

A "Retainer" Explained.

The following anecdote is related of Daniel Webster: When Webster was at the zenith of his career, one day a gentleman waited upon him to engage him for the defense in an important case at law—the amount at stake in the suit being \$80,000. Having stated the case from his point of view, Mr. Webster said he was willing to take it; but the client could not tell exactly when the case would come on. "Very well," said Webster, "if you retain me for the defense, I will hold myself in readiness, and will not engage for the plaintiff." The gentleman asked what the retaining fee would be. "A thousand dollars," "A thousand dollars!" exclaimed the gentleman. "Yes. Only think, for a moment, what I engage to do, sir. I do not only hold myself at your service in the matter, perhaps for a month or more, but I debar myself from accepting any offer, no matter how large, from the plaintiff." The applicant was satisfied with this explanation, wrote out a check for the amount, and gave it to the great expounder, who, after he had put it into his pocket, said: "I will now give you a bit of advice, gratis. If you can compromise this business upon fair terms with the plaintiff you had better do so." The client acknowledged his thanks and took his leave. In a few days after the gentleman called upon Mr. Webster again and told him that a compromise had been effected, and the matter was satisfactorily settled. Mr. Webster duly congratulated his visitor on the result, and would have turned to other business, but the visitor seemed to have something further on his mind. "Of course," he ventured, after a pause, "I shall not require your services, Mr. Webster." "Certainly not, sir." "And—how about the \$1,000 I paid you?" faintly asked the gentleman, who was not quite reconciled to paying so large a sum for services which were never to be rendered. "Oh, ah!" responded David, with a bland smile; "you don't seem to understand. It is very simple. That was a retaining fee—called in law a retainer. By virtue of the contract I also became a retainer. What should I retain, if not my fee?"

The gentleman went away, it is said, thoroughly instructed, if not quite satisfied, with this practical illustration of a "retainer."

Mississippi 'Skeeters.

The railroad station at Mississippi City is located among the pines, and the way the mosquitos were biting here, even in April, was enough to keep a mule moving. After awhile we got to talking about the insects, and I asked a native of the country:

"Are they thicker than this in the summer?"

"Thicker! Why, in July there's a million to one!"

"And larger?"

"Larger! Why, sir, one of the regular 'skeeters of this section could carry twenty of these on his back and still fly high!"

I thought I'd down him at once, and so continued:

"Now, sir, answer me truthfully. Do you believe that six of your biggest mosquitos could kill a mule if he was tied up out here?"

He looked at me in amazement for a minute, and then went to the door and beckoned in the man sitting on a box and watching the horses. When the man came in, the native said:

"William, you remember that air roan mule o' yours?"

"I reckon."

"In perfect health, wasn't he?"

"He was."

"Could run like a deer, and kick like a saw-log?"

"He could!"

"And he was all alone in a ten-acre lot, William?"

"He was."

"And two of them mud swamp 'skeeters got arter him one morning, and run him down and killed him, and devoured both hams and sucked every drop of blood in his body? William, speak up!"

"Stranger, if they didn't then I hope to be chewed to rags!" said William, and he said it exactly like a man who wouldn't have allowed there were two 'skeeters if he hadn't been earnestly convinced of the fact. He walked out doors, and a deep silence fell upon us two, broken only after a long interval by the native saying:

"I've allus kinder suspected that them skeeters had assistance from a hoss-fly, but I can't prove it. I kinder think the hoss-fly held him down till the marder was committed!"—*M. Quad.*

Men and Soil.

"Separated from the soil," said Mr. James Parton, the historian, in a recent lecture, "man never yet has succeeded in thriving. At best, without it, he is a potted plant, and some of the pots are miserably small. I have visited many factories in New England, and I find that wherever the operatives have a good-sized garden, with access to pasture for a cow, the people are healthy, contented and saving. Whenever this is the case, the factory population is able to live without actual starvation or extreme destitution in the event of the mills being closed for even a long period. Whenever they are separated from the soil, as in some of our large and crowded cities, there is squalor, demoralization and despair."

God has given man two eyes; if he lose one he hath another. But man hath only one soul; if he lose that, the loss can never be made up again—*Chrysostom.*

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