# A Government Detective's Story

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One of the saddest things I ever did was to take a boy who was clerk in a postoffice, at night, around his father's house, to the barn, where he had concealed a lot of letters that he had rifled. As we passed the house the father and mother of the boy, who knew nothing of the robbery, were sitting by the firelight singing some good old Methodist hymns, and we could hear them as we dug under the hay in the barn for the letters, with the boy showing us where they were. Then we had to go in the house and break the news to the old father and mother.

As we walked towards the house the voice of the father was lifted up in prayer, and we stood on the steps with uncovered heads, waiting for him to finish the prayer, and it was the saddest scene I have ever witnessed. I had the thieving boy, or young man, by the wrist, and as the father asked God to watch over their only child, and keep him from temptation, and deliver him from evil, the boy trembled all over, and broke down in a flood of tears, and I was not much more composed than he was. I tried to think of some way to get out of going in there, but the boy had papers in his room that we must have, and there was no other way.

It is said that government officials seldom die, and never resign, but I swear to you I was willing to die or resign, almost, at that moment, when the old gentleman got up from his knees, after the evening prayer, and went over to his dear old wife and revently kissed her, the mother of my prisoner, on the forehead, and then began to sing "Nearer, my God to Thee." I thought of my mother, and of my father, and of my children, and if the boy had skipped out I don't know whether I would had strength to catch him or not, but he never could have escaped. I will not dwell upon the scene in that house. It haunts me like a night mare, and I never see a good old father or mother, without wondering if they have not got a boy that is going wrong. — Peck's Sun.

*Cherokee Advocate* [Tahlequah, OK], September 14, 1883