peeping out from beneath the leaf-covered vines, dozens of great full grown watermelons could be seen.

"Ge-golly, dis am a snap!" ejaculated Pete. "De ole blowser am a-snorin' long 'fore dis. Lets git a hustle on us fer I'm jis achin' fer melon"

It was the work of but a few minutes to

scramble down the easy slope, and soon the two dark figures were stealing softly through the corn.

As the boys neared the patch, they moved with still more caution. The old farmer or his boys had shot at melon thieves several times, and although no one had ever been wounded, the guilty parties could hardly believe the gun had been pointed in another direction.

Soon they were at the edge of the patch. Everything looked favorable. Not a sound could be heard save the soft rustling of the corn leaves as they were stirred by the breeze.

Pete's face fairly beamed with expectancy. "Hockey, Drew, I wish I wuz as big as Pluny Jones dis ebenin', I can't hole half 'nough fer dis barbaque. You take dat whopper over dar, an' I'll murder dis un."

Pete was stooping over and with his jack-knife severing the great luscious melon. She's ripe as a pipin, Drew. Jumpin' turkeys, wont I—

His words were never finished. There was a flash and loud report from the other side of the patch. Something struck him in his face and on his arms and legs. A terrible feeling passed over him. He stood a moment stiff with fear. He could hear Drew running wildly through the corn. Across the patch in front two forms were approaching. With a wild cry of terror he started to run. It seemed as though the blood was pouring from every pore. How weak he was. The corn and everything around grew dark. "Dey hab killed me! Oh, Mammy—Mammy!" and he fell face forward among the vines.

"You are sure you didn't shoot him John?"

"No I pointed the gun the other way. The gravel you threw must have scared him. Let's turn him over. He'll be all right in a minute."

As they turned the slender black form over they started back in horror. The face was strangely contorted, the eyes wide and staring.

"Mercy, Sam, what have we done?"

John's ear was at the breast in a moment. There was no response. The two young men stared at each other in terrified silence. The truth dawned upon the.

"Good God, Sam, we've scared him to death."

S. J. COREY.

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