

**IN THE MIDST OF LIFE;
TALES OF SOLDIERS
AND CIVILIANS**

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In the midst of life; tales of soldiers and civilians by Ambrose Bierce

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AMBROSE BIERCE

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TALES
OF
SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS

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IN THE MIDST OF LIFE

Tales of Soldiers and Civilians

BY

AMBROSE BIERCE



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IN THE MIDST OF LIFE

THE SUITABLE SURROUNDINGS

THE NIGHT

ONE midsummer night a farmer's boy living about ten miles from the city of Cincinnati, was following a bridle path through a dense and dark forest. He had been searching for some missing cows, and at nightfall found himself a long way from home, and in a part of the country with which he was only partly familiar. But he was a stout-hearted lad, and, knowing his general direction from his home, he plunged into the forest without hesitation, guided by the stars. Coming into the bridle path, and observing that it ran in the right direction, he followed it.

The night was clear, but in the woods it was exceedingly dark. It was more by the sense of touch than by that of sight that the lad kept the path. He could not, indeed, very easily go astray; the undergrowth on both sides was so thick as to be almost impenetrable. He had gone into the forest a mile or more when he was surprised to see a feeble gleam